INTERNATIONAL PROLETARIAN DEMOCRACY

THE STRATEGY AND TACTICS OF THE WORKING CLASS

T.J.Melt

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Publisher's Note[1]

T.J. Melt (Dr. Josef Frey) finished writing the first edition of this work in 1944 in Zürich. Building on three earlier editions of his 'course', this much more comprehensive work had the aim, among others, of putting more emphasis on, and including more guidance on, tactical issues.

This first edition comprised four books. It appeared in the form of eighteen 'blue booklets' and was typed and printed in two phases: eleven booklets (I, II, III, IV, V/VI/1, VI/2, VII/1, VII/2, VII/3, VIII und XII) were published in Zürich from 1947 onwards with dark blue covers; the remaining seven booklets (IX/1, IX/2, X/1, X/2, XI/1, XI/2, XI/3) were published in Vienna in the 1950s with light blue covers.

The first edition of this work contains a number of typographical errors. This is understandable given the conditions of illegality under which the booklets were written, typed and published. The necessary corrections were made in the second edition.

Mistakes were most commonly found in the quotations and their sources. This is partly explained by the fact that the author originally noted down the quotations in shorthand. However, sometimes the mistakes already existed in earlier German editions of writings, above all those of Lenin and Trotsky, that were then corrected in later editions. Indeed, some of these Frey had already himself corrected in the first edition of his work. An important part of the preparatory work for the publication of the second edition was the systematic checking of the quotations in the specific edition of the source cited and undertaking the necessary corrections.

Before his death in 1957, Frey had already made a series of corrections and several amendments, either as an addendum to some of the booklets or as handwritten insertions, as preparatory work for a second edition. This second edition of his work reflects all these, mostly small, amendments to the text.

The second edition also uses a more modern format in order to make it more accessible to the reader. Additionally, each of the four books contains a complete list of references of the actual sources Frey cites.

[1] Translated from the second German edition of Melt's work published in 2010; Ed.

Translator's Note

International Proletarian Democracy: the strategy and tactics of the working class was originally completed in 1944 and published 'in the underground' over a number of years in the late 1940s and 1950s as a series of 18 booklets. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first time it has been translated into English and is based on the second edition of Melt's work published in 2010.

The translation of such a substantial German work posed a number of difficulties, not least in relation to the numerous quotations from Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky that Melt (Frey) used to illustrate and support his analysis of economic and political developments and their implications for the overall strategy and the tactics to be adopted by the working class in specific contexts.

This translator's note addresses a number of issues encountered over the 20-year period it took to fully complete the translation, a translation that aimed to achieve an optimal balance between linguistic/grammatical accuracy on the one hand and accessibility/readability for a reader whose first (and possibly only) language is English on the other. In any event the translation always strived to ensure that it at least accurately reflected the essence and spirit of the original German work.

Melt's deliberately polemic style and his stated quest to examine issues from all angles often resulted in him including a series of words with a similar meaning in the one sentence, in order to emphasise and elucidate an important point. Sometimes, the English language simply does not have an equivalent number of words with appropriate differences in nuance to match the original German – so occasionally the English translation of a particular sentence appears in a somewhat shortened form.

A significant number of the political terms used in the original work, although used in German political writings at that time, do not have a direct English translation that would accurately convey the same meaning as the original German. It was, therefore, more appropriate either to use the original German word in the main body of the text (and provide an English translation/explanation in brackets) or, where the common English translation did not truly reflect the meaning of the original German, include an English translation in the main body of the text (and include the original German in brackets).

Melt also sometimes used new political terms that he himself developed or were very rarely used even in German. The translation likewise developed some new terms/phrases in English to deal with this. Some of which may appear somewhat clumsy, for example: *Aufstiegsinteressen* (interests of ascent); *Bankrottpolitik* **(**bankrupt politics); *Koalitionseinstellung* (coalition-attitude); *Wegbereiter* (those who prepared the way); *Anteil an kapitalistischer Macht und Schüssel* (*share in capitalist power and in the capitalist gravy train*) but do at least reflect the true spirit/meaning of the original German.

It is also important to reiterate the point made in the preface to the second German edition of Melt's work in relation to the conditions under which the booklets were published. The original German edition contained a significant number of typographical errors, particularly in relation to the quotations used. Many of them are very minor inaccuracies in the quotations from Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, which were then corrected as part of the second German edition of the work published in 2010 and are reflected in this first English translation. In a number of

cases, it is also clear from the context that a word in the original German source is incorrect. In most of these cases the author has himself corrected these errors and this again is reflected in the English translation.

Likewise, it was also important to ensure that the quotations contained in the original edition of *International Proletarian Democracy* were checked thoroughly against the actual editions used by the author. Fortunately, it was possible to gain copies of each of these original editions from a variety of international sources. A list of the sources used in each of the four volumes of the overall work is included at the end of each of them. The list comprises the original German titles of the sources in order to clearly indicate that the quotations in this first English edition are direct translations of the German rather than simply copies of existing English translations. In a small number of cases the common English title has been included as a footnote where this is significantly different from the original German.

Indeed, the most serious challenges encountered in the process of translation were in relation to the considerable number of quotations from – often the more well-known – works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. The decision to use the original German texts as quoted by Melt as the basis for translation (subject to the above noted corrections) rather than readily available English editions was taken early on in the overall process of translation for a number of reasons:

Firstly, it was clear that many of the available English translations were based on different German (in the case of Marx and Engels) or Russian (in the case of Lenin and Trotsky) editions of the relevant works. Differences were particularly apparent in the case of well-known works of Lenin (e.g. *The State and Revolution*) and Trotsky (*Permanent Revolution*), both of which were written in Russian. The German translations of the editions that Melt used often differ not only from the available English translations but also from other German editions translated from the original Russian.

Secondly, even in the case of pamphlets/articles where there was only one original German edition, there were sometimes clear inaccuracies in the commonly available English translations of the original German, reflecting an apparent lack of attention to detail or plain misunderstandings or a combination of both.

Thirdly, there appeared to be a tendency in English translations to ‘soften’ the original German meaning – perhaps to reflect the generally lower levels of militancy among workers in Anglophone countries. This translation attempts to reflect the original German source more accurately.

Having said this, however, the translators did in all cases check existing English translations of the quotations included in the work. The key source for this process was the Marxist Internet Archive and the translators would like to acknowledge the huge number of very useful translations, particularly for complex German concepts and formulations, that they derived from this readily available source.

Melt sometimes uses original English sources to illustrate a point, possibly because he was unable to access a German translation available (e.g., Trotsky’s *Problems of the Chinese Revolution*). Melt undertook his own translation which was included in the original German edition. Rather than re-translating this German back to English, the original English text has been included in this English edition of his work.

Unlike in the first and second German editions of the work, where the full source was included in the main body of the text after individual citations, this English translation uses the Harvard style for in-text citations. In many cases, Melt used the original published version of a book or article. Where this is not the case, however, the original date of publication is included in square brackets for purposes of clarification, as this can be of considerable significance in terms of understanding the context of the quotation. The list of sources at the end of each volume replicates the titles, etc. of the original German ones to emphasise that the translation reflects these sources rather than existing published English translations.

In line with the more modern citation style adopted in this translation, a more modern hierarchy of emphases has been adopted that reflects Melt's prioritisation but excludes his use of spacing between letters – now replaced by underlining. A particular problem arose in the case of emphasis in quotations, as Melt sometimes wanted to emphasise a different part of the quotation than the original writer did. In this case the original emphasis is reproduced as italics without bold print to distinguish it from emphases which are either replicated by Melt or are additional emphases inserted by the Melt.

Post publication, Melt also made one important hand-written amendment to the published version of his original work in preparation for a second German edition of his work. His original work refers to capitalist *Privateigentum* (private property) on many occasions. He systematically changed this to capitalist *Eigentum* (property), in recognition of the growing importance of state capitalism, of capitalist companies that were nationalised (statified) in the late 1940s and 1950s in Western Europe.

Finally, this translation updates some of the terminology used by Melt. For example, he regularly makes reference to the *English* imperialists, the *English* bourgeoisie, etc. This reflects the German linguistic tradition of the time to use England/English as a substitute for Britain/British. This has been updated to Britain/British. Similarly, the translators have chosen to use more modern terminology in the case of a number of words that would now be generally considered inappropriate, e.g. negro (black). Where appropriate the translators have also used now more acceptable gender-neutral formulations/terms (e.g. they) rather than the masculine 'he' that was commonplace when Melt was writing in the 1940s.

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VOLUME 1

THE STARTING POINTS

FOR PROLETARIAN STRATEGY AND TACTICS

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PREFACE

The art of leading multi-million armies has to be learnt. But to lead the mass of the workers, poor peasants/farmers and petty bourgeois towards, and in, the international proletarian revolution is a far more difficult art. At stake here are hundreds upon hundreds of millions. Here one must not command but convince. Here one must again and again solve issues that are much more complicated than those that arise even during the most difficult military campaign. Here one is dealing with a struggle lasting not for years but for decades without interruption.

The art of leading the revolution also has to be learnt. It is learnt only in practice, only in the struggle and indeed singly and solely on the basis of the main experiences and lessons of the previous struggles. To disregard these experiences and lessons would mean neglecting the experiences of the struggles of the past, experiences paid for with gigantic rivers of workers' blood; it would mean hopelessly starting again and again from the beginning. The main purpose of this work is to systematically arrange and thoroughly examine in their total context the sum total of the most important experiences up to now of the struggle of the working class, focusing on what today is decisive for the working class – proletarian strategy and tactics, i.e. the science and art of leading the revolution.

I am dedicating this work to the advanced, thinking workers, male and female, of all countries and all races, especially to the best elements of the young workers of both genders. The future of the working class, in the last analysis of all humanity, is germinating in them. It is above all out of their ranks that the leaders for the greatest, most difficult, longest and final freedom struggle of the exploited and oppressed must and will arise. It is to them that I am dedicating this work, because they are becoming ever more conscious of the crisis of the workers' movement; because they are feeling ever more clearly that Social Democracy, the Labour Party and the Stalinist party do not serve the proletarian revolution, but actually work against it and that the workers today, therefore, in reality do not have a revolutionary party or a revolutionary international; because they are driven by the instinctive impulse to re-examine their intellectual skills and re-arm themselves mentally; it is to them that I am dedicating this work, because they know that nothing whatever changes by itself, least of all the fate of the workers, of the exploited and oppressed; because they understand that it is only through struggle that the masses can gain successes ***for themselves***, successes that are ***enduring***, provided the masses are well led and are in actual fact led in a revolutionary manner; because they understand that leading the masses in the revolution is a science and an art that have to be ***learnt***; an art that one learns only in the practical struggle, by simultaneously preparing and clarifying oneself by means of thorough, comprehensive and persevering study of the main experiences and lessons of the previous struggles. My work is directed at them, because they recognise that proletarian consciousness is the axis of the entire proletarian class strength, that what matters above all is to clarify, consolidate and deepen the proletarian mass consciousness and that for this purpose one must first and foremost work on one's own consciousness, work on it continually. It is singly and solely and constantly in conjunction with this continual mental work on themselves that the advanced, thinking and best elements of the working class bring forth from within their ranks through practical experience in the struggle what the proletariat today needs most of all: good, revolutionary ***leaders***.

That today, more than a quarter of a century after the greatest proletarian victory in world history, the Russian October Revolution, the world bourgeoisie is triumphant worldwide as never before; that today the overwhelming proportion of the workers' movement worldwide is, in truth,

serving the capitalist class interests; that it is fighting the world war for the imperialist robbers, sacrificing the life and property (*Gut und Blut*) of countless workers for capitalist profits, completely abandoning and indeed trampling underfoot the proletarian class interests, the proletarian-revolutionary interests – in the Soviet Union this manifests itself in the following way: the politics forced upon it by the Stalinist bureaucracy is becoming increasingly nationalist, increasingly Russian-chauvinist and more and more is preparing the way for the restoration of capitalism in Russia – this gigantic crisis of proletarian consciousness is above all a crisis of leadership.

Today, those who talk and write most about the socialist goals are those who do not lead the masses towards these goals, but away from them. However, Socialism as a goal is meaningless if the politics, strategy and tactics, in a word the road to it, does not actually lead there.

The Utopians contented themselves with showing that the goal for solving the problems of society was a Socialism that they themselves had cleverly devised, i.e. a fantasy-derived future societal structure. They left it to insightful monarchs and rich philanthropists to find the way there. It was scientific Socialism that first uncovered the fact that the actual motion of capitalist economy and society itself develops in its womb the forces that are driving towards the only solution to the crisis of society, the socialist solution; it revealed that the conflict between its ever more sharply clashing contradictions, between the capitalist antagonisms as well as ***the struggle of the working class against the capitalist class*** was the only road to the socialist goal, was the only road that leads to the solution, to Socialism, by being – on pain of decline and continuing retro-formation of economy and society – ultimately victorious by being ***led*** correctly, in a ***revolutionary*** manner. In this way, Marx and Engels laid the foundations for proletarian strategy and tactics as a science and an art.

The heir to scientific Socialism, the old Social Democracy – which at that time was still sound and had not yet degenerated – focused essentially on propaganda for the socialist end-goal and on ever more wide-ranging agitation for the prevailing, immediate, day-to-day demands of the masses in order to mobilise them for the struggle for Socialism. In conjunction with the struggle for this or that day-to-day demand, the old Social Democracy in the course of time also increasingly examined and discussed the road, the tactics, how and in what manner, by what means and methods this or that immediate day-to-day goal was to be attained, to be fought for. The old Social Democracy, which was at that time on the whole still sound, did not get beyond these essentially ad hoc, disconnected, ***individual tactical questions***.

It was Lenin and Trotsky who first posed the questions of tactics more and more clearly, not merely in conjunction with the immediate struggle for this or that immediate goal given by the specific conditions of struggle, but did this consistently and comprehensively in conjunction with the entire struggle for the socialist goal altogether. By continuing to build consciously on the firm foundation that Marx had laid with his main teachings, they created proletarian strategy and tactics as the science and art of guiding and leading the struggle of the working class; they did this by always examining and answering each particular strategic and tactical question in the context of the totality of the struggle of the world proletariat, i.e. always in the context of the international proletarian revolution.

Proletarian strategy and tactics in ***practice*** is of necessity always guidance in a specific struggle, under quite specific conditions, in quite specific circumstances, relationships, contexts and interrelations, always in a specific situation with specific prospects. Because every strategic and tactical guidance of Marx and Engels, of Lenin and Trotsky, and indeed all practical guidance for proletarian strategy and tactics is always only valid for a very specific context, for a

very specific situation, only within the limits of the specific conditions of this situation – how then can advice, an aid, guidance for the present and for the future be worked out from this, when after all the conditions, circumstances, relationships, contexts and interrelations are constantly changing, and are today different from the time of Marx and Engels or from the time of Lenin and Trotsky, too, and sooner or later will again be different from those of today?

From this the 'realistic' right opportunists drew and draw the conclusion that the strategic and tactical theses of Marx and Engels, Lenin and Trotsky are only of historical and literary value, but are irrelevant for the practical strategy and tactics of the proletarian struggle of today, tomorrow and the day after – or they use them, despite changed conditions, in a way that is not in keeping with the spirit of these theses, but merely repeats the words, in order to camouflage their opportunism in a sham-Marxist manner.

On the other hand, the 'firmly principled' left opportunists, drew and draw from this the conclusion that one must always and under all circumstances keep singly and solely to the principle-based tenets of Marx and Engels, of Lenin and Trotsky. In truth, they always see and recognise only the general, enduring, historical, fundamental conditions of struggle in capitalist society, which are ideologically expressed in the proletarian class principles, but they never see and recognise the ever changing, particular, special, transient, specific conditions under which the proletarian-revolutionary principles are to be realised.

Left opportunist politics does not recognise any revolutionary strategy and tactics whatsoever, but basically only abstract 'revolutionary' propaganda, which again and again mechanically recites only the general truths of the proletarian revolution and Communism. The right opportunists recognise only tactics, sometimes even strategy, but apparently no principles. In reality, however, every policy without exception, must, at least objectively, in effect, inevtably follow specific class principles. All existing classes, strata, groups, individuals, parties, organisations and states in actual fact wage their struggle under the ***totality*** of conditions prevailing in any given society. Hence their politics are subject not only to the changing, particular, special, temporary, specific conditions of struggle, but inevitably always, too, to the enduring, general, abstract, fundamental conditions of struggle in capitalist society. As unprincipled as right opportunist politics are from the standpoint of the working class, they in reality march consistently on the ***petty-bourgeois*** class line of the – from the standpoint of proletarian class consciousness, from the standpoint of proletarian class character – degenerated, petty-bourgeoisified workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy. The right opportunists disregard the general, enduring, fundamental conditions of struggle of the working class, but in actual fact keep strictly to the general, enduring, fundamental conditions of struggle of the petty bourgeoisie in bourgeois society.

How and in what manner is the strategic and tactical guidance of our masters to be applied, how and in what manner are the experiences and lessons of previous proletarian struggles to be applied at all to changed conditions, circumstances, relationships, contexts, interrelations and situations – it is this ***method*** above all that needs to be explained clearly. Only in doing this is the foundation laid for ***conscious*** proletarian strategy and tactics as the science and art of revolutionary leadership, as guidance for the actions and struggles of the working class both in the present and in the future, guidance that is based on the experiences and lessons of the past. Marx already had worked out this method in the form of ***dialectical materialism***; Lenin clarified it by means of the dialectical-materialist way in which he utilised Marx's strategy and tactics in practice.

Conscious proletarian politics must indispensably start from the dialectical-materialist world conception or else, sooner or later, it must inevitably slide further and further away from the proletarian class line. Only by means of materialist dialectics as the method of thinking are we again and again able to work out, to find out the conscious proletarian strategy and tactics that correspond to the specific situation. This is easier said than done: 'The dialectics of the process are themselves not that complicated. But they are easier to formulate in terms of their general characteristics than to rediscover them every time in living examples' (Trotzki, 1930a, p.214). For this very reason revolutionary leaders must learn to do this better and better. An exposition of the science and art of revolutionary leadership must therefore be firmly anchored in the Marxist world conception and go hand in hand with the dialectical-materialist method as its constant companion.

Ready-made strategic and tactical tenets that are always valid are not given here; but what is explained is the method of how to apply the strategic and tactical experiences, lessons, theses and guidance of the past to the struggles of the present and the future, as a mental aid to working out, to finding out the strategy and tactics that are necessary for this or that new, changed situation. Abstract lessons are not given here, but, on the contrary, always lessons in a specific context, within the framework of specific conditions.

It is not sufficiently known that Lenin gave his famous work: '*Left-wing' Communism: an Infantile Disorder* (1920) the subtitle 'An *attempt to provide a popular exposition of Marxist strategy and tactics*'. Worked out above all for the purpose of overcoming the ultra'left' infantile disorders, Lenin's work dealt above all with those manifestations, in which ultra'radicalism' made its appearance during 1919-20. In the present work an attempt is made to present Marxist-Leninist strategy and tactics in conjunction with all the main experiences of the working class up to now, above all in conjunction with the experiences of the First (imperialist) World War (1914–18), the post-war period and the experiences of the Second (imperialist) World War up to now (1939–44); it is at the same time an attempt at preparatory work for the programme of the proletarian class party. As a by-product it provides in summary form an exposition of the main tenets of Marxism-Leninism from the integrated point of view of proletarian strategy and tactics that is nowadays decisive for the working class.

Nevertheless, ***general*** tenets also arise from the sum total of the strategic and tactical experiences and guidance up to now, ***general*** tenets that are of the greatest significance for the correct practical application of strategy and tactics in the present and the future, because the general conditions underlying them are valid for the entire duration of capitalist society. I have endeavoured to work out these ***general*** tenets as clearly as possible.

What many honest workers misunderstand above all is the dialectical reciprocal relationship between the class principles on the one hand and strategy and tactics on the other. Even honest revolutionaries, who fully understand that only strategy and tactics that are actually in accordance with the class principles of the proletariat are proletarian, are revolutionary, stumble over the extremely important issue that the revolutionary principles are only a ***part*** of the reality in which the working class has to wage its struggle, and that therefore politics that is based ***only*** on the proletarian-revolutionary principles does, admittedly, take into consideration what is the most important part, the fundamental part, but is still only a part, of the actual conditions of the struggle – but what is still only a ***part*** – and for this very reason unable to realise the proletarian principles. ***PROLETARIAN STRATEGY AND TACTICS MUST ALWAYS MOVE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PROLETARIAN PRINCIPLES – BUT THESE THEMSELVES ONLY BECOME LIVING REALITY BY MEANS OF THE PARTICULAR STRATEGY AND TACTICS THAT ARE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PREVAILING SITUATION, AND ONLY BY MEANS***

OF THIS ARE CORRECT. POLITICS, STRATEGY AND TACTICS ARE PROLETARIAN, ARE REVOLUTIONARY, IF THEY ARE – ALWAYS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PROLETARIAN CLASS PRINCIPLES – ALWAYS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PREVAILING PARTICULAR, SPECIAL, TRANSIENT, TEMPORARY, CHANGING, CONCRETE CONDITIONS OF THE STRUGGLE. Only complete clarity in this basic issue creates the firm basis for the struggle against ***all*** opportunism of any kind.

The enormous catastrophes that have befallen the working class since 1914 through the opportunism of Social Democracy, the Labour Party and the Stalinist Party have rightly focussed the attention of the best elements of the proletariat above all on the struggle against opportunism; expressed positively this means: on the struggle for the principles of the working class, on always consistently and very strictly orientating all the struggles of the workers in accordance with the proletarian class principles. That was necessary then, and today, too, it is more necessary than ever, and continues to be indispensably necessary for the future too. But this correct and necessary emphasis on the class principles has led, and leads today too, to some honest fighters ***overemphasising***, indeed only emphasising, the proletarian principles and thus to ultra-'left' frames of mind, conceptions, inclinations and deviations of various kinds, various forms and various degrees.

Without unyielding struggle against right opportunism, without overcoming the influence of the right opportunists on the masses, there can be no real victory of the proletarian revolution – but without a clear and thoroughgoing demarcation from ultra-'radicalism' of all shades, kinds, old and new; without the greatest firmness against 'left' opportunism in all its ever changing manifestations and in whatever spheres it appears, there can be no victory over right opportunism, the masses cannot be detached from the influence of the right opportunists and led over onto the road of the proletarian revolution! Hence, I have also always drawn a line of demarcation with regard to 'left' opportunism as clearly as possible in all the main spheres and in all the main issues. How else is one to see through the consciously or unconsciously sophistic arguments of the right opportunists or 'left' opportunists most clearly but by treating the problems in their total context.

All opportunism must inevitably take effect in practical politics – openly or masked, consciously or unconsciously, at any rate in effect – in the most important question of all: the ***relationship to the class enemy***, the relationship of the workers as a ***class*** to the capitalist class or any section of it, a relationship expressed in practice in a ***party alliance with the bourgeoisie***. Today, all opportunists pursue this policy of alliance, in order to – as they say when driven into a corner by the revolutionaries – make use of the differences within the capitalist class in the interests of the working class, the proletarian state, the proletarian revolution, Socialism or Communism. There is a profound lack of clarity among the majority of the working class about this issue, which in practice is the most decisive one of all, although their proletarian instinct points them again and again in the right direction. It is precisely this issue that the opportunists, deliberately or unwittingly, confuse most of all, because this is precisely where they need complete darkness, where all cats are grey, so that they can continue – without losing the following of the masses – to pursue their opportunist policy of alliance, which very severely damages the world proletariat, the proletarian state, the world revolution, Socialism and Communism.

Although the revolutionary workers are, fortunately, firm with regard to precisely this issue, there is nevertheless occasionally uncertainty amongst them too, and no wonder. In particular, the utilisation of conflicts of interests between enemies is not only a constant source of ever recurring opportunist treacheries, but also the source of honest misunderstandings, which, of

course, unwittingly make the game easier for the opportunists. Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky have in countless passages written about the issue of alliances and about the revolutionary utilisation of differences between enemies. To this day, there has not been a comprehensive investigation and exposition of the issue of ***alliances***, both party alliances and state alliances, and the issue of the ***utilisation of conflicts of interest between enemies*** – both the utilisation of these by means of the party and by means of the state, as forms and methods of revolutionary struggle – a comprehensive and systematically arranged investigation and exposition that examines and clarifies these critical issues from all important sides. An exhaustive insight into these basic practical issues is lacking, because this comprehensive, systematic clarification of this whole complex of issues is lacking. This has been needed for a long time and has become increasingly imperative due to the war.

The First (imperialist) World War posed issues of principle for proletarian politics; the Second (imperialist) World War posed – within the framework of the principle-based proletarian war policy – temporary tactical questions, which could not be solved without an examination, an investigation from all angles, both of alliances and the utilisation of differences between enemies, as forms and methods of proletarian-revolutionary action. Tactical questions that had to be answered, in order to make it possible to wage an effective struggle against the 'new' social-patriotism of the second imperialist world slaughter, a social-patriotism that pretends 'to defend the proletarian state' and cloaks its treacherous activities with this. I have therefore endeavoured to examine as thoroughly as possible from all important sides the alliance as a form of struggle, as well as the revolutionary utilisation of differences between enemies as a method of struggle, indeed the entire principle-based, strategic and tactical relationship of the working class, of the proletarian party to the other classes, i.e. both their relationship to the world bourgeoisie, to its sections, groups, strata, parties, organisations and states – and their relationship to the genuine, non-exploiting, themselves exploited small peasants/farmers and petty bourgeoisie. In this context, the relationship to the exploited, oppressed nations and colonial peoples, i.e. the relationship to the classes into which they are divided, constitutes a sub-issue of this main issue.

These issues – like all political, strategic and tactical issues altogether – demand complete clarity in the basic questions of class, state and party and especially the leadership role of the party. I distinguish throughout between the objective aspect of class, i.e. class membership, and the subjective side of class, i.e. class consciousness. The first is a social fact that stems from purely economic roots; the actual class structure arises solely from this fact, and it is solely from this standpoint that one fully recognises the objective sources of proletarian class strength. Class consciousness, however, is already a political fact, which admittedly grows upwards basically out of the economic base and is fundamentally determined by it, but at the same time already expresses the conscious and unconscious retroaction of the political and ideological superstructure on the economic substructure of society. The consciousness of this or that class, of this or that member of a class at any given time, already reflects the influence of various ideologies, parties and organisations, which, without exception, are indeed to a greater or lesser extent instruments in the struggle between the classes. When it suits them, the opportunists lump together class consciousness and class membership. They have no interest in clarifying the workers about the enormous extent of their class strength; on the contrary they seek to blur the extent of it and diminish it as much as possible in the consciousness of the workers. They include the millions upon millions, who belong to the working class by virtue of their objective role in the process of social reproduction, with the petty bourgeoisie (i.e. the real middle class; Ed.), indeed even with the bourgeoisie, because for the time being these workers succumb to the ideological and organisational influence of this class and its parties as well as its petty-

bourgeois helpers. On the other hand, when it suits them they make left-capitalists out to be genuine petty bourgeois, in order to conceal their alliances with the bourgeoisie from the masses, alliances that are directed against the working class, against the proletarian state, against the proletarian revolution. Maximum clarity with regard to class structure, to an individual's objective membership of a class and to the role of class consciousness constitutes a main prerequisite for correct, consciously proletarian politics, strategy and tactics.

As a rule, every problem has a number of important sides. To illuminate only one of these sides means leaving – together with the other sides – the whole problem in the dark. Every serious issue of proletarian politics must be considered from all important sides; only in this way will it really be elucidated and clarified. A systematic investigation and exposition from all angles of all the essential issues for the politics, strategy and tactics of the working class must therefore necessarily consider every important side of every important individual issue in various places. Looked at superficially, it may appear that one and the same subject matter is being repeated needlessly several times. Closer examination, however, shows that the exposition again and again rotates, turns the subject matter in order again and again to present an important aspect of it to the thinking reader or present the same issue in another context. Every single issue must therefore be understood in the overall context of this entire work and can only be really understood in this way. It is therefore advisable initially to go through the work in its entirety and not to be afraid to have repeated goes at it.

I have let our masters speak using their own words as much as possible.

In as far as I name or criticise individuals, they only serve as abbreviated designations for specific classes, strata, groups, parties, tendencies or currents.

The first condition that must be fulfilled in order to lead the working class, and in the last analysis the whole of humanity, out of the abyss into which the bourgeoisie has hurled it with the help of its fascist henchmen and its Social Democratic, Labour, Stalinist and trade union-bureaucratic lackeys, is to uncover the causes of this gigantic fall and expose those who are guilty of causing it to the working class. In doing this, the criticism must not stop at anything, not at any group, stratum or class, nor at any error, mistake or treachery, nor at any current, tendency or party, even if it considers itself to be, or behaves as if it were, or gives itself out to be 'socialist', 'communist' or 'revolutionary'. Nearly five years of the 'great' Stalinist, Labour, Social Democratic and trade-unionist war policy, which sails under the slogan 'concentrate all our strength on first of all defeating fascism', have passed – and the result for the ***working class***? No matter how the struggle between the warring factions of imperialist robbers shifts the relationship of forces between them, the overall position of the world bourgeoisie has been enormously strengthened and the overall position of both the world proletariat, including the position of the Soviet Union in terms of its character as a ***proletarian*** state, the overall position of the international proletarian revolution has been tremendously weakened. It is precisely for this reason that the imperialists have for so many years been able to wage their murderous predatory war, the victims of which are above all the workers, poor peasants/farmers and petty bourgeois.

The second condition that must be fulfilled, however, in order to lead the working class, and in the last analysis the whole of humanity, out of the abyss, is to work out and show the working class, the poor-peasant/poor-farmer and petty-bourgeois masses, the exploited and oppressed nations, the colonial peoples and in the last analysis the whole of humanity, the positive way that in actual fact leads out of this abyss. This raises all the important problems of proletarian politics, strategy and tactics. They constitute the subject matter of this work and, for the current

first stage of the new gigantic proletarian-revolutionary wave that is beginning to rise, are summed up in the fundamental task of building and enlarging the ***proletarian class party*** in every country and uniting these parties into a world party, the ***Fourth International***. It is obvious that after the catastrophic experiences of the working class, especially with the Stalinist bureaucracy, the ***safeguards*** against a return of a bureaucratic degeneration and usurpation are of the very greatest importance. I have therefore paid very particular attention to this question.

Once again, both the fascist and the democratic imperialists, but also their social-patriotic, social-chauvinist, social-imperialist lackeys, promise that this world war will be the last, that they will make future wars impossible – all this on the basis of the continuing existence of world capitalism... The bourgeois and petty-bourgeois democrats of all shades promise over and above this that they will liquidate fascism and make all fascism impossible for ever in the future.

The strongest, richest and economically most solidly-based capitalist state, the United States of America, entered the war because it was the last remaining means by which the American bourgeoisie could overcome, for a certain period of time, the deep crisis of the American capitalist system, of the world capitalist system. Indeed, on 18 March 1943, President Roosevelt proudly announced to the whole world: 'Since the outbreak of war in Europe we have boosted our production of oil by 66%, of coal by 40%, of chemical products by 300%, of iron by 125% and of steel by 106%'. This means in reality, that the capitalist contradictions, which came to a head most sharply in American economy and society in 1929, are today already much stronger than at that time. Even the most favourable outcome of the war for the world bourgeoisie, an outcome that is not at all likely, would not give it a lengthy breathing space. The foundations of the capitalist equilibrium are severely shaken and the world war, regardless of its outcome, will shake them even more severely. Either the victorious proletarian revolution, real proletarian Socialism will come or a third imperialist world war will inevitably come not too long afterwards, a world war that will be still more frightful than the second one and so forth: the perishing of the whole of society or the transition to proletarian Socialism – the course of events will inevitably pose this question ever more sharply, ever more inexorably. Ahead of us is a revolutionary epoch that will probably last for decades, during which again and again war, revolution and counter-revolution, and again war and revolution will alternate with each other with short intervals of truce, of so-called 'peace'. As long as the proletarian revolution is not victorious once and for all, worldwide, capitalist wars, imperialist wars will always recur – everything else is a swindle. As long as the banner of international proletarian democracy is not flying victoriously over all the countries of the world, the capitalist counter-revolution will come again and again, the fascist counter-revolution too, in new forms, with new names and new masks. Whoever helps the war of the democratically dressed up imperialists against the fascist imperialists, is laying the foundations for fascism in the countries that are still democratic capitalist. The task that the working class has to accomplish and carry out is not one of supporting one group of imperialist robbers against the other, but utilising the struggle between them to the advantage of the proletarian revolution, in order to overthrow them all and put an end altogether to the whole capitalist system – otherwise the working class itself, together with the whole of human society, will head more and more towards certain destruction.

The world bourgeoisie and all its helpers – including too the Stalinist, Labour and Social Democratic bureaucrats – know what is at stake for them. They have learned from the First World War. They want 'to win the peace', they want 'to avoid chaos and anarchy', in a word they are working against the proletarian revolution, they want to prevent the revolutionary victory of the worker, poor-peasant/poor-farmer and petty-bourgeois masses at whose expense the capitalists live in luxury, while the helpers of the capitalists join in by sponging on the masses.

They will still inflict many a defeat on the working class until its revolution is victorious. However, the core elements of the proletariat and, with their help, the worker masses, will in spite of all this learn again and again, and more and more, from their experiences; they will become ever more conscious of their proletarian class interests. This time round the mole of history is digging especially thoroughly and it will dig ever more thoroughly. The objective conditions for the victory of the revolution are improving more and more as a result of the inevitable sharpening of the capitalist contradictions and will again and again in spite of this or that defeat become better still. It is in the hands of the working class to shorten this overripe process, which becomes all the more painful the longer it lasts, and to bring about the victorious turn in the entire fate of the workers, the small peasants/farmers, the petty bourgeois and that of the exploited, oppressed nations and colonial peoples and humanity as a whole. It depends decisively on the ***revolutionary understanding*** of the best elements of the working class, on them mastering proletarian strategy and tactics, on them joining together into a proletarian-revolutionary party, which provides the indispensably necessary leadership for the masses and thus enables the working class to actually fulfil its world-historic role – that of being the revolutionary surgeon for human society, who rids it from the ever deadlier capitalist abscess and then that of being the revolutionary organiser, who heals the wounds inflicted on humanity by the class cleavage that has lasted many thousands of years, and builds up a new, truly healthy, socialist, communist ***Gesellschaftsleben*** (social existence) for all workers, for all the exploited and oppressed, indeed ultimately for all human beings without exception, without classes, as free among the free, as brothers among brothers, not merely in words, not with alms, but as a living daily fact.

T.J. Melt. Lisbon, February 1944

Abbreviations

AFL	American Federation of Labor
CIO	Committee for Industrial Organisation
CI	Communist International
CP	Communist Party
CPGB	Communist Party of Great Britain
ECCI	Executive Committee of the Communist International
IGB	Internationaler Gewerkschaftsbund (International Trade Union Federation)
ILP	Independent Labour Party
IWW	Industrial Workers of the World
KAPD	Kommunistische Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands (Communist Workers Party of Germany)
KJI	Kommunistische Jugend-Internationale (Young Communist International)
KJV	Kommunistischer Jugend-Verband (Young Communist League)
KPD	Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (Communist Party of Germany)
LP	Labour Party
PCF	Parti Communiste Français (French Communist Paty)
POUM	Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista (Workers Party of Marxist Unification)
RCP	Russian Communist Party
RGI	Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale (Red Trade Union International)
SAP	Sozialistische Arbeiter Partei (Socialist Workers Party)
SI	Socialist International (Second International)
SP	Social Democratic Party / Socialist Party
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Social Democratic Party of Germany)
SPF	Sozialdemokratische Partei Frankreichs (Social Democratic Party of France) (Section française de l'Internationale ouvrière – SFIO)
StP	Stalinist Party
StI	Stalinist International

BOOKLET 1:

CLASS

CLASS

Since primitive communism perished, since private property in the means of production came into being, human society has been divided into classes, into exploiters and exploited, into oppressors and oppressed. During the successive main epochs of class society, history has revolved around the axis of the antagonism between slaveholders and slaves, between feudal lords and corvée-labourers (serfs, villeins) and between capitalists and wage workers. Just as simple (peasant, handicraft, in short petty-bourgeois) commodity production extends throughout all modes of production that serve the purpose of exploitation, so too the main class engaged in simple commodity production, the small peasants/farmers, the handicraftsmen, and lastly too the small shopkeepers/traders – in a word the petty bourgeois – extends throughout all exploitative forms of society.

All human beings, who in an exploiters' economy fulfil the same role in the social reproduction process, a process that also includes circulation – a role that is fundamentally determined by them having the same relationship to the means of production – belong to a class, constitute a ***class***. It is the collective name for a group of human beings, who, in consequence of them having the same relationship to the means of production, perform the same economic function in the overall process of the exploiters' economy. All characteristics that are normally cited as distinguishing marks of class membership, such as income, mode of living, education, etc. are either already contained in the basic characteristic of the role in production or are in the last analysis determined by the role in production.

I. The Class Structure of Capitalist Society

To own the big means of production that are decisive for the life process of human society, these sources of human life – land, mines, factories, machines and tools, means of communication, houses, raw materials, auxiliary materials, food supplies, etc.; to set them in motion and keep them in motion by means of wage workers; to pay these wage workers a wage that merely sustains and propagates the workers as a class to the extent necessary and in the quality required for capital and does not endanger profit; to squeeze out of them an amount of surplus value that is as high as possible and ever higher; to keep selling the commodities produced by the wage workers and in this way too to turn the surplus value into money and appropriate it as profit that is as high as possible and ever higher; to determine what and how much to produce, whether to expand or reduce production and when, by how much, where and for which commodities; to cease production if it does not yield a profit for the capitalist; in short, to command the social reproduction process, to utilise and exploit it for the interests of the capitalists, and again and again to seize all its fruits – this is ***the role of the capitalist class in production***.

To not own any means of production; to own nothing but their labour power and compelled to sell it piecemeal in order to be able to live; to set in motion and keep in motion in social cooperation the big means of production that are decisive for the life process of humanity; to produce an ever more gigantic part of the total social product and an ever more gigantic amount of surplus value for the capitalist class; to be paid a wage that just suffices to sustain and propagate the wage workers as a class to the extent necessary and in the quality required for capital, without endangering profits; to be forced to accept – through all fluctuations and in spite of the increasing amount of work performed and the increasing torment of work – an ever smaller share of the social new value, i.e. the total social product, total value produced by society after replacement of the used-up means of production – in all cases and under all circumstances, at least in relation to the ever increasing share of the capitalist class in the social new value; to be driven into ever greater insecurity; to be increasingly threatened by the spectre of unemployment and chained to this slave-fate, unavoidably, enduringly and for life – this is ***the role of the working class in production***.

To own the small means of production that are becoming less and less important for the life process of society; to set them and keep them in motion in individual isolation with their own and their family's labour power; to not exploit anyone else's labour power, at most employing an apprentice or a journeyman for a relatively short apprenticeship or journeymanship; to produce, in spite of the ever growing strain of work, an ever smaller part of the total social product and to get an ever smaller portion of the total new value produced by human society, ever smaller in all cases and under all circumstances, at least in comparison to the ever more enormous share that goes to the bourgeoisie; to experience, therefore, an ever deeper fall in real income – temporary fluctuations here and there for the better do not alter this at all; whilst outwardly economically independent, they actually become more and more dependent on the capitalist class, and yet above all they strive to rise into the capitalist class – this is ***the role of the petty-bourgeois class***, including the small peasants/farmers, ***in production***.

Two basic conflicting economic tendencies, basic impulses arise therefore in the petty bourgeoisie from its role in the social reproduction process: as simple commodity producers,

simple commodity retailers, the petty bourgeois are subject to the pressure, to the ever stronger pressure of the capitalist proletarianisation tendency – as private property owners of means of production they are driven by growing overwork and hunger ('saving') to increase the size of their small, simple private property as much as possible and turn it into bigger, capitalist private property, and to work themselves up into the class of the capitalist exploiters; the second basic tendency is in general stronger in effect than the first. Through its contradictory economic role, the petty-bourgeois class is therefore unavoidably pulled to and fro, giving it a fundamentally vacillating, fickle attitude that ***makes it incapable of playing an independent historical role even, under only little developed capitalist conditions***; inevitably the petty-bourgeois masses follow the leadership either of the bourgeoisie or of the proletariat, vacillating to and fro between the two main classes in capitalist society.

> Its (the petty-bourgeois class; auth.) intermediate position between the class of the bigger capitalists, merchants and industrialists, the bourgeoisie proper, and the class of the proletariat, determines its character. It strives for the position of the former, but the slightest misfortune hurls individuals of this class into the ranks of the latter. [...] Thus they vacillate continuously between the hope of entering the ranks of the wealthier class and the fear of being reduced to the state of proletarians or even paupers; [...] The means they possess are small and the insecurity of their property is inversely related to its size: this class is extremely fickle in its views (Marx[2], [1851-52] 1896, pp.7-8).

What above all distinguishes the capitalists, the bourgeois, from the ***genuine*** petty bourgeois (small peasant/farmer) is the fact that they exploit wage workers. It is true that capitalist producers of commodities again and again develop out of the simple, petty-bourgeois producers of commodities, but only when and where they go over to exploiting the labour power of others and become exploiters. As long as the small commodity producer, the small owner, does not exploit the labour power of others, they are real, genuine petty bourgeois and belong to the ***non-exploiting, itself exploited middle class***. Under capitalism the exploitation of the peasants/farmers differs 'only in ***form*** from the exploitation of the industrial proletariat. The exploiter is the same: ***capital***. The individual capitalists exploit the individual peasants through ***mortgages*** and ***usury***; the capitalist class exploits the peasant class through the ***state taxes***' (Marx, [1850] 1895, pp.89-90).

> The peasant's smallholding is now only the pretext that allows the capitalist to draw profit, interest and rent from the land, while leaving the peasant himself to see to it how he can extract his wages (Marx, [1852] 1914a, p.105).

The screw of capitalist prices, taxes, rents, etc., the cyclical capitalist economic crises, the recurring imperialist wars all ensure that the genuine urban petty bourgeois, the handicraftsman, the shopkeeper, etc. too – despite their increasing overwork – is *de facto* slaving away for a workers' wage and is actually being exploited.

Once the petty bourgeois (small peasant/farmer) begins to exploit wage workers, they begin to turn into an exploiter, into a capitalist. The genuine capitalist exploiter, the 'pure' capitalist,

[2] Originally attributed to Marx, it was later discovered that Engels was the main author of this book; Ed.

exploits a sufficiently large number of workers and realises a sufficiently large mass of surplus value that they no longer need to perform ***manual labour***. This does not at all mean that those exploiters, who only exploit a few wage workers or only one wage worker – and therefore have to perform manual labour, because the mass of surplus value realised by them is too small to free them from it – would be, in terms of their objective class position, genuine petty-bourgeois commodity producers. The opportunists lump the ***non-genuine*** petty bourgeois, who in reality are the small or the smallest capitalist exploiter elements, i.e. ***small capitalists***, together with the genuine petty bourgeois, in order to be able to pass off the left wing of the capitalist class more easily as the petty bourgeoisie and pass off the coalition with the exploiting left-bourgeoisie more easily as an alliance with the non-exploiting, themselves exploited middle strata. All these small, smallest, very smallest exploiters are hybrid forms, intermediate stages in which the pure capitalist is in a more or less undeveloped state of pupation; they are transitional stages, transitional forms, out of which the function of the capitalist exploiter again and again emerges, unfolds, develops in the direction of the bourgeois in pure form.

At a higher level, where they exploit even more workers, and realise an even bigger quantity of surplus value, so that they hand over even the work of the immediate ***directing*** and ***supervising*** of individual workers and groups of workers to paid individuals, i.e. to managers and overseers, the ***pure capitalist*** becomes a fully developed capitalist, a ***rentier capitalist***, a mere coupon-clipper, a pure capitalist parasite, a capitalist sponger in pure form.

In the higher phases of this process of development, the economic dependence of the small and smallest capitalists on the big capitalists, on the monopolist capitalists grows especially strongly. They exploit workers and at the same time are themselves increasingly ‘exploited’; this means they have to hand over an increasing part of the surplus value extracted from their workers to the big capitalists, to the monopolist capitalists. Occasionally, they, objectively, undergo in this manner a process of retro-formation – admittedly not in terms of their form, but in terms of their real class position – into genuine, non-exploiting petty bourgeois, and finally into petty bourgeois who are themselves exploited. Even if the number of these instances is increasing, this does not in any way alter the rule that the capitalist exploiter begins already at that point where the exploitation of someone else’s labour power in return for a wage assumes a regular character, all be it only on a small or very small scale in terms of numbers. The non-genuine, exploiting ‘petty bourgeois’ are objectively the very smallest, smallest or small capitalist exploiters, and belong to the capitalist class, the bourgeoisie. (In terms of ***consciousness*** some of them take up a petty-bourgeois position and join, for example, petty-bourgeois-democratic parties; this, however, does not alter their objective class position and strengthens the capitalist tendencies in petty-bourgeois democracy, as in the case of Social Democracy and the like.)

Correctly assessing class, class relations and the reciprocal relationships and interrelationships of the classes is one of the first basic conditions for correct class politics. When determining the class character of a social stratum, two issues are often mixed up: ***class membership***, which is given objectively by an individual’s relationship to the means of production and by the individual’s role in production resulting from this; and the subjective side, i.e. the ideas that these or those individuals or strata form about class membership and about their interests that arise from this, i.e. the issue of ***class consciousness***. The divergence from time to time of these two issues (class membership and class consciousness) among broad sections of the exploited masses for a more or less lengthy, often very lengthy period of time, is

a basic fact, without which capitalist society could not maintain itself. Holding down the class consciousness of the exploited is an enduring basic condition for the existence of every class society without exception. But, however difficult the process of developing consciousness on the part of the exploited may be, whatever errors, illusions, distortions, atrophying, retro-formations, relapses and degradations may accompany this process, and in fact do accompany it, this does not in any way alter the fact that – as far as the bulk of them are concerned – class consciousness, is in the last analysis, in the long run, ultimately determined by an individual's objective class membership, which is after all merely the social expression of an individual's function in the economy, of an individual's position in the relations of production, i.e. in the relations into which human beings enter in the production of their material life, relations that on their part are determined by the particular, specific relationships of human beings in their relationship to the means of production, i.e. the specific mode of production. Marx' basic historical-materialist thesis is also valid for the relationship between class consciousness and class membership: 'It is not the consciousness of human beings that determines their existence, but conversely it is their social existence that determines their consciousness' (Marx, [1859] 1909, p.LV). Class membership is a purely social concept, whereas class consciousness is already a political concept; determined in the long run, in the last analysis by class membership; it is – during this more or less lengthy period of time – formed, hampered, furthered and frequently thrown back; it unfolds again and again and ultimately unfolds again and again to a higher level, through political experience, as a result of political factors and through the actions of the economic, political, religious and cultural organisations, of the organisations for science, literature and art and through all their institutions, instruments, aids and products.

Lack of clarity when assessing class membership makes it possible, makes it easier for the opportunists to mislead the workers in issues of the very greatest importance. Thus, for example, Social Democracy, the Stalinist party, the Brandlerists, the SAP, ILP and POUM executed the following manoeuvre with regard to the 'People's' Front comprising the French SP and StP in the years 1936–38 with the party of the French left-capitalists (the Radical 'Socialist' Party), and in the years 1936–39 with regard to the 'People's' Front of the SP, StP, POUM and the Anarchists in Spain with the party of the Spanish left-capitalists (the Radical 'Socialist' Party[3]), in order to deceive the workers about the class character of their capitalist ally and thereby about the character of the alliance: they operated with the vague slogan 'anti-fascist alliance', in which the capitalist class character of the alliance was simply suppressed – or they made the left-capitalists out to be petty bourgeois and the coalition with the left-bourgeoisie to be an 'alliance with the petty bourgeoisie'.

The Stalinist ***social fascism*** of unhappy memory (1928 to 1933 and afterwards too) was an especially disastrous deception with regard to assessing class character. The SP was given out to be a social-fascist party, i.e. a kind of fascist party, i.e. a party of the bourgeoisie. Based on this the Stalinist party rejected the alliance, the united front with the SP against the Nazis on

[3] By the time the 'People's' Front was formed in 1936 in Spain, the original Radical 'Socialist' Party had split. One of its sections – the *Partido Radical-'Socialiste' Independiente* (Independent Radical-'Socialist' Party) – had fused with two other left-capitalist groups in 1934 to form *Izquierda Republicana* (Republican Left). It was *Izquierda Republicana* – which followed basically the same left-bourgeois political line as the Radical 'Socialist' Party – that joined the 'People's' Front in Spain in 1936; Ed.

principle. It was precisely this united front that during those decisive years was the only means to prevent the establishment of the fascist dictatorship in Germany and to liquidate fascism. Under the slogan of social fascism the Stalinist party deliberately sabotaged the realisation of the proletarian fighting united front against the bourgeoisie and thereby actually worked into the hands of the SP, which was just as deliberately sabotaging the proletarian fighting united front, and in this way the SP again and again obtained the excuse it desired – supplied gratis by the Stalinist party – for this purpose in front of the workers. As a result of the effect of this policy of theirs both parties were in actual fact allies of the Nazi party; as a result of this policy of theirs they smoothed Hitler's way to power, made possible the establishment of the fascist dictatorship in Germany and opened the door to the Second (imperialist) World War for the world bourgeoisie. It is true both parties had the intention of fighting against fascism and in words they did, but through the inevitable effects of their actual politics they worked precisely on the contrary into the hands of fascism, the fascist party, the bourgeoisie of Germany and the world bourgeoisie. It is true that in effect the SP pursued bourgeois politics, which in the last analysis benefited capital – the Stalinist party too did exactly the same – but in terms of its class character the SP was not a fascist party, not a party of the bourgeoisie, but the party of a certain petty-bourgeois stratum, namely the petty-bourgeoisified workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy, which is dragging great masses of workers behind the SP and is sponging on them politically for its own purposes – something which, as we shall see later on, holds good in essence, though in a somewhat different form, for the Stalinist bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy too. This policy, which both parties, the SP and the StP, carried on in actual interplay with each other, has disintegrated the consciousness of the workers and weakened their fighting strength to such a degree, that the world bourgeoisie was able to risk the Second World War. This policy of *de facto* alliance with the Nazis against the working class and the proletarian revolution, supplemented and carried on to an extreme in 1939 by the Stalinist bureaucracy through its state alliance with Nazi Germany – an alliance that was so detrimental to the revolution – all this has made conditions very much worse for the effective defence of the Soviet Union as a proletarian state and for the revolutionary uprising of the masses against the imperialist world war that had broken out.

> Any politics that incorrectly assesses the relationship of the classes to one another is wrong, 'namely that most important, most basic factor, without which there can be no Marxism' (Lenin, [1921] 1925b, p.633).

In terms of its starting point, the ***workers' aristocracy*** arises from the thin stratum of the most highly paid workers, who, again and again recruited from new elements, are again and again subjected to a capitalist process of transformation, which again and again goes through three phases. In the first phase, the workers, who in terms of their performance are the most diligent, automatically get into the top stratum of highest earners. The second phase begins with the intervention of the bourgeoisie. It picks out the ones in this top stratum, who are especially inclined to selfishness, promotes them and makes them into overseers, 'slave drivers' (*Antreiber*), foremen/forewomen, etc., into sergeants and subalterns of the industrial army, in short into subordinate officials of the entrepreneurs against the workers. At the same time the bourgeoisie endeavours to raise this entire upper stratum as much as possible above the mass of the proletariat, and by means of higher wages, perks and privileges, to distance and estrange it as much as possible from the mass, and to strengthen the egotistical tendencies in this upper stratum as much as possible and turn it in every way, economically and politically, against the

working class. Consciously, with the most cunning means, the capitalist class of every country, to a greater or lesser extent, pursues this systematic process in order to corrupt and petty-bourgeoisify the top earners in the proletariat. Especially in countries (such as Britain and the USA) whose bourgeoisie is realising enormous surplus profits, particularly from the exploitation of other peoples – especially the colonial and semi-colonial peoples – this policy of bribing and corrupting the upper stratum of the proletariat is pursued on a very large scale and with the greatest success. This explains the riddle of why the British and the American workers' aristocracy and their political and trade union organisations, their co-operatives and other organisations go through thick and thin in all decisive questions with their respective capitalists, with their respective imperialists against the working class, against the proletarian state, against the proletarian revolution. The workers' aristocrats, who are degenerating and ***petty-bourgeoisifying*** in this way***,*** finally enter the third phase. In the course of a sufficiently long process of degeneration and petty-bourgeoisification they have acquired a thoroughly petty-bourgeois consciousness: their selfish interests mean more to them than the interests of the working class; they seek to maintain, strengthen and extend their privileged position at the expense of the workers, and hypocritically give out the self-seeking interests of the workers' aristocracy to be the class interests of the proletariat, and give themselves out to be working class. Workers in terms of their role in production, they thus more and more become petty bourgeois in terms of their consciousness. The longer (this process goes on; trans.) the deeper this ideological attitude takes root in them in economic terms. Their higher income makes it possible for them to have greater reserves; they accumulate some wealth, negligible in comparison to the bourgeoisie, but nevertheless significant in comparison to the average worker, who possesses almost nothing or nothing at all. They become increasingly interested in maintaining, strengthening and extending this modest position of wealth, which assumes not only the form of money, but also often takes the form of a small house or a small business that is carried on as a sideline, perhaps by the wife. In this way the petty-bourgeoisifying workers' aristocrats ultimately turn more and more into ***petty-bourgeoisified*** workers' aristocrats, more and more into regular ***petty bourgeois***. There are, it is true, now and again, here and there among the top earners of the proletariat those who are upright and do not succumb to degeneration, who through all the enticements remain loyal to the working class and sometimes render it great services. These, however, are the exceptions and remain exceptions where and as long as the capitalist class obtains sufficiently big profits in order to be able to bear the costs of the continual process of corruption, to which it subjects the upper stratum of the proletariat, and yet be able to survive in the competitive struggle. It is an enduring capitalist process, which again and again begins anew and again and again catches hold of and draws in those workers' who are rising into the stratum of top earners. True to the capitalist example, the Stalinist bureaucracy also carries on the systematic corruption and petty-bourgeoisification of the top earners among the Russian workers. It is consciously rearing a workers' aristocracy that is petty-bourgeoisifying more and more, and is ultimately more and more petty-bourgeoisified. See the shock-brigaders and later on the Stakhanovites.

The more the proletariat grows in number, the more it goes over to organised forms of its struggle, the more it must – compelled by the capitalist conditions of work and life – select professional class officials (*berufsmässige Klassenorgane*), ***proletarian officials***. Set free by the workers from labour in the social process of reproduction, they look after the everyday affairs – which arise on an ever greater scale and in ever greater variety – of the working class

and its various strata, groups and factions as their job. As long as the workers have to slave away from morning till evening, in order to merely eke out a meagre existence, the mass of them have neither the time to continuously carry out such functions, nor is it possible for them to acquire the knowledge and education that is becoming more and more necessary for performing such functions. A considerable shortening of labour time and a significant raising of the level of class consciousness of all workers is a precondition for the complete liquidation of the need for proletarian officials; only then will the existence of a special stratum of officials, who carry out these functions as their job, become superfluous, only then will all workers without exception be able, taking it in turns, to perform these functions effectively alongside their activity in the process of production. This presupposes the establishment of the dictatorship of proletarian democracy and socialist production that has already been comparatively highly organised and developed by the dictatorship of proletarian democracy – conditions, which after the establishment of the political (state; trans.) power of the working class, can by no means be realised in a trice. The anarchist slogan of ***instantly*** removing the need for all officials altogether only expresses in a specific manner the general anarchist nonsense of simply abolishing the party and the state instantly.

Proletarian officials do not fulfil any role in production; they are not an independent class, but a social element with its origins in the working class; and in terms of their starting point they belong entirely to the working class. (In so far as the economic officials in the degenerated proletarian state function in the process of production, they constitute, in terms of their objective class position, the top stratum of the workers' aristocracy.) Originating mostly from the working class, they are selected by it in order to take care of the everyday affairs of the proletarian class as their job. If real, honest, living party democracy prevails in the proletarian party and in the proletarian mass organisations and also in the proletarian state and its workplaces, if the party and the mass organisations are working unceasingly at raising the level of class consciousness of their members ever higher and, over and above this, that of the workers in general, and especially if they are working at strengthening their independent revolutionary thinking and judging more and more, and finally, if other safeguards against degeneration are put in place – then the dangers, which are inevitably connected with the existence of proletarian officials, will be kept in check, then the disadvantages, which are inevitably connected with it, will be kept to a bearable minimum and will be far surpassed by the advantages of having this institution. But if these conditions do not exist, then, under the influence of the capitalist environment, the proletarian officials begin to degenerate, to bureaucratise, to petty-bourgeoisify.

Higher pay for proletarian officials is unavoidable. They are highly skilled, very highly skilled workers, who need to be paid accordingly. There must of course be a limit. They must not be so highly paid that they grow beyond the working class in terms of their standard of living and their life *niveau*; their salary must not exceed the wage of a *guter* (i.e. skilled; trans.) worker. Some see in the salary limit the most important safeguard against bureaucratisation and the dangers connected with it. This is undoubtedly overrated. The importance of this question should not be overrated in this way. By itself the limitation on salaries is a weak safeguard, but together with other safeguards it acquires a greater significance, but even then, only a secondary one. One must not disregard the reverse side of the salary limit. The proletarian officials carry out very important functions; they often learn about very confidential matters in relation to the Party, the trade unions and the workers' state. To pay them badly would mean – looking at things completely soberly – making it easier for the capitalist class enemy to corrupt them.

Dealing with the everyday class affairs on a daily basis creates a certain position of power for the proletarian officials, a position that grows with the extent and importance of the affairs. From this arises the temptation to use this power for the sake of power and ultimately, too, for the sake of personal advantage, i.e. to abuse it; out of this develop tendencies that turn a proletarian official – if sufficiently strong safeguards do not counteract them – into a ***workers' bureaucrat***. All this draws the increased attention of the class enemy to the issue of influencing, via the workers' bureaucracy, the proletarian organisations, and thereby the proletariat in the interests of the capitalist class (*im kapitalistischen Sinn*).

The proletarian organisations gradually become bigger and financially stronger too; they have a regular, bigger income, funds and assets. Originally paid a pittance, indeed underpaid, the material situation of proletarian officials improves in the course of time. Hand in hand with the growth of the organisations, representatives of the proletarian class enter the representative bodies of the capitalist state, i.e. the municipal and district councils, parliament, etc. In this way the (position of; trans.) the upper stratum of proletarian officials is raised markedly, especially if no provision has been made for a salary limit. In this way there gradually arises in a growing proportion of the proletarian officials, at first unconsciously, later on more and more consciously, the tendency that the revisionist Bernstein has couched in the words: 'The final goal means nothing to me, the movement everything[4]. Increasingly, they begin to develop a petty-bourgeois consciousness. Not risking anything, not daring to do anything that could endanger what they have attained, and thereby too the basis of their material position, becomes their guiding thought. Truly revolutionary politics, which is thoroughly realistic and has nothing to do with putsches or ultra-'radicalism', is impossible without taking risks, or daring to do things. Whereas the Party, the trade unions, the co-operatives and the state are only a means to achieve the communist goal and must always be subordinated to it and integrated into it, this tendency seeks to push the socialist goal, the communist goal into the background, by treating it at best only in words as an empty phrase with regard to the highest goal; the actual, more or less conscious goal for this tendency becomes one of maintaining, consolidating and extending at any price the positions attained – and the position of power and the material position of the workers' bureaucracy built upon them – even if it is at the price of abandoning the proletarian class interests, the revolutionary end-goal and the proletarian revolution. Going over from the basic line of revolutionary class struggle against the class enemy onto the basic line of party collaboration, trade union collaboration, and collaboration of the co-operatives, etc. with the class enemy against the world proletariat, the proletarian state and the world revolution expresses this tendency most clearly. Taking further effect this leads to a growing number of proletarian officials – who by now can already be described as a degenerating, ***petty-bourgeoisifying*** workers' bureaucracy – influencing the consciousness of the Party, trade union, co-operative, etc. members, their supporters and the masses in general more and more in an opportunist manner and increasing this influence persistently and systematically more and more.

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[4] The quote that Melt cites here succinctly, is: 'I openly admit that I have exceptionally little understanding of and interest in what is commonly known as the 'final goal of Socialism'. This goal, whatever it is, means nothing to me, the movement everything' (Bernstein, 1898, p.556); Ed.

At a certain point this development leads, in certain situations, to entry into high-ranking, into the highest ranking and very well-paid capitalist offices, indeed to party collaboration with the bourgeoisie, or some section of it, in the government, and therefore to a further strengthening in both the position of power and the material position of the petty-bourgeoisifying workers' bureaucrats. This, together with all its effects, is further intensified by the bourgeoisie, which fosters this development with all available means, as long as the line of collaboration is acceptable to it. Already petty-bourgeoisified in terms of their consciousness, these workers' bureaucrats gain an ever stronger economic basis: a significant income and assets in the shape of money, and other things, assets and income that are considerable in comparison to that of the average worker. In this way, in terms of their economic interests too, they become increasingly degenerated, petty-bourgeoisified workers' bureaucrats and grow more and more into a regular ***petty-bourgeois*** stratum.

The danger that had previously only been recognised by small groups now becomes evident to the advanced workers; opposition to it arises and begins to grow. The workers' bureaucracy, in order to maintain and extend its position and the considerable associated advantages, as much as possible, resorts to curtailing party democracy and workers' democracy in the trade unions, the co-operatives, etc., and finally too in the proletarian state. The further the workers' bureaucracy leaves the proletarian road, the more power, honours and personal advantages accumulate in its hands, the greater becomes the danger of opposition for it, the more sharply it throttles party democracy, workers' democracy, soviet democracy and, in the course of this process, finally liquidates them completely, leaving only a facade that leaves the workers and even the members with no real control any more and is only meant to deceive them. Hand in hand with this the workers' bureaucracy increasingly steps up its exertions to deceive, confuse and mislead the members of the Party, trade unions etc., indeed all the workers. In certain circumstances, the degree of degeneration of the workers' bureaucracy and the enormity of its ongoing betrayal of the workers reach such a level that it resorts systematically and calculatedly to force, criminal acts, murder and assassination against the most advanced workers, who see most clearly through its treacherous game, especially against their leaders, viz. the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Although somewhat different in terms of form, this process is essentially the same in the Stalinist parties outside Russia. At first it takes place at the centre of the Stalinist world organisation. Here, in the state, in the state economy, party, trade unions, co-operatives, etc. an enormous Stalinist bureaucracy has grown, elevated head and shoulders above the proletariat, a Stalinist bureaucracy that is privileged, petty-bourgeoisifying and finally more and more petty-bourgeoisified. On the periphery – in the Stalinist parties outside Russia – this process only manifests itself feebly at first. But here, too, the officials in the Stalinist movement are materially completely dependent on the central Stalinist bureaucracy and precisely for this purpose are elevated appropriately in material terms above the proletarian *niveau*. Wherever the Stalinist party grows, the Stalinist bureaucracy enters the representative bodies of the capitalist state. This process takes place in a similar form to that in the case of the Social Democratic bureaucracy; although formally a salary limit exists, the Stalinist bureaucracy finds a thousand roundabout ways to circumvent it. Finally, the Stalinist parties in the countries outside Russia take the path of overt or concealed collaboration with the bourgeoisie; they become social-patriotic and the doors to various well-paid high-ranking posts begin to open to them too, just as they did previously to the SP-bureaucrats. See, for example, the Stalinist bureaucrats at that

time in republican Spain. The process of petty-bourgeoisification in the Stalinist centre is inevitably followed by the process of petty-bourgeoisification of the Stalinist bureaucracy on the periphery. The Stalinist bureaucracy is a degenerated workers' bureaucracy on the basis of the proletarian state that it is degenerating – the Social Democratic bureaucracy, the Labour bureaucracy is a degenerated workers' bureaucracy on the basis of the capitalist state – the Stalinist bureaucrats outside the Soviet Union are a hybrid of the two.

Thus, as in the case of the workers' aristocracy, the process here too passes through three phases, always beginning anew, because there are after all always new candidates rising to become proletarian officials. The workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy support one another and merge with one another to a certain extent, through especially influential workers' aristocrats growing in one form or another, partly or wholly, into the workers' bureaucracy. Politically, they take over the role that the petty-bourgeois democrats played in 1848: they take hold of the party of the workers from the standpoint of the petty bourgeoisie, from the standpoint of the petty-bourgeois interests of the degenerated workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy. In contrast to the bourgeoisie, who as an ***economic parasite*** exploits the proletariat economically, they, as ***political parasites***, exploit the workers politically. They make political use of the fighting strength of the workers deliberately to a greater or lesser extent, in order to procure positions of power and material advantages for themselves personally, and to raise themselves socially above the working class; all this takes place at the expense of the economic, social and political class position of the workers; the crumbs that the bourgeoisie at the same time lets fall as bait for this or that section of the proletariat do not alter this in any way. Inevitably this political sponging on the workers in the last analysis turns out to the advantage of the bourgeoisie. In actual fact every degenerating, degenerated workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy acts as the servant of its bourgeoisie, and in the last analysis of the world bourgeoisie. The same is true too for the German workers' bureaucrats and workers' aristocrats, both of Social Democratic and Stalinist hues, because by fighting for the restoration of bourgeois democracy in Germany, but against the proletarian revolution, they seek to preserve the rule of the German bourgeoisie, even for the period of time after the collapse of the fascist dictatorship. The Stalinist workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy in the Soviet Union too are working more and more into the hands of the new capitalist elements that they themselves are rearing in Russia – and in the last analysis are working more and more into the hands of the world bourgeoisie.

Under capitalist conditions, in capitalist surroundings – the Soviet Union too exists in capitalist surroundings – it is inevitable that these tendencies arise in the proletarian officials. From this the anarchists conclude that the proletariat, in order to avoid these dangerous tendencies, would have to do without proletarian officials altogether. This would mean throwing out the baby with the bath water. When one of their organisations becomes somewhat bigger, the anarchists are in reality themselves compelled to employ proletarian officials in one form or another. See, for example, the anarchist trade unions at that time in Spain. Under capitalist conditions of work and life the proletariat is not able to keep big organisations alive, nor keep them going without appointing proletarian officials; it can only take these big organisations forward utilising them. The establishment of proletarian power does not alter these conditions at a stroke; on the contrary it only creates the actual possibility of overcoming them through a process, which of course on this gigantic scale needs a long time. Whoever under capitalist conditions refuses altogether to have proletarian officials, in reality refuses to form big, powerful

organisations, and in the last analysis also renounces the formation of the proletarian state, and the building and extension of the proletarian state economy. The proletarian officials are – for a transient, but of course very lengthy period of transition – an indispensably necessary and extremely useful means, but means they must be and remain and must not become an end in itself! The dangerous tendencies connected with them are a fact. It is true, not every official of the proletariat succumbs; there are very laudable exceptions, but they are the exceptions, and the dangerous tendencies cannot be done away with by means of any kind of acrobatics; to counter these tendencies measures that are and remain enduringly stronger must be put in place.

From the start, the proletarian party and the proletarian state must work unceasingly at making officials superfluous altogether, i.e. creating the pre-conditions that in actual fact make it possible for all workers without exception, and taking turns, not only to carry out all leading functions in the state and economy, but also in the Party, the trade unions, etc. effectively. It is obvious that this process of transition will take a long time and will lead only gradually to the desired result, not least in view of the more than 6000 years of class oppression and its consequences. At any rate, however, this process must be started immediately, and it must be continued with perseverance. And precautions and safeguards must be put in place at once against the degeneration of the proletarian officials into workers' bureaucrats, who become estranged from the masses, place themselves above the masses and turn themselves into persons who are privileged in some way. The workers' councils must not only be advisory and decision-making bodies but must also at the same time be executive bodies, so that the workers from the outset take part in the day-to-day affairs of the state and in carrying them out, indeed taking part in managing all aspects of the administrative work in state and economy. The Party and the mass organisations must, as one of their most serious tasks, continually carry on raising the level of class consciousness of the members, indeed of all the workers ever higher, and must persistently educate them to independent proletarian thinking and judging – this is the most important thing, because it is only in this way that they will be able to make the correct use, in proletarian class terms, of the possibilities that party democracy, workers' democracy and soviet democracy open up to them. Real, honest party democracy, workers' democracy, soviet democracy and workplace democracy must be and remain the basis in the Party, the mass organisations and the proletarian state. The officials in the state and in the state economy must be recallable at any time by the workers' councils; likewise, the officials of the Party and the proletarian mass organisations must be recallable at any time by the members. A salary limit must apply and in addition other safeguards must be put in place. However, and one must be clear about this, there is no absolute safeguard. Whoever waits till they find such an absolute safeguard, inevitably ends up in passivity, in inaction, the biggest of all mistakes. It suffices if the workers recognise the danger and if – learning from their bitter experiences with Social Democracy, the Labour Party, Stalinism and the trade union bureaucracy – they always do the maximum that they are capable of doing in order to hold down this danger and endeavour again and again to increase and improve this maximum. And if in the process they remain conscious that there are no absolute safeguards and cannot be any, that the workers must not go so far as to see nothing but this danger and that they must not go so far as to make the proletarian organisations incapable of action, or even to negate them by putting in place so many safeguards against these dangerous tendencies. The party, the mass organisations and the state are means for achieving the ultimate communist goal. Like these means themselves, all

precautions and safeguards that are intended to enduringly secure the proletarian class character of these organisations and their proletarian class line, must be and remain subordinated to and integrated into the communist goal. The workers must not go so far as to negate the proletarian party, the proletarian mass organisations and the proletarian state, these indispensably necessary means for achieving the highest goal – or even merely make them incapable of action.

For genuine ***apprentices*** and ***journeymen***, the period of apprenticeship, of journeymanship is only the transition to master handicraftsman; they belong to the middle strata, but are becoming an ever rarer phenomenon. In fact, the industrial and commercial apprentices are increasingly becoming industrial or commercial ***assistants***, who have no prospect of becoming independent, of becoming masters; they remain chained to this role for life; at best they find employment in capitalist industry or commerce; in both cases they are exploited, genuine proletarians.

One must not be deceived by the fact that the emoluments of ***directors*** take the form of wages; only a small part of their 'wage' (salary, emoluments in kind – like an apartment, a car, etc., a percentage of the profits (*Tantièmen*), remunerations, a share in the profits and the like), is really a wage for their managerial activity. In reality the directors draw a substantial share of the profits in the form of wages; they participate in the process of exploitation and therefore belong to the capitalist class. And this quite apart from the fact that as a rule they also have a considerable amount of wealth that is predominantly employed in capitalist exploitation. Nominally the directors only have the big means of production at their disposal on behalf of the capitalist owners, but within this framework they actually have them at their own disposal, to a large extent even independently.

The ***lumpenproletariat*** (beggars, prostitutes, pimps, vagabonds, gamblers, confidence tricksters, criminals, etc.) does not fulfil any role at all in production. It is neither an independent class, nor does it belong to the working class. In the same way as the capitalist parasites live at the apex of society at the expense of social labour, the lumpenproletarians, this scum, these dregs of all the classes, live in the depths of society at the expense of social labour. Victims of the impact of the contradictions of class society, an impact that has crushed them and broken their moral fibre, they will only be fully released from their fate once victorious Communism has by and large overcome the cleavage of humanity into classes. But in the struggle for the realisation of communist society, the lumpenproletariat is – with regard to the revolutionary working class – as a rule, a helper of the counter-revolution. Likewise, the Bonapartism of Napoleon III, for example, based itself amongst other things on an extra-state power apparatus, the '*Garde Mobile*' that was formed from lumpenproletarians; so too the Bonapartist system of Dollfuss-Schuschnigg in Austria was based on the '*Heimwehr*' (home guard; trans.) that was formed using lumpenproletarian elements. Lumpenproletarians also frequently perform services for fascism.

> The lumpenproletariat, this passively rotting mass from the lowest strata of the old society, is here and there swept into the movement by a proletarian revolution; its whole conditions of life mean it will be more prepared to let itself be bought for reactionary intrigues (Das Kommunistische Manifest, [1848] 1891, p.17).

> The *lumpenproletariat*, this scum of the demoralised elements of all classes, which takes up its headquarters in the big cities, is the worst of all possible allies. This riff-raff is utterly venal and utterly importunate. When the French workers in every revolution, wrote on the houses: *Mort aux voleurs*! Death to thieves! and even shot some of them, they did not do this out of enthusiasm for property, but because they rightly considered that, above all, they had to keep this gang off their backs. Any workers' leader who uses these scoundrels as a guard or bases himself on them, proves by this action alone to be a traitor to the movement (Engels, [1850] 1875, pp.9-10).

That Bakunin regarded the lumpenproletariat as an important battering-ram for the social revolution, is especially characteristic of the confusion and profound backwardness of his anarchist theory and practice.

The ***semi-proletarians*** have one foot in the middle class and the other in the working class. They are to be found particularly in the countryside and there they constitute the most important part of the poor, non-exploiting, themselves exploited peasant/farmer population. For example, as cottagers or cotters they own a small house, a tiny strip of arable or horticultural land, a goat or such like, but all this does not suffice to even barely keep their heads and those of their family above water. They do not exploit anyone else's labour power, and are, on the contrary, always compelled to sell at least a part of their own labour power. At the same time they work on the side, either as day labourers in the countryside for big landowners or big peasants/farmers, for the upper stratum of the middle peasants/farmers too, for the rural bourgeoisie in general, or have a second job as wage workers in mines, factories, brickworks, on building sites, etc. Lenin calls them the ***poorest peasants*** 'who eke out an existence, in part through wage labour, because they do not possess sufficient land, livestock or implements' (Lenin, [1917] 1921c, p.43).

The ***intelligentsia***, like the '***new middle class***' generally, is, in class terms, a vague, often misleading concept. It is already incorrect to say that the intellectuals are purely brain-workers. In reality they too perform manual labour – the sedentary way of working of many intellectuals is anything but healthy, and is indeed often exhausting, especially the activity of the many office workers who have to perform monotonous, mind-numbing labour – just as, conversely, manual workers have to perform a great deal of brain-labour, which requires the senses and the mind to be at the highest level of attentiveness, and eats away enormously at their nerve-power. It is precisely because class membership is concealed in these expressions, that they are used with particular liking by the bourgeoisie and its helpers, in order to keep the economically and socially important 'new middle class', and the 'intellectuals' – who, in reality, for the most part belong to the proletariat – at a distance from the working class and at the same time in order to deceive the latter about the immense size of the proletarian class and the gigantic extent of its economic and social power. In reality, every 'new middle class' individual, every 'intellectual' is a wage worker or a petty bourgeois or a capitalist, depending on their objective class position. Take a doctor. Many doctors are employed in hospitals or in sanatoria on a salary. A growing number of doctors are financially too weak to ever be able to set up on their own; in terms of their role in production, these doctors are genuine wage workers and belong objectively to the working class, no matter what it looks like in terms of their class consciousness. (Moreover, the doctors who are wage workers do actually perform productive labour, because – like the repair

of the material conditions of production, of the machines, etc. – the 'repair' of the personal conditions of production, i.e. the wage workers, constitutes an essential component of the process of social reproduction, and even more so.) If the doctor is independent, then, depending on the circumstances of the case, they are a genuine petty bourgeois, if they do not exploit anyone else's labour power (or only employ a genuine apprentice or journeyman) or a small capitalist, who exploits labour power on a very small scale, but on a regular basis. Finally, as an owner, for example, of a sanatorium in which so and so many doctors, male and female nurses, male and female cooks, boilermen, office workers, chambermaids, masseurs, etc. are exploited, he or she is a fully developed capitalist exploiter. Likeewise in the case of all 'intellectuals', and in the case of all kinds of the 'new middle class'. The fact that the proletarian intellectuals and the 'new middle class' still have in most cases – in consequence of their lineage, traditions, social relationships, etc. – a bourgeois or petty-bourgeois consciousness and often cling to it tenaciously, conditions their political conduct for a more or less lengthy period of time, but does not alter their class position that is determined by their role in production.

In comparison to industry, capitalist development in agriculture, and therefore too the cleavage of the rural population into classes, proceeds at a snail's pace. Simple commodity production has survived in the countryside to a much greater extent than in the towns and is only gradually losing importance in the countryside. But ultimately the class antagonisms collide heavily with each other in the countryside as well and sharpen here too, even if this takes place more slowly. The boundaries between the strata in the countryside are therefore not yet so sharply defined, and there are a greater number of transitional forms here; the concepts of ***agrarian class structure*** are therefore still somewhat blurred. This makes it easier for the bourgeoisie and its helpers to mislead the workers in many important respects. It is therefore all the more necessary to grasp the structure of the classes in the countryside as accurately as possible.

All those who are bent on systematically deceiving the working class are especially fond of using the term 'peasant'/'farmer' per se for this purpose. The bourgeoisie, from the most extreme right wing of its front (the fascists) through the left wing (the left-bourgeoisie) down to its most leftist helpers of all gradations, which also include the SP, the LP and the StP, the Brandlerists, centrists, ultra-'lefts' and anarchists, are especially fond of operating with the term 'peasants'/'farmers' per se. We find 'peasants' per se as serfs or villeins in feudal production; they are corvée peasants, corvée labourers, exploited workers who are enslaved and paid in kind. We find 'peasants' per se, i.e. peasants who are not or not yet differentiated (genuine petty bourgeois) in simple commodity production. They possess a piece of arable land, work using their own labour power and that of their family, do not exploit anyone else's labour power and thus eke out their own and their family's existence as best they can. By penetrating into agriculture, capitalist commodity production progressively differentiates the peasantry, which was originally homogeneous in terms of class and not differentiated. Genuine peasants, i.e. peasants in the strict class sense, who do not exploit anyone else's labour power – i.e. 'peasants' per se or simply 'peasants' – are now only to be found in capitalism as ***small peasants/farmers***[5] (small tenants) and ***semi-peasants/semi-farmers***) – semi-proletarians. On

[5] In order to avoid unnecessary repetition in this and subsequent paragraphs dealing with the agrarian class structure, the term farmer has not been inserted after the term peasant in all cases; Ed.

the other hand, the ***middle peasants/farmers*** have arisen out of the mass of the peasantry – they themselves do indeed work, but already make use of the labour of day labourers on a more or less regular basis and sometimes indeed already also permanently employ a male or female servant – as do the ***big peasants/farmers***, who already without exception exploit male or female servants, and do so continuously, and at the same time also frequently in some places exploit day labourers; this is not altered in any way by the fact that the big peasants and their families work alongside these day labourers and servants. At any rate the upper stratum of the middle peasants belongs to the exploiters class; only the lower stratum of the middle peasants consists of non-exploiting peasant elements; whereas, however, the small peasants and the semi-peasants not only do not exploit, but are themselves exploited, the non-exploiting lower stratum of the middle peasants is economically still in a relatively sound position; however, it too is gradually pressed down ever deeper by capital in relation to the bourgeoisie. Where and when the process of class division in the countryside has already begun or is indeed already developed, one must strictly avoid speaking simply of 'peasants'; one must keep a very close eye on anyone who does this, instead of carefully distinguishing between semi-peasants, small, middle and big peasants and, among the middle peasants, carefully distinguishing the non-exploiting lower stratum from the exploiting upper stratum.

Agrarian class structure is often, especially in the official statistics, worked out according to the size of the area possessed. In accordance with this, for instance, those who possess up to 2 ha (hectares[6]) are designated as dwarf peasants, those with 2-5 ha as small peasants, those with 5-20 ha as middle peasants, those with 20-100 ha as big peasants, and those with more than 100 ha as landowners. Certainly, the extent of the area possessed (and the number of livestock owned) is a significant help, but by itself is not sufficient. Five ha of horticultural land worked with modern methods can, under certain circumstances, be a considerable capitalist undertaking. Conversely, a 60ha plot of land with poor soil, cultivated extensively, can constitute a small undertaking based on simple commodity production, the owner of which is a small peasant. In the imperialist era, the decisive criterion by which the classes in the countryside must primarily be classifed is and remains the question of whether the stratum concerned exploits wage workers or whether it itself is exploited. Accordingly, the class structure of the rural population in developed capitalism is as follows[7]:

1. The ***rural proletariat***: the agricultural and forestry wage workers, the (lifelong) male and female farm servants, as well as the day labourers, male and female.

2. The ***semi-proletariat*** (the ***poorest peasants*** or semi-peasants): the dwarf proprietors (dwarf tenants), cottagers, cotters; they are compelled to hire themselves out to a considerable extent as day labourers or wage workers in order to eke out a livelihood, because the tiny plot of land at their disposal is too small in order to sustain themselves and their families.

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[6] 1 hectare = approximately 2½ acres; Ed.

[7] The non-differentiated feudal peasant and the little-class-differentiated semi-feudal peasant have not been taken into account here; these forms are still of significance in backward countries; on the other hand they do not play any part at all in the developed, capitalistically mature countries:

3. The ***small peasants*** (small tenants) or the ***poor peasants***: the small proprietors, who only have at their disposal a small plot of land, which they cultivate using their labour power and that of their families, without exploiting anyone else's labour power and which in terms of size suffices to enable them and their families to eke out a living. 'Peasants, who do not employ any wage workers even during harvest time, etc., and sell little or no grain' (Lenin, [1920] 1930d, p.379). They are genuine petty bourgeois, who from time to time and here and there increase in number – through the reduction in size of their parcels of land, in particular in consequence of the sub-division of their inheritance. In every case, their dependence on the rural bourgeoisie, on agrarian capital, on capital in general, grows in all kinds of forms. In the long run this basic tendency is stronger than all kinds of counter-tendencies that frustrate, hamper and slow down this process. That this process has flourished below the surface far more than was and is outwardly apparent is demonstrated by the frenzied exertions of the German bourgeoisie to find – through their Nazi bloodhounds – a way out for a lengthier period of time by means of directly robbing land in Poland, Russia, etc., land that was for the most part the private or collective property of non-exploiting peasants, of toiling masses in general. In this way the intention is to put up a bulwark of peasants, above all against the German workers. Even if this attempt were to succeed, it would be, even for the German bourgeoisie, only a temporary way out; the cleavage into classes in the countryside would, in a completely monopolist Germany, proceed much more thoroughly still than hitherto. And at the same time, on the other hand, the peasants who had been robbed in Poland, Russia, etc. would be pushed all the more thoroughly into the proletariat or at least on to the side of the proletariat.

4. The ***middle peasants***: they employ day labourers, wage workers – admittedly only temporarily, but nevertheless already for some part of the year; sometimes they also already have a permanent male or female servant; they already produce more or less big surpluses over and above the needs of their family. When they use someone else's labour power on a very small scale and only exceptionally, they can still be regarded more or less as a non-exploiting stratum between the petty bourgeoisie and the small capitalists. When, however, they exploit day labourers on a larger scale regularly or someone else's labour power at all, even if on a very small scale, but do so continually, they constitute an upper stratum of the middle peasants, who are already genuine small capitalists. In the strict sense, non-exploiting middle peasants are relatively rare underdeveloped, mature capitalist conditions. In the proletarian state, however, they will, from a certain stage on, be the rule for a more or less lengthy phase.

5. The ***big peasants***: they exploit someone else's labour power continuously, produce considerable surpluses and are genuine, indeed very dogged, capitalist exploiters. The big peasants (and the upper stratum of the middle peasants too) develop more and more into capitalists. However, one must not judge this solely according to the size and quality of their area of land. If, in accordance with Marx, one calls the part of capital spent on the personal conditions of production v (variable capital, wage capital) and the part of capital expended on the material conditions of production c (constant capital, material capital), then further investigation shows that of the total capital C of the big peasants and of the upper stratum of the middle peasants, c (their expenditure on machines, tools, buildings, etc., electric power, structures for drainage and irrigation, for processing milk, etc., on raw materials, livestock for breeding, improved seeds, etc., on auxiliary materials such as artificial fertiliser, coal, petrol and the like) becomes bigger and bigger; on the other hand v (their expenditure on wages) becomes smaller and smaller in comparison to this. This development towards a higher organic

composition of capital is proceeding more slowly than in industry, but it is proceeding in agriculture too, indeed at a quicker tempo than previously and indeed not only in the large agricultural undertakings, but also in the middle-sized agricultural undertakings and in the undertakings of the big peasants and the bigger middle peasants. This means that there is a progressive, and indeed accelerated progressive, capitalisation of agricultural production, with all the basic tendencies of capitalism, such as centralisation and concentration, even if these assume different forms in agriculture from those in industry, e.g. agricultural co-operatives.

6. The ***big landowners*** (estate owners): They are genuine big capitalists. In developed, mature capitalism they become more and more interwoven with the big bourgeoisie to become proper bourgeois. The owners of gigantic estates become more and more interwoven with the monopoly bourgeoisie. Not only do they own large undertakings in the agricultural industry (dairies, distilleries, sugar factories, seed nurseries, etc.) or occupy leading positions in these large undertakings, which thereby grow into cartel-like, trust-like entities, they also usually have a significant shareholding in large-scale industry and big banks and sit on their board of directors. Conversely, many industrial and bank capitalists become interwoven with the big landowners, socially through marriage, economically by having shares in large agro-industrial undertakings and, often too, by becoming big landowners themselves. (There are, however, still genuine estate owners – feudal ones, semi-feudal ones and also those who are already becoming capitalists, i.e. operating with wage workers – in the more or less backward countries).

Capitalist production, long since world production, a ***world economy***, is becoming more and more a ***centralised*** world economy. This basic tendency is reproduced in the class structure of capitalist society. Every national market, every national economy is connected by countless threads to the world market, to the world economy and these threads are daily becoming more numerous, stronger, firmer and more indissoluble. No country can avoid this, not even the biggest; no country is self-sufficient; every country is and is becoming to an ever higher degree dependent on the world market, on the world economy; every country is, and is becoming, more and more a large subsection of the world market, of the world economy. Inevitably, the motion of national markets and national economies is fundamentally determined by the motion, by the laws of motion of the world market, of the world economy. All national ‘socialism’, all autarchy, all ‘socialism’ in one country is a complete illusion and in reality only covers up, as in Nazi Germany, the imperialist endeavours of the German bourgeoisie, or as in Soviet Russia, the selfish striving for power and enrichment by the Stalinist bureaucracy and by the elements of a new Russian bourgeoisie, who are developing in and around the Stalinist bureaucracy, but who, for the time being, are still in the shadows.

An analogous process, corresponding to the process of centralisation and concentration in the capitalist economy on a world scale, takes place in the structure of the capitalist class. The capitalist class starts out as a small-scale urban bourgeoisie. Having become stronger, it becomes a national bourgeoisie, fights to overcome feudal fragmentation and petty-bourgeois philistinic particularism and makes the national market and the nation state a reality. Having become stronger still, its national garb becomes too tight for it. It welds itself into economic conglobations and combines that extend beyond the borders of countries, into suprastate, supranational, international cartels, syndicates and trusts. From this it inevitably follows that it strives for suprastate, supranational, political conglobations under the slogan of a bigger

'*Lebensraum*', ('living space'; trans.), i.e. space for exploitation and the like. All methods of capitalist competitive struggle operate in this direction, from the simplest advertising leaflet, via customs duties, up to and including guns, tanks, battleships, bombs, poison gases, right up to and including world war. What is at stake here is not a mere gathering together (centralisation), but at the same time a concentration on the basis of centralisation, that is to say appropriation and subordination, and at the same time fitting and integrating the markets and investment markets, the sources of raw materials and the economy (above all the productive apparatus) of the vanquished countries, both capitalist and non-capitalist, into the markets and investment markets, sources of raw materials, production, and economy of the victorious capitalists, hand in hand with a higher degree of organisation of the economic composition of the victor's capital at the expense of the vanquished capitalists. The capitalist class is more and more becoming a ***world bourgeoisie***, and its national sections in the individual countries are in actual fact being reduced more and more to sections or parts of one big class of capitalist world exploiters.

That the capitalists have basic, enduring common interests does not do away with the fact that in all kinds of other interests they oppose each other in the daily capitalist competitive struggle, a struggle that is inevitably again and again ultimately bound to end in imperialist war. But whatever differences or antagonisms tear the world bourgeoisie apart, and however bloody they are, they (the different sections of the world bourgeoisie; trans.) are ***steadfast as one against the world proletariat over and above all other antagonisms***. To hold down the working class the whole world over, to permanently impose and force the conditions of capitalist exploitation and oppression upon the working class, to permanently maintain the conditions of capitalist profit-making, to permanently secure capitalist property in the means of production – these basic interests weld the capitalists of the whole world more and more firmly together as a world bourgeoisie over and above all differences and antagonisms. Wherever, whenever, in whatever form:

> ***THE CLASS ANTAGONISM BETWEEN THE WORLD BOURGEOISIE AND THE WORLD PROLETARIAT IS AND REMAINS, FOR CAPITALIST SOCIETY, THE BASIC, DECISIVE SOCIAL ANTAGONISM THAT IS PARAMOUNT OVER EVERY OTHER SOCIAL ANTAGONISM***.

The First World War was only possible, because the SP, the LP and the trade union bureaucracy sided with the bourgeoisie and disintegrated the revolutionary consciousness, the fighting spirit and the fighting will of the masses in every country and did not foster, but on the contrary hampered and hindered, the revolutionary uprising of the masses against the imperialist world war when it broke out. The revolutionary forces of the working class developed without, despite and against the SP, the LP and the trade union bureaucracy. The Second World War only became possible because now the Stalinist bureaucracy, the Stalinist parties, in actual interplay with the SP, the LP and the trade union bureaucracy over a period of nearly twenty years, systematically carried on the disintegration of the revolutionary consciousness, the fighting spirit and the fighting will of the masses. They continued to do this even after the war had broken out and are thus hampering and hindering the revolutionary uprising of the masses against the imperialist war. The capitalist world war is taking place on the basis of the world proletariat's loss of power, for which during the First World War the SP, the LP and the trade union bureaucracy were to blame, and for which, during the Second World War, the SP, the LP, the trade union bureaucracy and the Stalinist parties are to blame. Deep down the

revolutionary forces of the world proletariat are unfolding, without, despite and against the Social Democratic, Labour and Stalinist parties and the trade union bureaucracy. Once these forces awaken to the living struggle, things will look different in the capitalist camp. With regard to the world proletariat (the proletarian state included), capitalist world unity was and is a rock-solid fact, rooted in the capitalist class interests, in the conscious, anti-proletarian, anti-revolutionary attitude of the bourgeoisie of all countries over and above all differences and antagonisms. This class unity is indeed again and again shaken by the more or less fierce inner-capitalist frictions and conflicts, but with regard to the world proletariat, the proletarian state and the world revolution the capitalists subordinate even their gravest inner differences and conflicts to their common interests, their class interests; and especially against the proletariat when it acts in a revolutionary manner, the world bourgeoisie again and again quickly gets together as a unified, thoroughly unitary class that acts as a single unit.

The corresponding process on the proletarian side is the development of the proletarian class into the ***world proletariat***. This process, it is true, takes place more slowly than in the camp of the bourgeoisie, because it is hampered and hindered with all the means of cunning and force that the capitalist exploiters and oppressors have at their disposal. One of their chief means in this connection are the agents they make use of in the camp of the working class, i.e. the false friends of the workers, the traitors of all gradations: Green, Murray, Lewis & Co. in the USA, the Labour Party in Britain, Australia and New Zealand, Social Democracy, the Stalinist bureaucracy, the Stalinist parties, the anarchist bureaucracy, the trade union bureaucracy; in words they all ooze ‘socialism’, ‘communism’, ‘revolution’, ‘liberty’, ‘fraternity’, ‘equality’, ‘justice’, ‘humanity’ and the like, but in doing so have only their own shabby, self-seeking advantage in mind; these agents are only bent on sponging on the proletarian class strength for their own egotistical purposes and turning it into their share of the power, honours, income, wealth and parasitic existence of the world bourgeoisie; these agents, who, by limiting themselves to national, occupation-based, trade-based and other sectional aims, again and again detach sections of the working class from the world proletariat, and in this way again and again split and weaken the international proletariat. Grave, the gravest catastrophes are the consequences of these unceasing treacheries. But their effects open at first the eyes of the advanced workers and, with their help, ultimately those of the great mass of the proletariat, about the causes of the terrible defeats and about the indispensable necessity – on pain of perishing – for all workers, over and above all differences, to join together in the international unity of the proletariat on the basis of the struggle against the enemy of all workers, i.e. against the world bourgeoisie and against its helpers and co-parasites. Thus, as a result of the defeats and the catastrophes, the workers by necessity – for otherwise they would perish – are pushed, are driven by the most terrible experiences that they themselves have undergone, to come together, to join together, to weld themselves together over and above all their differences into a single working class that fights in a revolutionary manner against the world bourgeoisie, into a revolutionary world proletariat.

Under capitalist conditions the development of the middle strata as a class proceeds in exactly the opposite direction. There is no question here of centralisation and concentration into a world middle class. It is increasingly rare for a petty bourgeois here and there, now and then, to succeed in rising into the capitalist class. An ever bigger part of the middle strata, it is true, is ‘centralised’, is ‘concentrated’, namely in the belly of the world bourgeoisie and is integrated in one way or another, often swallowed – or, what is only the social expression of this process of

economic absorption, it sinks, directly or indirectly, into the proletariat, in all kinds of more or less veiled forms, no matter how this process is reflected in the consciousness of those concerned.

In the course of the capitalist process of reproduction, the middle strata are reproduced again and again, and from time to time, here and there, their numerical strength even shoots up. However, they are not becoming concentrated into a unitary international middle class; on the contrary, they are becoming more and more differentiated, because they represent an obsolete mode of production, i.e. simple (handicraft, small-peasant/small-farmer) commodity production. Producing as small peasants/farmers means producing agrarian products on a handicraft basis. The more capitalist production develops, the more the share of simple (handicraft, small-peasant/small-farmer) commodity production – the production of commodities without the exploitation of wage workers – in the total product of human society, inevitably shrinks more and more. An ever bigger part of what humanity needs in order to maintain itself, to propagate itself and to develop is produced capitalistically. Partly already also, as in the Soviet Union, in forms that – in their objective tendency, and despite the Stalinist betrayal – still embody the first, even if inadequate, steps towards a transition in the direction of Socialism, but steps that are in consequence of Stalinism extremely uncertain and are becoming increasingly uncertain. The dependence of the handicraft and small-peasant/small-farmer commodity producers on capital is becoming ever stronger and their degree of independence ever smaller, and increasingly uncertain; their property in the small means of production is being hollowed out more and more and is increasingly becoming a mere illusion. They double, triple their exertions in order to maintain themselves as independent commodity producers. Thus, they double, triple their toil and exploit themselves more and more for the benefit of the capitalist class. In consequence of their inferior means of labour and their backward methods of production, and despite the growing drudgery of labour, they get a diminishing share of the social new value and the social net income – i.e. the total social product, total value, total gross income after deducting for the means of production consumed – in comparison to the share that the capitalist class seizes from the social new value and social net income on an ever greater scale. They are frequently reduced to the level of a mere workers' wage and even below it. Their standard of living is falling more and more, at least relatively, i.e. in comparison to the standard of living of the capitalist class and here and there it is falling in absolute terms too. A good many sink below the level of the proletariat. At any rate, the genuine middle strata in town and country belong to the gigantic army of the exploited and oppressed masses.

A similar process – at a higher level – is taking place among the small capitalists, among the small, indeed all the weaker capitalists. Their independence is dwindling and increasingly becoming a mere illusion. In actual fact, their dependence on big capital, and in the last analysis on monopoly capital, is continually increasing. They carry on the process of exploitation more and more in the service and on behalf of some big capitalist, i.e. the capitalist proper and rapidly become to a greater or lesser extent 'sweatmasters'; increasingly, the surplus value that they extract from their workers disappears into the pockets of the big capitalists. In the course of time they are often in essence reduced by the big capitalists to the level of a mere workers' wage, they are in actual fact turned into mere branch managers and their salary is sometimes pushed down even below the value of their labour power. Outwardly weak, and in most cases very small capitalists, they turn again during this process of retro-formation, into genuine, non-exploiting, sometimes even themselves exploited, petty bourgeois in terms of their real economic role,

indeed ultimately sink into the proletariat and draw only a workers' wage in the form of profit, often an extremely modest amount, and in employment that is extremely uncertain. See, for example, the many master joiners in the cities, who employ a joiner's mate but, at the same time, are completely dependent on big capitalists in the furniture trade. Likewise, many small publicans, who employ a number of waiters, are in actual fact completely in the hands of big brewery capital. (In any case, capitalist development is moving in this direction. Shoemakers' workshops and middle-sized shoe shops are turning into branches of big shoe factories for the sale and repair of shoes; food shops are becoming sales outlets for gigantic food businesses or food factories; huge bread factories that also produce confectionery, are turning bakeries and confectioners' shops into their sales outlets, etc.).

War and rising prices, including agricultural prices, bring some relief for the small-peasant/small-farmer commodity producers, but only temporarily. After a few years, as a result of the inevitable action of the capitalist mechanism, things inexorably go downhill for them again and again. This was the case after the First World War too, and it will also be the case after the Second World War. Handicraftsmen and small peasants/farmers wage a heroic struggle, but in the long run their superhuman struggle is and remains hopeless in the face of the continuous, constantly increasing impact of the capitalist productive forces; they constitute a class that is in decline. Either human society would need to be reduced to simple commodity production – this would be an immense retro-formation, and about eight-tenths of humanity would have to perish, because handicraft and small-peasant/small-farmer commodity production could not feed 2.2 billion human beings, let alone develop further – or humanity will have to go over to abolishing capitalist commodity production, gradually liquidating simple commodity production too, and go over to production in common, to production for common account, i.e. to production on a communist basis, to a classless society, to a communist society. This alone is the salvation for the handicraftsmen and small peasants/farmers. One must again and again seek and find the process of transition (leading to this salvation; ed.) – in its concrete stages and transitional forms, and in its tempo – and always in agreement with the small peasants/farmers, handicraftsmen and small shopkeepers, always in harmony with their interests and always to their clear, tangible advantage. As commodity producers they have, in the long run, no future, but they do have a future as producers, as producers together with all working human beings, united in a world production co-operative that produces on a co-operative basis and administers itself in freedom and equality, a world production cooperative of communist society that is free of the capitalist yoke.

The general law of motion with regard to the middle strata in capitalist society can be broadly outlined as follows:

During the ascent of capitalist development: during the phases of economic upswing – a numerical increase. During the periodic crises – some are ruined and sink into the proletariat; many take the path of emigration; here new small-peasant/small-farmer and handicraft strata find a new lease of life. In the old countries, in the course of times of periodic upswing, new small-peasant/small-farmer, handicraft and small-shopkeeper elements are reproduced again and again.

During the epoch of capitalist decline: the periodic ups and downs of the industrial cycle now no longer take place on the basis of expanding and ascending capitalism, but on the basis of declining, decaying, putrefying capitalism, on the basis of the crisis of the entire capitalist

system, an ongoing, ever more acute crisis. The safety valve of emigration is essentially no longer open. The *zahlungsfähige* (with the ability to pay) market is becoming ever tighter for monopoly capital; it is no longer in a position, and is also therefore no longer prepared, to let the handicraft commodity producers and the small-shopkeeper commodity sellers have their market; more and more it seizes this market by forcibly turning them *en masse*, using the most drastic means, into factory workers – as in Nazi Germany. But even in the epoch of decline, here and there, from time to time, a numerical increase in the middle strata takes place as a result of the retro-transformation of hundreds of thousands of workers into whole, three-quarter-, half-, quarter-petty bourgeois by the Social Democratic, Labour, Stalinist, etc. bureaucrats, in order to keep them at a distance from the proletarian revolution (the flight of white-collar workers, who have been made unemployed, into small-scale undertakings, small-scale retail, where they lose the last of their savings and are ruined; the transformation of unemployed workers into smallholders, of factory workers into allotment holders, etc.). Even where and when a rise in agricultural prices helps the small-peasant/small-farmer commodity producer, this is only temporarily; the tendencies of capital, which bear down on and restrict the independence of the small peasant/farmer more and more (falling agricultural prices compared to rising industrial prices, the division of the inheritance, mortgages, taxes, etc.), prove to be much stronger in the long run, and the importance of these tendencies increases even more significantly and more quickly as the epoch of capitalist decline progresses, than was formerly the case during the epoch of ascent.

The actions of the capitalists with regard to the middle strata follow a contradictory line. Economically, capital develops the tendency to absorb the handicraft, small-peasant/small-farmer, small-shopkeeper commodity producers and commodity sellers. Socially, however, the more the class antagonism between the world proletariat and the world bourgeoisie sharpens in the course of the further development of capitalism, the greater the interest of the bourgeoisie in putting an as-strong-as-possible barrier of middle strata between itself and the proletarian masses and in keeping this barrier; for this purpose it makes economic concessions from time to time to the middle strata at the expense of the working class.

In the course of the cycle of prosperity and crisis that takes place on the basis of the epoch of capitalist decline, the middle strata therefore move on what is on the whole a declining wave-like trajectory, in which the crests of the waves – the periods of economic improvement and relief for the small peasants/farmers, the handicraftsmen and the small shopkeepers/traders – become ever lower and shorter; whereas the troughs – the periods of economic pressure, growing dependence and a falling standard of living – become ever longer and ever deeper.

II. The Class Interests

In every class there are countless differences in terms of gender, age, occupation, nation, race, family, individuality, etc., countless special interests, partial interests, interests of sections or factions of a class, such as the interests of strata, occupations, trades, groups, families, individuals, etc. However, over and above all the more or less specific, diverse partial interests, all those belonging to a class have – as a result of having the same role in production – the same, general, ***common interests***. The common interests are either variable interests that change from day to day, momentary interests, day-to-day interests, temporary, ***transient interests***, i.e. those that merely last for a more or less lengthy period of time – or they are constant, ***enduring interests***, i.e. they exist as long as a class exists as a class; they last as long as a class lasts and exists as a class.

The ***class interests*** are the important, decisive, paramount interests, common to and enduring for all members of a class over and above all differences of whatever kind and arise out of the same role they have in the social reproduction process. The class interests are the basic, fundamental, ***principle-based interests*** of every single member of a class, of every section of it, and of the class as a whole for the entire duration of its existence; these are the interests that are the same, general, common interests in contrast to all special interests, in contrast to all partial interests; they are enduring interests in contrast to all interests that are merely temporary, transient interests. In comparison to the class interests, which as the highest, all-embracing interests of the entire class find their expression in the highest class goals, i.e. in the end goals of the class, the limited, restricted interests of the entire class, which find their expression in the limited, restricted interests and precisely therefore – in comparison to the end goals – in the transient, temporary goals of the struggle of the entire class, are also called part-interests. ***Partial interests*** are therefore either special interests of sections of a class or – in relation to the end goals of a class – limited interests of the entire class.

The ***class principles*** are nothing other than theoretical tenets that express the class interests ideologically, in terms of thought. The proletarian class principles are also called proletarian-revolutionary principles or, in short, proletarian principles or ***revolutionary principles***. These have nothing to do with utopian ‘principles. Whilst fully acknowledging the sometimes brilliant foresight that some of them showed, the ***utopians*** were *Weltverbesserer* (‘world-improvers’) who, based on their imagination, cleverly devised panaceas and ‘principles’, principles according to which human society was to be modelled, in order to be rid of its evils. In contrast, the proletarian principles are theoretical tenets, derived from the actual capitalist conditions of production and relations of production, from the actual movement of the capitalist economy and society and from the actual role of the working class in the capitalist reproduction process – derived it is true by means of the brain, but derived from the actual conditions in which the workers actually act and live, that is to say derived from the ***facts***. They are therefore nothing but the general expression of specific facts and specific actual conditions, i.e. the capitalist conditions, the facts of capitalism.

> The theoretical tenets of the communists are in no way based on ideas or principles that have been invented or discovered by this or that *Weltverbesserer*. They are only general expressions of the actual conditions of an existing class

> struggle, of an historical movement taking place before our very eyes (*Das Kommunistische Manifest* [1848] 1891, pp.18-19).

Scientific socialism does not start out from fantasies, from figments of the imagination, but from the facts, above all from the facts of capitalism, from the actual capitalist conditions, from the actual movement, change and development of these conditions, and from the laws and rules according to which this movement and development is actually taking place.

> Communism now no longer meant the concoction, by means of the imagination, of an ideal of society as perfect as possible, but an insight into nature, and into the conditions and the consequent general aims of the struggle waged by the proletariat (Engels,1885, p.8).

The proletarian principles are not doctrines and dogmas to be blindly believed. Anyone can check them; anyone, in particular any worker, can deduce them from the actual conditions of production and relations of production into which every wage worker without exception is placed, from the role of the proletariat in production, a role that they experience day and daily and from the role of the capitalist in production, a role that confronts them day and daily, vividly, in the form of the capitalist and their officials and agents. The revolutionary principles make no claim to eternity; they are not dogmas, nor doctrines that are valid once and for all, forever, or for all circumstances, whatever they are; they are only valid for capitalist conditions and circumstances, but they are valid for the entire duration of these conditions and circumstances, until they are completely and finally liquidated worldwide.

The revolutionary principles are not axioms. Axioms are tenets, which – supposedly preceding all facts – determine our entire thinking, are not capable of any proof, and also do not need any proof, because they are so simple that their correctness is easily understood by everyone without further explanation. In reality axioms are without exception derived from facts and are almost without exception tautologies; that is to say what they proclaim as a brand-new, world-determining basic truth, from the start contains the old, well-known, simple knowledge. The predicate of the axiomatic tenet mostly only says in other words what is already contained in the subject of the same tenet. For example, the tenet ‘the whole is bigger than the part’ is grandiloquently proclaimed as an axiom. From billions of actual experiences, human beings recognised and again and again recognise that the part is smaller than the whole. This fact that they experienced again and again, they have summed up in the concepts of ‘the whole’ and ‘the part’. What the axiom trumpets as a world-determining truth of the relationship of the part to the whole is – abstracted and deduced from the facts – already from the start contained in the concept of ‘the whole’. The revolutionary principles are not axioms, but general reflections of particular facts in our heads, namely the facts of capitalism and the conditions of production and relations of production in capitalism; they are provable, they are proven and anyone can day and daily verify the proofs in the light of the facts of capitalism and their actual movement.

To actually dispose over at will the big, decisive means of production as its property; to set them in motion and keep them in motion by means of wage workers; to pay the workers a wage that just about maintains and reproduces them as a class to the necessary extent and in the requisite quality for capital and does not endanger profits; to train them to become objects of exploitation that are as suitable as possible and squeeze an ever bigger amount of surplus value out of them, indeed the prevailing maximum amount of surplus value; to again and again

sell and to dispose of the commodities produced by the wage workers at prices, which again and again secure for the capitalists the replacement of the capital consumed and at the same time secure the transformation of the surplus value into money – thus appropriating an ever higher profit, the prevailing maximum level of profit; to produce at will whatever and how much they, according to their private judgment, deem appropriate; to expand production at will, to throttle or indeed cease production at will, if it does not yield any profit for the capitalists and to throw the workers out of work; in short, to command the social process of reproduction, to exploit it in their own interests and again and again seize all its fruits for themselves; to permanently secure the capitalist conditions of production by means of capitalist state power, to permanently hold down the wage workers and above all to permanently preserve for the capitalist class its property in the decisive means of production, these sources of life for the whole of human society – these are the class interests of the capitalist class, the ***capitalist class interests***.

To actually dispose over the big, decisive means of production as the property of the proletarian state by means of proletarian democracy; to set and keep in motion, in social co-operation, the big means of production that are decisive for the life-process of humanity; to produce in an ever more abundant quantity everything that human society needs, in order to secure – first of all for the toiling, exploited masses and ultimately for all human beings without difference – an existence truly worthy of a human being and to develop this existence higher and higher; to raise the real wages, the whole standard of living, the cultural existence of the workers and all the non-exploiting toiling people ever higher, and therefore too, to shorten the labour time more and more – without over-straining the intensity of labour; to give every worker, male and female, every working person who is exploited, and in the last analysis all human beings, an all-round education to the highest scientific level and to educate them to think and judge independently in all vital questions; to improve working conditions in their entirety more and more, to safeguard the workers and middle strata ever better against all vicissitudes of production, and in a manner worthy of human beings; to secure employment and earnings on an enduring basis and an ever better old age worthy of human beings; to permanently secure all these conditions of life by means of proletarian-democratic state power and to permanently hold down the capitalist exploiters and parasites; to permanently integrate the big, decisive means of production of the whole of society into ever better planned production; to ultimately transfer them from being the property of the proletarian-democratic state – overcoming the cleavage of humanity into classes and making the state and the party superfluous – to being in actual fact at the disposal of human society that is organised, in freedom and equality, as a fraternal world co-operative – these are the class interests of the working class, ***the proletarian class interests***.

To actually dispose over the small means of production as their private property; to set them in motion and keep them in motion with their labour power and that of their family, in individual isolation, without exploiting the labour power of others; to again and again sell the commodities produced in this way at prices that again and again secure the replacement of the consumed means of production, the replacement and propagation of their labour power and that of their family and over and above this to secure a net gain, which – even if modest – is still as high as possible and is as far as possible ever higher; to permanently maintain and safeguard their economic independence as small producers and small vendors and above all their private property in the small means of production; to expand as much as possible the scale of their production and the size of their means of production, and turn these means of production as

much as possible into capital, that is to say into means of production for the purposes of profit, operated by exploited wage workers – in a word: to rise into the capitalist class – these are the class interests of the petty bourgeoisie (including the small farmers/peasants), ***the petty-bourgeois class interests.***

The worker masses are the key market for the commodities of the petty-bourgeois producers and vendors. This applies not only to the handicraftsmen, small shopkeepers/traders, small publicans, etc., but also to the small farmers/peasants. The direct, and above all the indirect, buyers of the products of the small peasants/farmers are by far and away overwhelmingly the immense masses of workers. If their purchasing power falls, then inevitably the income of the petty-bourgeois strata, including the small farmers/peasants, also falls at the same time. Objectively, therefore, the petty bourgeoisie is very much interested in the real wages of the working class being as high as possible. On top of this the economic independence of the middle strata is threatened by the bourgeoisie, in all kinds of forms, again and again and more and more strongly, and the capitalist tendency of proletarianisation is pressing them down more and more strongly, ever harder and ever more deeply. This and other similar tendencies push the petty bourgeoisie in the direction of the working class.

On the other hand, however, the petty bourgeois are interested in securing as high prices as possible for their commodities. Although their tiny means of production constitute a more and more uncertain source of existence and livelihood, although their existence is becoming more and more uncertain, although the growing capitalist pressure is driving them, forcing them to exploit themselves and their families more and more, although they themselves are indirectly and directly sucked dry more and more by the capitalist class – in spite of all this, the petty bourgeois do everything they can to cling to their private property, to their tiny means of production, which, after all, they have acquired using their own labour power. To work their way up into the big bourgeoisie, into the bourgeoisie proper, into the class of capitalist exploiters, and to exploit wage workers themselves, is their greatest wish, their highest goal. Conversely, as a result of all this, the petty bourgeoisie feels itself driven to oppose the workers' demands for a better life and their struggle for higher wages, shorter labour time, etc. This counter-tendency becomes stronger especially once a genuine petty bourgeois becomes a non-genuine petty bourgeois or a small capitalist, i.e. when they, even if on a small scale, begin to exploit the labour power of others.

Thus, through the inner contradictions of its class interests, the petty bourgeoisie is thrown to and fro between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. On the one hand the petty bourgeois have common interests with the workers – on the other hand they have common interests with the capitalists: thus, they vacillate again and again between the two main classes of capitalist society, to and fro, back and forth. The decisive factor is petty-bourgeois private property – and to the petty bourgeois, the bourgeoisie (with its capitalist state) seems to offer more secure protection for this than the working class – and with this the more or less predominant tendency and hope in them to work their way upwards and rise into the capitalist class. It is a continual task of proletarian politics to utilise all vacillations and tendencies that here and there, now and then bring the petty bourgeoisie, or sections of it, closer to the working class, for the proletarian revolution.

Only those genuine petty bourgeois, who have finally given up hope of working their way up into the bourgeoisie and recognise that capitalism increasingly hollows out their private property,

increasingly shakes and undermines and makes a mere sham of their economic independence, threatens their existence and proletarianises them more and more, only those genuine petty bourgeois seriously, predominantly gravitate towards the proletariat – and even then, always in a vacillating manner. Only when proletarian politics that proves through the most decisive actions and their results that it is capable of defeating the capitalist class decisively and maintaining this victory; and that at the same time again and again shows the petty-bourgeois strata in town and country that it does not dream of taking their labour-based property, their private property – hard earned by their own labour – from them by force, and that gets them to recognise, through patient practical activity, that what matters to it is winning the petty-bourgeois producers for the transitional steps to Socialism only by means of conviction; and that combines the greatest firmness with regard to the eternal petty-bourgeois vacillation with being very accommodating with regard to the needs of the petty bourgeois and with tangible advantages for the non-exploiting, themselves exploited small farmers/peasants and petty bourgeois – only this proletarian-revolutionary policy is able to draw growing numbers of the petty-bourgeois masses permanently onto the side of the proletariat and keep them on the side of the proletariat, and gradually – always in agreement with the small farmers/peasants and petty bourgeois – to integrate them into socialist production.

In consequence of its contradictory class interests, in consequence of its continual vacillation between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat that inevitably results from this (in the case of the farmers/peasants this main reason is further strengthened by their geographic fragmentation, and in the case of all petty-bourgeois strata, by these strata becoming – with the development of capitalism – increasingly differentiated and fragmented) the ***petty bourgeoisie is objectively incapable of playing an independent power role***. This does not exclude the fact that the petty bourgeois, or some petty-bourgeois strata or other attain power; but in consequence of their petty-bourgeois class position they are, even in underdeveloped capitalist conditions – objectively, in effect – only able to exercise power for the benefit of another class, namely the capitalist class. Certainly, the petty-bourgeois governments also vacillate between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat and, where and when they move closer to the working class, these vacillations must be utilised for the proletarian-revolutionary struggle. But the basic tendency of their petty-bourgeois interests pulls them towards the bourgeoisie: in their overall effect, their actions and lack of actions serves to maintain capital and strengthen the bourgeoisie, even if the petty-bourgeois governments imagine the exact opposite to be the case. This becomes absolutely clear again and again, and indeed without exception, during the entire capitalist era, even in the backward countries (colonies and semi-colonies) once imperialism has begun to transfer the capitalist mode of production to these countries. This applies to the extremely radical, petty-bourgeois Jacobin party and to Robespierre's government in 1793–94 in France – back then the petty bourgeoisie, together with the peasants, who had just been freed from feudalism, was still by far and away the biggest class in society, the bourgeoisie was only a small stratum and the modern proletariat was extremely underdeveloped in terms of size and consciousness. This applies to all subsequent petty-bourgeois radical, petty-bourgeois 'socialist', petty-bourgeois 'communist' governments of Social Democratic, Labour, Stalinist or any other hue, even if they call themselves a 'workers' government', or a 'workers' and peasants'/farmers' government', or a 'dictatorship of democracy', or a '(democratic) dictatorship of the workers and peasants/farmers', or a 'soviet government', or whatever. Nationally, the petty-bourgeois governments of Social Democracy, the Labour Party

and Stalinism (including the Stalinist government in Russia) strengthen the capitalist tendencies and the bourgeois elements in their own country; internationally, scale they help to maintain world capitalism and to strengthen the world bourgeoisie. In the backward countries to which capitalist development has spread, history shows the same picture, especially, for example, in China. In the Kuomintang, as a party and as a government, the peasants and the petty bourgeois and the workers, who had been forced to join the Kuomintang by Stalin, were under the direct leadership of the Chinese bourgeoisie. The petty-bourgeois Wuhan government was, with regard to its actual actions, in terms of the results of its activities, the servant and executor of the Chinese bourgeoisie, as was irrefutably proved by the fact that it ultimately aligned itself behind Chiang Kai-shek. The Chinese peasants and petty bourgeois were never able to form a party or government that was independent and led independently, no more than the small peasants and petty bourgeois in China are today or will be capable of this in the future. In China, like everywhere else, and everywhere else like in China, they have only the choice between being led by the bourgeoisie or being led by the revolutionary proletariat. The entire historical experience proves this and results inevitably in the last analysis from the peculiar class position of the middle strata. The petty bourgeois, and even more so the peasants/farmers, are at best capable of forming a party that is outwardly independent, but these parties are incapable of giving independent political leadership, not even in times of peace, let alone in periods of revolution or counter-revolution. In as far as they are not under direct capitalist leadership, like some peasant/farmer parties under their big-peasant/big-farmer, indeed capitalist leaders, they sail without exception – in terms of the effect of their politics – in the capitalists' wake; they therefore in actual fact act and work under the leadership of the capitalist class, and in the last analysis under that of the world bourgeoisie – in actual fact becoming its political followers. They are even less capable of forming a government independent of the bourgeoisie; on the contrary all petty-bourgeois governments, of whatever kind, whatever their guise, whatever name they appear under, however 'radical', 'revolutionary', 'socialist', 'communist', or 'soviet' they proclaim themselves to be – whether they are petty-bourgeois liberal, petty-bourgeois democratic, petty-bourgeois Social Democratic, petty-bourgeois Labour or petty-bourgeois Stalinist – they are all in actual fact executive organs of the bourgeoisie and in the last analysis of the world bourgeoisie. In developed world capitalism the petty bourgeoisie, rural and urban, is in reality able to act in a revolutionary manner only under the leadership of the revolutionary working class: only under the leadership of the revolutionary proletariat is the peasantry – as long as the class antagonism has not yet surfaced in the countryside – in its entirety (and the urban petty bourgeoisie) able to finish the bourgeois-democratic revolution in a consistent manner, to finish it completely; once the class antagonisms in the countryside arise, it is only under the leadership of the revolutionary proletariat, that the poorest and poor peasants/farmers, i.e. the semi-proletarians and small peasants/farmers (and the urban non-exploiting, itself exploited petty bourgeoisie) are able to lead the proletarian revolution, the socialist revolution to victory and continue to lead it victoriously.

The class interests are the basic interests of all members of a class with regard to their existence, development and ascent, and indeed for the entire duration of the existence of the class; they are therefore superordinated to all partial interests (including the limited interests) and all transient interests. Every section of a class can and should advocate its sectional interests, its group interests, its individual interests, but it can, should and must fight for all these

specific interests in such a way that it always subordinates its sectional struggles, group struggles, individual struggles and specific struggles to the interests of the class as a whole and always keeps these struggles in harmony with the struggle of the entire class. If a section of a class does not do this, if it seeks its advantage at the expense of the class, then it harms and weakens not only the class, but precisely by doing this it, in the last analysis, harms and weakens itself as well – even if for a while it deceives itself or lets itself be deceived by this – and loses any advantage thus gained and often even more. ***Acting in class solidarity*** in no way means that every single class member has to give up altogether advocating interests other than the class interests; on the contrary, every single person should protect their particular interests, but they should, must do this in such a way that they do not harm their other class comrades, so that they always seek their own advantage in harmony with the advantage of all other class members; in a word that they ***subordinate all sectional, group, individual or specific interests to, integrate them into, the class interests and always keep them in harmony with the class interests.***

Exactly the same thing applies to the day-to-day interests and the transient interests (including the limited interests). The class can, should and must fight for its day-to-day and temporary (limited) interests, but it must not do it in such a way that, for the sake of transient (limited) advantages, it neglects or gives up fighting for its enduring, basic interests, i.e. its class interests. If it does this, then it harms itself and ultimately loses even the advantages attained for a temporary period (to a limited degree). If a stratum of the class seeks or derives temporary advantages at the expense of the class, then it weakens not only the entire class, but in actual fact thereby also, inevitably, its own position and ultimately loses not only the advantages gained, but also in certain circumstances everything. This is particularly clearly demonstrated in the case of the policy of coalition (the 'people's' front) and in the case of all nationally limited politics. The workers' bureaucrats in Germany, Austria, etc., – who originated in the proletariat and had spiralled their way up to a petty-bourgeois existence at the expense of the working class – steadfastly built on the 'realism' of their ice-cold calculation that their ongoing betrayal of the class interests of the workers would bring and secure them ongoing advantages. But their special advantages proved to be extremely transient; they had gained them at the expense of the working class, and precisely by doing this they had undermined the basis of their own power; thus, in the end, these were taken back from them, indeed they lost absolutely everything. If the capitalist counter-revolution – for which Stalin together with his clique has so thoroughly prepared the way – is victorious in Russia, then the new Russian (monopoly capitalist) bourgeoisie, which is developing in and around the Stalinist bureaucracy, has the same fate in store for the Stalinist bureaucracy. In the last analysis the fate of every section of the working class, however advanced its degeneration may be – whether it wants it or not – is for better or worse inevitably linked to the fate of the entire class – except for those of course who finally turn into capitalist exploiters. ***The class – and every section of the class – must always superordinate the enduring interests of the class over its temporary (limited) interests and always subordinate the struggle for the latter to the struggle for the former.***

Within every class there are a vast number of differences and therefore also all kinds of frictions. This also applies to the working class. For someone who looks superficially at these differences and frictions within a class and only focuses on them, there arises from time to time the deceptive appearance that there are no class interests at all. But the antagonisms between the classes themselves are sharper than all differences and frictions within a class; as the

motion and development of capitalism continues, these antagonisms, the ***class antagonisms***, inevitably become ever broader, ever deeper and ever fiercer. The more sharply the classes clash – no-one is spared experiencing this fact, no matter how much they personally want to evade it – the more clearly, the more tangibly ever bigger sections of a class again and again become aware of the supreme, decisive, paramount importance of the class interests; and after repeated, more or less difficult experiences, after paying more or less dearly for these experiences, after a more or less painful process of suffering, they ultimately become conscious of their class interests.

The Stalinist bureaucracy justifies the dissolution of the Stalinist International (22 May 1943) as follows: in different countries the tasks of the movement have become more complicated; the world war has sharpened the differences in the situation of the individual countries and has created a deep division between the countries that have become the instruments of the Hitler tyranny, and the freedom-loving peoples, who have been united in the powerful anti-Hitler coalition. ***The Stalinist bureaucracy is in actual fact passing over in silence, is in actual fact denying, the proletarian class interests***. Precisely by doing this it is passing over in silence and denying that there are – over and above all differences whatsoever, including the differences it has mentioned – vital, paramount, basic interests, ***principle-based interests that are enduringly common to the workers of all countries*** and that precisely, therefore, indispensably require ***enduring common action*** and an ***enduring common international leadership organisation*** for this purpose, i.e. the ***proletarian international***. Politically, by turning it from an instrument for the international proletarian revolution, into a tool against it, the Stalinist bureaucracy has long since liquidated the Communist International. Its liquidation as an organisation and its burial formally took place as a trade-off for the imperialist robbers of America and Britain agreeing to Stalin's annexations, which the Stalinist bureaucracy needs in order to conceal from the masses the gigantic catastrophe into which – through its bankruptcy-politics – it has hurled the Soviet state.

In every class there are more or less significant ***groupings***. The bourgeoisie (the big bourgeoisie or the bourgeoisie for short) is grouped according to the size of its capital into the small, middle and big bourgeoisie, into ***small***, ***middle and big capitalists***. The small bourgeoisie – nowadays this is no longer the petty bourgeois, but the small capitalists. In the epoch of capitalist ascent, the capitalists are sub-divided on the basis of the division of labour, into ***commercial capitalists, money capitalists, industrial capitalists and landowners***, and divide the total surplus value among themselves as commercial profit, interest, industrial profit and ground rent (rent). In Britain the capitalist class function of the landowners has developed into its purest form. Large-scale agriculture is carried on by capitalist tenant farmers; by virtue of their power over the land, the landowners extract a considerable and growing part of the agricultural surplus value in the form of rent from them; they do nothing other than draw rent. Outside Britain the big landowners mostly carry on agriculture on a capitalist basis themselves using stewards; rents are drawn in this case too (also by private landlords, real estate companies, etc.), but in this case those who are nothing-but-landowners have not developed into such a clearly separate stratum of capitalist society as those in Britain. In the epoch of capitalist decline, the advancing process of capitalist centralisation and concentration overlaps and blurs the boundaries between them more and more. Money capital turns into bank capital. The usury capitalists and money-capitalists become ***bank capitalists*** who, by means of bank credit, gain ever greater control and power over ever bigger sections of industry, trade, transport

and agriculture. In the further course of the capitalist competitive struggle, industrial capital – which is coming together to form cartels, syndicates and trusts, and is dominated by a stratum of the very biggest industrial magnates, a stratum that is becoming relatively thinner and thinner – succeeds in establishing an actual monopoly in especially important branches of the economy, above all in heavy industry, and succeeds in controlling and commanding an entire branch of the economy. Ultimately, the interweaving and merging of monopolist industrial capital with bank capital brings into being finance capital, the ***finance bourgeoisie***, monopoly capital, the ***monopoly bourgeoisie*** – a numerically tiny stratum of gigantic capitalist predators, who in actual fact control, dominate, command and exploit in accordance with their private interests, not only this or that branch of the economy, but more and more all branches of the economy, indeed more and more the entire economy altogether and indeed not merely in one country, but in several countries and over and above this worldwide. In the trusts, particularly once they grow into monopolist structures, horizontal integration goes hand in hand with vertical integration: they have their own transport facilities and their own selling and purchasing organisations; they take care of their money operations through their own bank, their own banking concerns and own the land themselves. Industrial and commercial profit, interest and rent flow less and less to separate capitalist factions; instead they flow more and more to the small, but increasingly powerful gang of monopoly capitalist- robbers, with the other capitalists turning more and more into mere executive organs of these monopoly capitalists.

The ***process of political regrouping within the bourgeoisie*** corresponds to this process of economic regrouping. In the struggle against feudalism, when it was a matter of overthrowing feudal rule and liquidating the feudal economy, the mass of the bourgeoisie was at first, bourgeois-radical, bourgeois-democratic, bourgeois-republican, ***bourgeois-revolutionary***; only the small stratum of the very richest bourgeois, especially the big money capitalists, sided from the start with the feudal reaction, with the feudal counter-revolution. Bourgeois democracy was the lever by which the bourgeoisie mobilised the masses and set them in motion for itself. During this period the proletariat is numerically still relatively weak and without proletarian consciousness; it can, therefore, be easily roped in and made use of for the class struggle of the bourgeoisie. With the ascent of capitalism, the number of proletarians swells; in the course of successive struggles, growing sections of the proletariat gradually, more or less clearly, begin to advocate their own proletarian interests, which are the exact opposite of the capitalist interests. The mass of the bourgeoisie moves to the right: the moderate bourgeois-revolutionary elements become ***conservative*** – the radical, bourgeois-revolutionary-democratic bourgeoisie, however, becomes more and more liberal-monarchist, constitutional-liberal, liberal-democratic, in a word, ***liberal***; it begins increasingly to vacillate, to hesitate, to become inconsistent in the struggle against feudalism. The competitive struggle among the capitalists continually sharpens; hand in hand with this, the capitalist process of centralisation and concentration gains in width and depth. The weaker capitalists who are afraid of being beaten competitively, sucked up and swallowed by their fellow capitalists who have bigger amounts of capital, gather into a left wing, i.e. the ***left-bourgeoisie***; on their part the exploiters with bigger capital gather into a right wing, into the ***right-bourgeoisie***, in order to hold onto and consolidate their superior position. Increasingly the time is passing when the mass of the bourgeoisie acts democratically; now, even its liberalism begins to pale more and more. More and more it is the left-bourgeoisie that makes use of bourgeois democracy; in this way it tries to mobilise the masses, petty-bourgeois and proletarian, against the right-bourgeoisie and to make use of them for left-capitalist

purposes. The right-bourgeoisie becomes reconciled with the remnants of the feudal lords and they begin to merge with each other. Whereas the left-bourgeoisie is inclined to make concessions to the masses, in order to lure them more easily for the struggle of the left-capitalists, and for this very reason advocates a democratically veiled bourgeois-dictatorship, the right-bourgeoisie in essence fights against any concession to the masses and works basically in the direction of an overt capitalist dictatorship. The more the proletariat increases in number, the more it begins to bring its independent proletarian class interests to the fore, the more the left-bourgeoisie too begins to fear the proletarian revolution; its liberalism and its democratism increasingly degenerate in empty phrases; the left-bourgeoisie too increasingly becomes a counter-revolutionary force and, indeed even from the bourgeois-revolutionary standpoint.

In the epoch of capitalist decline the right-bourgeoisie increasingly develops into the ***monopoly bourgeoisie*** and the left-bourgeoisie into the ***non-monopoly bourgeoisie***. The latter embraces the weaker capitalists, who fear being beaten competitively, incorporated and swallowed by the monopoly capitalists. Feudalism is liquidated, the feudal lords have long ago become capitalist exploiters through and through and, in keeping with their traditions, the overwhelming majority of them become interwoven and intergrown with the right wing of the bourgeoisie. ***THE STRUGGLE OF THE NON-MONOPOLY CAPITALISTS IS IN NO WAY AGAINST NO-LONGER EXISTING FEUDALISM, BUT MERELY ABOUT HOLDING ONTO THEIR POSITIONS AS CAPITALIST EXPLOITERS AND, IF POSSIBLE, ASCENDING INTO THE RANKS OF THE MONOPOLY CAPITALISTS***. The more the crisis of the entire capitalist system broadens and deepens as the epoch of capitalist decay advances, the more the left wing of the bourgeoisie becomes disintegrated, and although at times it is again and again reproduced, this takes place on a declining scale. One section of the weaker capitalists is ruined directly by the ever-recurring thrusts of the monopoly-capitalist offensive and sinks into the petty bourgeoisie or into the proletariat, or even into the lumpenproletariat. Another section is intermittently absorbed, is in actual fact integrated as a component part into the monopoly-capitalist economic machine. Those who still maintain a certain economic independence become more and more threatened in their existence as capitalists by the superior competitive strength of the monopoly capitalists. Despite all their resistance, they too gradually become economically, and politically too, increasingly dependent on the monopoly bourgeoisie, because capitalist exploitation, which is being driven forward more and more sharply, simultaneously drives the class antagonism between the proletariat and the entire bourgeoisie more and more to the extreme. Trembling for their capitalist property in the face of the proletarian revolution (they hear the rumble of its approach from the depths better than a good many workers), the non-monopoly capitalists, throughout all their vacillations, again and again regard and seek their last line of defence for their position as capitalist exploiters in the face of the workers, with the monopoly bourgeoisie. Having clearly become counter-revolutionary, the left-bourgeoisie begins to disappear more and more, and in actual fact goes through thick and thin with the monopoly bourgeoisie in all decisive questions. It only retains some liberal phrases from its liberalism in reserve for the worst case, that a big setback occurs – re-appearing under a (bourgeois-) democratic name – to ward off the revolutionary thrust of the masses, and, by means of liberal sham concessions and bunkum, to divide and disintegrate the masses, to gain time and in this way to save the entire capitalist position – just as it did in 1918-23 in Germany and Austria. It knows that it cannot fulfil this role without the help of the capitalist agents in the workers'

movement, i.e. Green, Murray, Lewis and Co., and indeed the whole of the trade union bureaucracy, the Labour Party, Social Democracy, the Stalinist parties, the centrists, the anarchists, etc. As the programme of a movement, bourgeois liberalism only still survives – under a flood of sham-socialist phrases – in the actual programme and policies of the petty-bourgeoisified workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy, that is to say of the petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties. The Labour Party and Social Democracy are parties of bourgeois liberalism under advanced capitalist conditions, which economically, and therefore politically too, no longer permit liberalism on the part of the capitalist strata. Ready to resort to any means if only this extends their hold on their positions of power and privilege again for a further period of time, the petty-bourgeoisified Stalinist bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy and the Stalinist party from time to time dabble in bourgeois liberalism, covering up their reactionary position as occasion demands with a deluge of sham-communist phrases.

With regard to tactics, the differences between the right-bourgeoisie and left-bourgeoisie, and between the monopoly and non-monopoly bourgeoisie revolve around the question of what sort of capitalist tactics are best for holding down and exploiting the working class: stick and carrot – or carrot and stick. The bourgeoisie carries out its left-capitalist politics via its left, non-monopoly wing by means of the degenerating, degenerated workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy, who for this purpose make use of the petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties and the proletarian mass organisations, which they mislead and misuse on a petty-bourgeois line. The political role of the left, non-monopoly bourgeoisie passes over to the degenerated, demoralised workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy in the same measure as the non-monopoly bourgeoisie loses importance for the entire capitalist class and loses influence over the worker masses.

Once it has overcome the confines of the urban market, the bourgeoisie – in keeping with the historical development of the capitalist competitive struggle – becomes grouped according to national markets; it is nationally orientated or rather orientated on a state basis. How, with the development of the capitalist world market, monopoly-capitalist centralisation and concentration increasingly comes up against the limits of the national and state groupings of the bourgeoisie, how monopoly capital seeks to centralise and concentrate the world bourgeoisie more and more, has already been referred to earlier.

All strata, groups and groupings within the capitalist class – and the same applies to the working class and the petty bourgeoisie – grow out of the particular economic position of each of these groups within the framework of the everyday life of their class; they too in the last analysis are rooted in the contradictory motion of the capitalist economy, which besides this still – to a decreasing extent it is true – drags along with it more or less big remnants of earlier, obsolete modes of economy, i.e. simple commodity production, the remnants of feudal production (for example, in India), indeed of slave production (for example, in Abyssinia [now Ethiopia, trans.], where its liquidation is on the agenda, and in the case of various black tribes in the interior of Africa), even remnants of the ancient communist mode of production (for example, in the case of many indigenous tribes in the interior of Brazil).

We have already discussed the formation of the workers' aristocracy and the workers' bureaucracy, their development and their role, elsewhere. Leaving them aside, the ***grouping of the working class*** takes place at first according to ***trades*** or ***occupations*** and finds its organisational expression in the occupation-based trade unions. The progressing capitalist

centralisation and concentration drives and compels the workers too, to centralise and concentrate in all spheres (in the political sphere, in the sphere of trade unions, co-operatives, etc.). The occupational differences within the working class lose their importance; the unifying tendencies gain more and more in strength in the face of the increasingly fierce thrusts of the capitalist offensive carried out against the workers irrespective of occupation. In the trade unions this expresses itself in the occupation-based trade unions being supplanted by the industrial unions. The same is true of the grouping of the workers into ***skilled*** and ***unskilled***. The heavy blows of the continuous, more and more ruthless capitalist offensive reduce these differences; over and above differences in the level of skills the workers begin to unite into industrial unions. In any case, as capitalist development progresses, all differences – including national and racial differences – within the working class are reduced more and more, that is to say in comparison to its common, enduring interests, i.e. to its class interests and, in comparison, to the unifying tendencies based on these interests. This development does not at all proceed in a straight line. The more capitalism decays, the more desperate are the attempts of the bourgeoisie to hold up the process. With devilish cunning, with violence and cruelty the bourgeoisie makes use of all differences in the camp of the proletariat, baiting and inciting one proletarian against another. Here and there, from time to time, it succeeds in doing this – but only transiently. Through all the severe and very severe setbacks, first the advanced workers and with their help ever bigger sections of the worker masses recognise their real friends, their real enemies and those who help their enemies. In the process of all the setbacks, the workers clarify, deepen their consciousness of their common interests, heighten this consciousness more and more for the purpose of a unified, international, proletarian-revolutionary struggle that is united in solidarity and thereby ultimately gain victory. In the same measure that this process continues, the differences within the working class lose their importance in comparison to what all class members have in common.

The middle strata develop the most groups and groupings. No class is so internally split and riven as the middle class. The petty bourgeoisie represents an obsolete mode of production; it is a class that is in decline. For this reason the differentiating tendencies within the middle strata are becoming stronger and stronger, the unifying tendencies, however, are becoming weaker and weaker. More and more the petty-bourgeois strata in town and country are acting politically and organisationally merely as followers of the two main classes in society, for the time being above all of the bourgeoisie, but the more the proletariat victoriously establishes itself as a real power, the more the petty-bourgeois strata become followers of the working class.

III. Class Consciousness

The fact that all those belonging to a class have enduring common interests, i.e. the same class interests, in no way means that all those belonging to a class are also in reality conscious of this basic fact. Only someone who, in full consciousness of the proletarian class interests, always in actual fact acts in accordance with them is ***class-conscious***, has ***class consciousness***, is really a ***communist***. Proletarian consciousness is proletarian-revolutionary consciousness, is communist consciousness.

The proletarian-revolutionary principles are merely the ideological and conceptual expression of the proletarian class interests. To act in a class-conscious manner therefore means, expressed in another way, to always align one's actions in actual fact in accordance with the proletarian class interests and the revolutionary principles. Only politics, strategy and tactics that always in actual fact adheres to the line of the proletarian class interests and the proletarian-revolutionary principles, moves on the proletarian ***class line***, on the proletarian-revolutionary line, on the ***principle-based line*** of the working class. Proletarian-revolutionary politics, proletarian ***class politics*** is the politics and the only politics, which – for the entire duration of capitalism – unconditionally and under all circumstances keeps to the framework of the proletarian class principles, is the politics and the only politics, which – as long as capitalist conditions have not been completely abolished on our entire planet – is unconditionally and under all conditions faithful to the proletarian-revolutionary principles, in a word: ***IT IS THE POLITICS OF UNCONDITIONAL FIDELITY TO THE REVOLUTIONARY PRINCIPLES*** of action with regard to capitalism everywhere, with regard to all enemies of the working class, of the non-exploiting, exploited peoples, indeed of all human society, as long as capital has not been completely and finally overcome on a world scale, in all countries. The opposite of this, the abandoning of the proletarian class principles, is called ***opportunism***. All politics that in its effect runs counter to the proletarian class interests and the proletarian-revolutionary principles, all politics that is in effect unprincipled, is ***opportunist***, in contrast to all politics that is ***fundamentally*** aligned in accordance with (proletarian-revolutionary; trans.) ***principles***. To act always and without exception in accordance with the proletarian class principles or expressed negatively: ***FUNDAMENTAL STRUGGLE AGAINST ALL OPPORTUNISM***! – this is the primary fundamental thesis of all Marxist politics, i.e. all proletarian-revolutionary politics, strategy and tactics, which on its part arises out of dialectical materialism.

> They (the communists; auth.) fight for the attainment of the immediate aims and interests of the working class, but in the ***present*** movement, they ***at the same time*** represent the ***future*** of the movement (*Das Kommunistische Manifest*, [1848] 1891, p.31) (as in all quotations the emphases in this quotation are those of the author[8]).

[8] The author (T.J. Melt) notes in a number of places that the emphases in the quotations are his emphases (denoted by bold italics in this first English edition). These emphases often replicate those in the original work cited. Sometimes there are additional emphases. Where any original emphasis contained in the original writings of Marx, Engels, etc. is not replicated by Melt, this is indicated simply by italics; trans.

> This forgetting of the great, the principal considerations for the momentary interests of the day, this struggling and striving for the success of the moment regardless of later consequences, this sacrificing of the future of the movement for the sake of its present, may be honestly meant, but it is and remains opportunism, and 'honest' opportunism is perhaps the most dangerous of all! (Engels [1891] 1928b, p.65).

The communists are distinguished from the parties, who think that they represent or pretend to represent the proletarian class interests, by the following:

> that, on the one hand, in the national struggles of the proletarians in different countries, they ***emphasise and give effect to*** the ***common*** interests of the ***entire*** proletariat, common interests that are independent of nationality; and on the other hand, that in the various stages of development through which the struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat passes, they ***always*** represent the interests of the ***whole*** movement (*Das Kommunistische Manifest,* [1848] 1891, p.18).

> Opportunism means sacrificing the fundamental interests of the masses to the transient interests of a small number of workers or, in other words, the alliance of a ***section*** of the workers with the bourgeoisie, directed ***against the mass*** of the proletariat (Lenin, [1915] 1921m, p.157).

All opportunism ***divides*** the working class, because it – consciously or unconsciously – puts the interests of a ***section*** of the workers above the common, enduring interests of all workers of the whole world, above the interests of the workers as a ***class***.

Acting without principles, in an unprincipled way, in a word: opportunism, appears in two main forms. Opportunism proper advocates ***only temporary interests*** – mostly of a section of the class, for example, the upper stratum of best-paid workers; it puts the day-to-day interests above the enduring interests of the entire class and abandons the enduring interests in favour of temporary interests. In effect über-'radicalism' (phrase-revolutionarism, sham radicalism, also called ultra-'leftism'), which fights for ***only the enduring interests***, ***only the class principles***, but does not pay regard to, disregards the transient, temporary interests, overlooks them, glides over them as if they did not exist, does the same thing. In effect the same as opportunism proper, as ***right opportunism***, it is called ***left opportunism*** in order to indicate and make clear their different origins.

To advocate ***only partial interests*** or to superordinate them to the common, enduring interests of the entire class is the second form of opportunism, irrespective of whether it is a matter of group, stratum, occupation-based, trade-based, individual interests or of local, district, provincial, national interests, or of interests of any other section.

In comparison to the class interests as the enduring, common interests of all class members throughout the whole era of capitalism, every partial interest, even if it encompasses the entire class (limited, restricted interests) is necessarily only temporary and therefore to describe both acting in this way and such conduct as opportunism is completely justified. ***ONLY IF THE STRUGGLE FOR TRANSIENT INTERESTS, FOR PARTIAL INTERESTS, FOR LIMITED INTERESTS IS COMBINED WITH THE STRUGGLE FOR THE REVOLUTIONARY END-***

SLOGANS AND ALWAYS REMAINS SUBORDINATED TO AND INTEGRATED INTO THIS STRUGGLE, IS IT REVOLUTIONARY. This also applies fully to every ***temporary slogan***, however much it is escalated, indeed to all temporary slogans combined, because the temporary slogans, no matter how they are combined with each other, only express temporary interests, only partial interests, only limited interests; the struggle for any kind of temporary slogan, for any number of temporary slogans must be combined with the struggle for the enduring interests of the proletariat, for the revolutionary end-slogans, and must always remain subordinated to, and integrated into, this struggle, otherwise it is opportunist.

Any politics that only advocates the interests of the workers of one country (or one nation, or one state), or has this as its guiding thought or superordinates this to the interests of the world working class, in a word: ***ALL NATIONAL OR PREDOMINANTLY NATIONALLY ORIENTATED POLITICS IS OPPORTUNIST***; it contains in embryonic form the 'national politics' that places itself 'realistically' on the basis of a nation (that is capitalist-led or is being led towards capitalism), and on this basis – ostensibly – seeks advantages for the working class of this country, in reality for the upper stratum of the working class, advantages that furthermore are extremely transient, seeks advantages in party collaboration or in trade union collaboration with the bourgeoisie, i.e. by abandoning, relinquishing the proletarian class interests, by in actual fact voluntarily subordinating the workers to the command of the capitalist exploiters.

Proletarian class politics, proletarian-revolutionary politics must always place the whole, i.e. the ***entire working class of the world***, the international proletariat, above any one of its sections whatsoever; proletarian class politics, proletarian-revolutionary politics must always and without exception subordinate the interests of every section to, and integrate them into, the interests of the entire class, and must always keep all partial interests in harmony with the interests of the world proletariat, or expressed in another way: all politics, on behalf of whatever section of the working class, must always be subordinated to, and integrated into, the ***proletarian world revolution***, and in its effect serve it; it must be orientated and directed towards the international proletarian revolution, otherwise it is opportunist and places the part above the whole. This applies fully too to all politics that places the proletarian state – even if it covers one-sixth of the Earth's surface – above the interests of the world proletariat and the world revolution.

'United action, of the civilised countries at least, is one of the first conditions of the emancipation of the proletariat. […] ***Proletarians of all countries, unite***!' (*Das Kommunistische Manifest*, [1848] 1891, pp.22, 32) – this is how the Communist Manifesto summarises the principle of proletarian internationalism and brands the Stalinists' 'socialism in one country' from the outset as betrayal. Marx worked out this verdict even more clearly:

> It goes entirely without saying that to be able to fight at all, the working class must organise itself at home as a ***class***, and that its homeland must be the immediate arena for its struggle. Insofar as this is the case its class struggle is national, not in substance but, as the Communist Manifesto says, 'in form'. But the 'framework of the present-day national state', for example, the German Empire, is itself in its turn economically 'within the framework' of the world market, and politically 'within the framework' of the system of states. […]

> International fraternisation of the working classes (i.e. the working class in each country; trans.) in the common struggle against the ruling classes (i.e. the ruling class in each country; trans.) and their governments (Marx, [1875] 1928, p.14) – this is how in 1875 Marx formulates revolutionary internationalism.

Since Marx wrote these words seventy years ago the world market has become the dominating fact in an even more pervasive way and it is becoming increasingly so. ***PROLETARIAN POLITICS MUST BE INTERNATIONAL OR IT IS NOT PROLETARIAN, NOT REVOLUTIONARY, AND IS NOT PROLETARIAN CLASS POLITICS, BUT ITS OPPOSITE.***

> Proletarian internationalism demands that, firstly, the interests of the proletarian struggle in any one country be subordinated to the interests of the struggle on a world scale; and, secondly, a nation that is gaining victories over the bourgeoisie should be able and willing on its part to make the greatest national sacrifices in order to overthrow international capitalism (Lenin, [1920] 1925b, p.567).

All proletarian class politics, all proletarian-revolutionary politics must always and without exception orientate itself in accordance with the principle of revolutionary internationalism and must under all circumstances whatsoever and without any exception move on the line of ***proletarian internationalism***, otherwise it is not politics for the working class, but against it. This principle of proletarian-revolutionary politics, strategy and tactics flows from the basic Marxist thesis: Oppose all opportunism on principle! Unconditional fidelity to the proletarian class interests and class principles!

Proletarian class consciousness comes by no means into the world as a ready-made fact, nor does mass consciousness develop in a straight line, evenly and automatically. Its development, in the majority of cases, is in the last analysis determined by the fact that the workers have the same relationship to the means of production and have the same role in the process of production and by the fact that the proletarian class interests resulting from this – while being under the influence of earlier modes of production and relations of production that continue to have an effect on the feelings and thoughts of the workers (under the influence, therefore, of the milieu, the traditions and the transmitted heritage in terms of feelings and thoughts) – are, however, determined especially under the influence of the reciprocal actions of the classes: ***it is above all in the class struggle that proletarian class consciousness develops***.

The bourgeoisie does its utmost to prevent, delay and hamper class consciousness from arising and developing in the proletariat; the bourgeoisie does its utmost to hold down, crush, disintegrate and destroy any class consciousness that has emerged and is growing in the working class. (Using all means available, it also holds down and again and again misleads the consciousness of the small peasants/farmers, handicraftsmen and small shopkeepers/traders, in short the consciousness of the middle classes in town and country, as well as that of the oppressed and exploited colonial and semi-colonial masses; it confuses, disintegrates, indeed poisons their feelings and thinking in order to dominate, exploit, make use of and misuse these masses more easily, for example, in order to be able to play them off against the working class.) In order to achieve this crucially important aim, the bourgeoisie combines carrot and stick, cunning, slyness, craftiness of all kinds and degrees, bait, temptations and corruption, in ever new forms, with intimidation, force, veiled and unveiled, and in all kinds of forms and gradations.

If the working class were class-conscious and if it were to clearly recognise its class interests and in actual fact consciously, systematically act according to them, then the rule of the capitalist exploiters would soon be played out, despite their big guns and all their instruments of power. 'The bourgeoisie maintains itself in power ***not*** only by force, but also by virtue of the lack of class consciousness of the masses and the routinism, by intimidating them and by their lack of organisation' (Lenin, [1917] 1925b, p.369). Using all means available, the bourgeoisie works at preventing the workers becoming class-conscious. For this purpose, it has above all the capitalist state with all its institutions, such as the Church, schools, radio, the cinema, the press, the theatre, literary institutions, all kinds of organisations, etc., etc. In doing this it also makes use of all kinds of helpers, for example, special agents in the camp of the working class, such as trade union bureaucratic, Labour, Social Democratic, Stalinist and such like bureaucrats, not to mention the capitalist bloodhounds and torturers of all kinds, the Pinkerton detective gangs, the Ku-Klux-Klan, fascists and such like. Lineage, tradition, upbringing, the influences of the bourgeois and the petty-bourgeois environment in thousands of different forms, in short, the whole milieu, act to retard and delay proletarian class consciousness coming into being and developing. In order to draw and to keep proletarian strata, proletarian elements behind them, the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie and their helpers must continuously work at clouding the proletarian consciousness, i.e. the indispensable basic condition for the bourgeois to rule and exploit the working class and for the petty bourgeois to sponge politically on as broad worker masses as possible, on as many strata and elements belonging to the working class as possible.

The transition of proletarian strata or elements from bourgeois or petty-bourgeois consciousness to proletarian consciousness, from unclarified, little clarified, weak, not yet firmly established, irresolute worker-consciousness to clear, firm, resolute proletarian consciousness is a process that proceeds at first in a subterranean, molecular, invisible way. Countless experiences of all kinds, apparently without effect, accumulate more and more, till, after more or less numerous vacillations, after more or less sizeable setbacks, they finally break through the smoke screen that the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie and the helpers of the bourgeoisie are continually creating. What is decisive in order that class elements or class strata that are still not conscious, or not yet sufficiently conscious, become conscious, is the actions of the conscious elements of the class, above all goal-conscious, consistent, persistent, clear, determined, bold action by the proletarian class party.

Under capitalist working and living conditions the great mass of the workers is, of its own accord, spontaneously, only able to grasp its most immediate, most pressing, most burning interests, i.e. its day-to-day interests, is at most able to develop ***trade union consciousness***. Only the most advanced, the best worker-elements, i.e. only a minority of the working class, is able, under capitalist conditions, to work its way through to proletarian consciousness, to develop ***class consciousness*** and to act accordingly, consciously, consistently and purposefully. Only the class-conscious minority of the proletariat is able, through proletarian mass action, to raise the consciousness of the worker masses progressively ever higher and ultimately to the heights of class consciousness, by always giving the struggle of the masses – a struggle that is orientated towards the day-to-day interests of the masses – the fundamental direction of the general, enduring interests of all workers without exception, by always giving it the fundamental direction of the proletarian class interests, by always linking the day-to-day struggle of the masses to the struggle for the fundamental interests of the proletariat, the

proletarian class interests, which are summed up in the highest main and collective slogan – the international proletarian revolution. The methods of struggle, through which the class-conscious minority of the proletariat realises this under non-revolutionary, pre-revolutionary conditions, are ***revolutionary criticism and propaganda***.

Because the capitalist *Betriebsmechanismus* (the mechanics, the workings of capitalist production and circulation; trans.) is becoming more and more complicated, the bourgeoisie is compelled by its profit interests to raise the consciousness of the workers to a certain extent. Tending the machines, and, indeed, working in this *Getriebe* (i.e. in the *Betriebsmechanismus*), something that is continually becoming ever more complicated, demands not only a certain general manual dexterity and skilfulness, but also indeed a certain minimum knowledge in terms of reading, writing, numeracy, etc.; these are pre-conditions that cannot be circumvented for the modern production of surplus value and the appropriation of profit, both in huge quantities – and therefore also for the enormous enrichment of the bourgeoisie. That the intellectual horizon of the workers is thereby broadened to a certain extent and their powers of comprehension raised, is a side effect that is extremely unwelcome to the capitalist class, and one that it tries to the best of its ability to weaken and thwart. What the bourgeoisie wants and needs are well-trained human work beasts, nothing more. To the best of its ability it deliberately prevents the workers from developing higher mental abilities that would enable them to distinguish what is important and most important for them, from what is unimportant for them, in that they recognise at the same time the standpoint from which to start out when doing this and that would enable them to grasp complicated contexts, to gain deeper insights, a greater overall view, a far-reaching view and be able to orientate themselves, and orientate themselves quickly. Having as many skills as possible, being well-trained human cart-horses – that yes – but with as little spirit as possible – this is the line of capitalist policy with regard to the consciousness of the working class. In order that all the experiences and knowledge that the workers nevertheless gather, and which they – against the will of the bourgeoisie and in defiance of all the obstacles – nevertheless work themselves through to, win through to, are confused, smeared, blurred and destroyed as much as possible, the capitalist class maintains a gigantic apparatus that works unceasingly at clouding, duping, deceiving and misleading the consciousness of the masses, an apparatus in which capitalist schools, the capitalist press, capitalist radio, capitalist cinema, capitalist theatre and the Church play the main role.

Under the conditions of the gigantic all-round upswing of capitalism in the last third of the nineteenth century, profits increased everywhere; higher wages, a better standard of living for the workers could therefore also, to a certain extent, be gained through struggle. Opportunism arose from out of this objective situation and simply assumed these transient conditions would last forever and built up its policy of ‘gradual growth into socialism’ upon this – without the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisie. The imperialist (monopoly capitalist) epoch, which started at the beginning of the twentieth century, put an end to the all-round capitalist upswing; only in the very strongest imperialist countries did the upswing continue, with growing profits, super profits. Here the objective conditions for opportunism still continued to exist for a more or less lengthy phase. This in no way hindered or hinders the opportunists from continuing their opportunism even where the conditions that made it possible, are disappearing or have disappeared. The very essence of the Social Democratic parties lies in that today they still continue the opportunism that won the day within the parties on the basis of the all-round capitalist upswing at the end of the nineteenth century, after the development of capitalism had

swept the objective conditions for the opportunist, reformist politics from under their feet.

It will require further hard experiences brought about by all kinds of illusions, disappointments, struggles, blows, defeats, successes, victories ***and*** the persistent, continuous goal-conscious work of the most advanced, conscious elements of the class; it will also require the unceasing, never-slackening, systematic, well-planned struggle of the class party, in order to raise, to consolidate the consciousness of the worker masses and raise it ever higher and higher, in defiance of all the desperate resistance of the capitalist rulers and exploiters, their fascist henchmen and opportunist helpers. It is precisely the ***AWAKENING AND UNFOLDING OF PROLETARIAN CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE WORKING CLASS, IT IS PRECISELY THE RAISING OF THE PROLETARIAN MASSES TO AN EVER HIGHER LEVEL OF CONSCIOUSNESS, IT IS PRECISELY THIS TASK THAT IS THE MOST CENTRAL TASK OF THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY. IT IS THIS TASK THAT IS THE TASK OF ALL TASKS. IT IS THE TASK INTO WHICH ALL OTHER TASKS WHATSOEVER FLOW AND MUST FLOW; IT IS THE TASK TO WHICH ALL OTHER TASKS, THE BIGGEST AND THE SMALLEST, ARE WITHOUT FAIL SUBORDINATED, MUST WITHOUT FAIL BE SUBORDINATED; IT IS THE TASK THAT ALL OTHER TASKS – IN TERMS OF INTENTION AND EFFECT – MUST SERVE UNDER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES. ALL POLITICS, STRATEGY AND TACTICS THAT – WHATEVER THE INTENTION, WHATEVER THE PURPOSE – IN FACT CLOUDS, CONFUSES, DISINTEGRATES, WEAKENS, LOWERS THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE WORKERS IS ANTI-PROLETARIAN, ANTI-REVOLUTIONARY AND HITS THE FIGHTING STRENGTH AND THE POWER OF THE WORKING CLASS IN ITS NERVE CENTRE. ANY SUCCESS ACHIEVED AT THE EXPENSE OF THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE MASSES, BY CLOUDING THIS CONSCIOUSNESS, IS IN THE LAST ANALYSIS AGAIN AND AGAIN BOUND TO RESULT IN A DEFEAT OF THE WORKING CLASS. GENUINE PROLETARIAN-REVOLUTIONARY POLITICS, STRATEGY AND TACTICS MUST, IN FULL CONSCIOUSNESS, AND AS ITS MOST CENTRAL TASK, AIM TO CONTINUALLY CLARIFY AND RAISE THE COGNITIVE ABILITY AND THE LEVEL OF CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE WORKING CLASS, AND MUST IN ITS EFFECT ACTUALLY LEAD TO AN EVER HIGHER LEVEL OF CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE WORKING CLASS; ONLY THIS TRULY TURNS PROLETARIAN-REVOLUTIONARY POLITICS, STRATEGY AND TACTICS INTO POLITICS, STRATEGY AND TACTICS OF THE WORKING CLASS, OF THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION.***

If one compares the high level of consciousness of the German and Austrian workers (1918-23), of the Russian workers (1917-23), of the British workers (1926), of the Chinese workers (1925-27), of the French workers (1935-36) and of the Spanish workers (1936-37) – including the many illusions and errors that understandably still had a hold in their minds at that time – with the tremendously low level to which their consciousness has been reduced, then one understands how it has become possible to establish overt capitalist dictatorships in Germany, Austria, Spain and France. If one examines the actions of the SP, the LP and the AFL since 1914, and of the Stalinist party since 1923-24 from the point of view of how they – together with their Second International, Two-and-a-Half International, Third International and the Amsterdam Trade Union International – have used all available means to confuse, lower, weaken, disintegrate and paralyse the consciousness of the working class, and how they all still continued doing this, even in 1933-34 – only then does one understand how the catastrophe of

1933-34 was possible, how the German and Austrian workers – shaken in their consciousness, their self-confidence and their belief in themselves and paralysed in particular by Social Democracy and Stalinism – were crucified by the monopoly-capitalist-led bourgeoisie by means of fascism; only then does one comprehend how the catastrophe of the General Strike and Miners' Strike (1925-26) in Britain, how the Chinese catastrophe (1927), the Spanish catastrophe (1938-39) and the catastrophe of the working class in France (1937-39) could take place; only then does one comprehend, how the path to the Second (imperialist) World War was smoothed for the imperialist robbers and how the awakening of the worker masses to proletarian class consciousness, to proletarian-revolutionary consciousness, how the re-grouping of the proletarian masses for a revolutionary uprising against the imperialist war fury, how the resurgence of the masses for the proletarian revolution was systematically halted, checked, held down by the Stalinist Party, the Labour Party, Social Democracy, the AFL, the CIO, the UMW, the trade union bureaucracy, etc. – playing into each other's hands – using all available means of hypocrisy, deception, confusion and misguidance. Victory over the Nazis, over the fascists – yes; but at all costs it must not come to proletarian revolution, only to the restoration of capitalist democracy – that was and is the main guiding thought of the Stalinist bureaucracy, the Labour bureaucracy, the Social Democratic bureaucracy and the trade union bureaucracy, and is the guiding thought too of the American trade union bureaucrats, workers' aristocrats, etc. They cannot admit that victory over fascism altogether can only be realised by means of the proletarian world revolution – otherwise they would have to give up on themselves; they fear fascism, but they fear the proletarian revolution far more still.

It would be a great error to think that the development of an ever higher level of proletarian consciousness is only the task of schooling, training and ***education*** among the members of the Party and the mass organisations, and of ***propaganda among the worker masses***. Undoubtedly this holds good to a large extent. But what is and remains decisive here too is the ***entire politics of the Party, the mass organisations and the workers' state***: their entire politics must be clear and understandable to the masses, must make sense to them and it must again and again ***prove*** to the worker masses in terms of intentions, deeds, effects and results that the well-being and the ascent of the working class truly is the enduring axis of its entire striving, its actions and its activity. The best educational work fails and is bound to fail if the line of its politics in its entirety is not in keeping with the proletarian class interests and the proletarian world revolution. Furthermore, politics that in its entirety runs counter to the proletarian-revolutionary line is in the long run inevitably bound to also distort, falsify, poison and devalue the educational work and turn it into anti-proletarian, anti-revolutionary educational work.

Words, Deeds and Effects

We have heard Engels say: '"honest" opportunism is perhaps the most dangerous of all', i.e. opportunism borne of the best of intentions. Why? Because if the workers are convinced that the intentions of the 'honest' opportunists are good it makes the proletariat much less resistant, less attentive and delays clearing up a mistake, allows the canker to become bigger, have an effect for longer and corrode much more deeply.

'Let's seek out people who are honest, let's get people with honest intentions and we can safely leave the rest to them' − this is the way many workers think: a disastrous error for which the working class pays with very heavy defeats and very bitter disappointments. Of course, personal honesty and honest intentions are a basic condition for the proletarian revolution. Anyone who is not imbued with the thoroughly honest intention of leading the working class to victory, anyone who is only, or first and foremost, thinking of their own advantage, or anyone who only seeks their own advantage at the expense of their class and places their own interests above those of their class − instead of integrating them into and subordinating them to the interests of their class – can never ever act in a proletarian-revolutionary manner, but, on the contrary, will without doubt pursue politics against the interests of the working class, against the interests of proletarian revolution. Such people are bound to lower and disintegrate the consciousness of the workers in the Party, the trade unions, the co-operatives, and the proletarian state, etc., and the consciousness of the masses generally, and are inevitably bound to lead the working class ultimately to defeat again and again.

However, good, honest intentions do not suffice. In everyday life a worker understands this completely. If a violinist invites someone to listen to them by saying: 'come, I will play something nice for you' and then scrapes dreadfully on the strings so that it grates upon the ear – the worker will certainly say to them: 'I fully acknowledge your good, honest intention to play something nice for me on your violin, but when it comes to playing the violin my dear friend, in the last analysis and first and foremost, it does not depend on good, honest intentions but on the actual result, on the effect of your playing the violin'. Quite right! But the exact same applies to the class struggle, to politics, to proletarian-revolutionary politics!

Certainly, words are also deeds, but they are the weakest, the least binding form of action and involve the least commitment. Words must therefore always be checked against the ***deeds***. The words must match the deeds and the deeds the words. If they do not match each other, then there is something wrong with the politics. But deeds too in themselves still signify too little; what matters is ***to where and to what*** they lead, i.e. the direction, the line that objectively results from these deeds and their ***effect***, their ***overall effect***. ***ONLY POLITICS THAT IN ITS OVERALL RESULT, IN ITS OVERALL EFFECT, ACTUALLY WORKS TO THE ADVANTAGE OF THE PROLETARIAN <u>WORLD REVOLUTION</u>, AND ACTUALLY SHIFTS THE RELATIONSHIP OF FORCES BETWEEN THE CLASSES TO THE DISADVANTAGE OF THE WORLD BOURGEOISIE AND TO THE ADVANTAGE OF THE <u>WORLD PROLETARIAT</u> (THE PROLETARIAN STATE INCLUDED) − ONLY SUCH POLITICS IS IN ACTUAL FACT PROLETARIAN CLASS POLITICS, IS REALLY PROLETARIAN-REVOLUTIONARY POLITICS***.

However revolutionary, socialist or communist the words used to state a policy may be; however 'red' the deeds; however 'red' the municipal blocks of flats may be, as in 'Red' Vienna;

however ‘bold’ the putsches – such as the one set in motion by Stalin in December 1927 in Canton; however ‘red’ the ‘giants’ that the Stalinist bureaucracy constructed in Russia – a political line such as this with all its ‘revolutionary, socialist, communist, red’ words and deeds led to the catastrophe of the General Strike and Miners’ Strike in Britain (1925-26), to the Chinese catastrophe (1927), to the German catastrophe (1933), to the Austrian catastrophe (1934), to the catastrophe of the working class in France (1937-39), to the Spanish catastrophe (1938-39) and to the catastrophe of the workers’ movement in almost all countries, and made possible the catastrophe of the Second (imperialist) World War, led to the catastrophe of the Stalin-Hitler Pact (1939), to the catastrophic destruction of 50% of the entire Soviet-Russian economic apparatus – and, despite the tremendous military achievements and the heroic bravery of the Red Army, despite the boundless sacrifice of the Russian workers and peasants, this political line led to the most tremendous strengthening of the position of the world bourgeoisie and to the tremendous weakening of the position of the entire world proletariat, the proletarian state included. These results, these effects ***prove*** that these politics, that the basic line of these politics neither was, nor is revolutionary, neither was, nor is socialist, neither was, nor is communist, neither was, nor is red, but the opposite of this, i.e. anti-revolutionary, anti-socialist, anti-communist, anti-proletarian.

‘The question: *What did we expect and what did we get*? is in general the principal criterion in strategy’ (Trotzki, 1929, p.124). What did Stalin expect? That he would not pull the chestnuts out of the fire for British and American imperialism; he announced and threatened that whoever attacked Russia would this time round have the war with all its horrors in their own country, that this time round the war would not be fought on Russian, but on the enemy’s soil! He expected, and declared as proven, that his ‘socialism in one country’ would catch up with the capitalist economy and indeed overtake it (‘in no time at all’) – and what did Stalin ‘get’, what was the result of his politics overall, with his war policy as its latest chapter: that he is in fact pulling the chestnuts out of the fire for British and American imperialism, at the expense of the Soviet Union, at the expense of the world proletariat; that the war with all its horrors has been fought above all on Russian soil; that half the Soviet economy has been destroyed, has been hurled far back, whereas the economy of American monopoly capital is intact and is expanding enormously, that the ‘autarchy of one sixth of the Earth’s surface’, Stalin’s ‘socialism in one country’, has been turned into an enormously increased, gigantic dependency on the world bourgeoisie.

ALL OPPORTUNIST POLITICS INEVITABLY LEADS THE CLASS ONTO AN INCLINED PLANE, DOWN WHICH IT IS <u>BOUND TO</u> SLIDE EVER FURTHER, <u>BOUND TO</u> FALL EVER FURTHER, THE LONGER THE OPPORTUNIST COURSE IS CONTINUED. THIS IS THE POLITICAL <u>LAW OF THE INCLINED PLANE</u>. NOT ONLY THE POLICY OF COALITION (‘PEOPLE’S FRONT’), SOCIAL-PATRIOTISM, SOCIAL-CHAUVINISM, SOCIAL-IMPERIALISM, NATIONALLY LIMITED POLITICS (FOR EXAMPLE, STALIN’S ‘SOCIALISM IN ONE COUNTRY’, STALIN’S ‘REVOLUTION IN ONE COUNTRY’), BUT ALSO ANARCHISM AND ULTRA-RADICALISM ARE INCLINED PLANES OF THIS KIND.

Of course, it is never a matter of results or effects from one day to the next. Even with the very best politics errors and mistakes can happen; they are to a certain extent unavoidable in consequence of the gigantic difficulties of the task. But failures, blows and defeats signal, show, prove that something is wrong with the line. If they are continuously checked by the class, by

the members of the Party, the trade unions, etc., if the voices of criticism are listened to and examined, then the mistakes will again and again be corrected as soon as possible. In this way, the damage is limited and at the same time the class has gained in experience and consciousness. If, however, a political line that again and again leads to very big failures, blows, defeats and catastrophes for the working class is continued for many years or decades, despite all the catastrophes – the way Social Democracy has been continuing its politics of betrayal without interruption since 1914, the way the Stalinist bureaucracy has been continuing its treacherous fundamentally line without interruption since 1923-24 – if this politics is continued, even after the biggest catastrophes, if the voices of proletarian-revolutionary criticism that are raised against this politics are suppressed, stifled, indeed even assassinated – as the Stalinist bureaucracy and Social Democratic bureaucracy have been doing for years, for decades (the Social Democratic bureaucrats at best only shed hypocritical crocodile tears even for the systematic assassination of proletarian revolutionaries and their most poisonous slandering by the Stalinist gangsters), indeed they have, when it later suited them, finally even declared the murder of revolutionaries by the Stalinist bureaucracy to be politically justified – then this is the irrefutable ***proof*** that, firstly, this politics is objectively directed against revolution, Socialism, Communism, against the world proletariat, the proletarian state included; secondly, this politics is being pursued subjectively and continued consciously, and is therefore a conscious betrayal of the working class; thirdly, this politics is pursued for the consciously selfish benefit of a thin stratum, namely the Stalinist bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy and the Social Democratic bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy, the trade union bureaucracy included. That they – in Germany, Austria, etc. – have miscalculated with regard to capitalism, namely that they too have paid the price for their politics of betrayal, has not altered their attitude and they are continuing their politics of betrayal; the politically bankrupt Social Democratic bureaucrats and Stalinist bureaucrats are speculating on being resurrected and all their advantages and privileges being restored to them together with new, additional advantages and privileges. (The same also applies – with the necessary modifications – to the American trade union bureaucrats and workers' aristocrats and to the Labour workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy.)

IF ONE WANTS TO BECOME CLEAR ABOUT THE CHARACTER OF ANY POLITICS, ONE MUST ALWAYS POSE THE QUESTION: WHICH <u>CLASS</u> OR STRATUM, AND ABOVE ALL THE <u>POWER</u> OF WHICH CLASS OR STRATUM DOES IT BENEFIT OR DAMAGE IN ITS <u>OVERALL RESULT</u>; DOES IT IN ITS OVERALL EFFECT STRENGTHEN OR WEAKEN THE PROLETARIAT – DOES IT WEAKEN OR STRENGTHEN THE BOURGEOISIE; DOES IT IN ITS TOTAL EFFECT SHIFT THE RELATIONSHIP OF FORCES BETWEEN THE CLASSES IN FAVOUR OF THE WORLD PROLETARIAT OR IN FAVOUR OF THE WORLD BOURGEOISIE; IS IT BOUND TO LEAD, DOES IT ACTUALLY LEAD – IN ITS OVERALL RESULT – TO A STRENGTHENING OF THE POSITION, TO AN INCREASE IN THE POWER, TO AN IMPROVEMENT IN THE OVERALL SITUATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL PROLETARIAT, THE PROLETARIAN STATE INCLUDED, TO AN IMPROVEMENT IN THE CONDITIONS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION – OR TO THE EXACT OPPOSITE? One must not let oneself be deflected from ***posing this fundamental question*** on an international scale and within this framework on a national scale by partial successes, however successful, not by the municipal blocks of flats, the kindergartens, etc. in 'Red' Vienna, nor by the 'red' giants of the Stalinist bureaucracy; the most

splendid partial successes are endangered, indeed ultimately lost (see Austria), if the politics that has led to them fails precisely in the main question, i.e. the question of power.

ALL POLITICS MUST – IN THE LONG RUN – BE JUDGED FIRST AND FOREMOST BY ITS EFFECT, BY ITS OVERALL RESULT FOR THE WORLD PROLETARIAT, FOR THE WORLD REVOLUTION. IN COMPARISON TO THIS, GOOD, HONEST INTENTIONS ARE ONLY OF SECONDARY IMPORTANCE; they are, in this or that context, of tactical importance, depending on the party-political circumstances, namely for the question as to which methods of healing the Party should use to treat the illness. Someone who has erred honestly can be cured, can be corrected, can correct themselves. Even if they have erred gravely there is still a place for them in the working class, in the revolutionary party; other, easier tasks can be entrusted to them and new trust in a higher level of leadership skills can grow again in the course of work, of the struggle. It is quite another matter, if good, honest intentions do not exist, if the opposite is the case and continues to be so for years, for decades, if the most pernicious, most catastrophic politics for the class continues to be pursued contrary to all warnings, if the voices of revolutionary criticism are throttled, suppressed and eliminated using all available means – then there is no alternative but to make a radical incision, i.e. ***break unconditionally*** with all these treacherous elements.

ONE MUST POSE EVERY QUESTION ABOVE ALL POLITICALLY, I.E. INDEPENDENTLY OF THE INDIVIDUALS OR THEIR INTENTIONS; ONE MUST FIRST AND FOREMOST ASK: WHERE DOES A SPECIFIC ATTITUDE, A SPECIFIC PATH, A SPECIFIC POLICY, STRATEGY OR TACTIC LEAD TO – ONLY ON THIS BASIS CAN, SHOULD AND MUST ONE POSE THE QUESTION AS TO THE HONESTY OF INTENTIONS. FUNDAMENTALLY, ONE MUST ALWAYS ASK WHERE A SPECIFIC POLICY, STRATEGY OR TACTIC IS IN ACTUAL FACT LEADING TO AND IS BOUND TO LEAD TO IN CONSEQUENCE OF ITS INNER MECHANICS, LOGIC AND COGENCY, WHETHER IN ITS OVERALL EFFECT, IN THE LONG RUN, IT ACTS FOR OR AGAINST THE WORLD PROLETARIAT, FOR OR AGAINST THE SOVIET STATE AS A PROLETARIAN STATE, FOR OR AGAINST THE WORLD REVOLUTION. WITHOUT HAVING THOUGHT THIS BASIC THOUGHT THROUGH TO THE END AND ABSORBED IT UNSHAKEABLY FIRMLY, ONE IS INEVITABLY AGAIN AND AGAIN BOUND TO DECEIVE ONESELF AND THE MASSES IN POLITICS, STRATEGY AND TACTICS. WHOEVER JUDGES ONLY, OR EVEN ONLY MAINLY, BY INTENTIONS AND NOT BY ACTIONS AND BY THE EFFECTS TO WHICH THEY LEAD, AND ARE BOUND TO LEAD IN THE LONG RUN, IS POLITICALLY IRRETRIEVABLY LOST.

'I assume (with reference to politics or conduct; auth.) the "noblest" of intentions, but I do not give a damn for "intentions"' writes Marx in his letter of 19 October 1877 to Sorge (Marx, 1934, p.640). And in 1851 he writes even more clearly: 'Among rational people it is self-evident that one judges a man not by his assurances, but by his actions, not by what he pretends to be, but by what he does and really is' (Marx, 1896, pp.108-109). This applies not only to the political actions of individuals, of leaders, but also to all the politics, strategy and tactics of classes, social strata, groups, parties, trade unions, indeed all organisations, including the state.

IV. The Most Important Manifestations of Opportunism to Date

In the epoch of capitalist ascent, opportunism manifests itself above all in ***restricting the struggle to the fight for day-to-day demands*** of the workers, especially to the economic ones; the position of power of the bourgeoisie is in no way weakened by this, on the contrary, it is strengthened, because the workers are in this way kept and deflected from the struggle for power. In Russia (1894-1902), this tendency bore the name Economism. In capitalist Western and Central Europe, it took, in particular, the form of political neutrality of the trade unions, co-operatives, etc., or of struggle only through the trade unions, of struggle only through the co-operatives. (Most recently honest revolutionaries are succumbing to this form of opportunism in that they mistakenly limit the transitional struggle to the struggle for transitional slogans ***per se***, i.e. to transient interests, instead of connecting this struggle fundamentally, and in a manner that gives it direction, to the struggle for the proletarian end slogans, to ***revolutionary criticism and propaganda***, and doing this persistently in a manner intelligible to the masses.)

Ministerialism – first practised in France and known as Millerandism or Briandism – entails making relatively subordinate concessions paid for by supporting the capitalist state against the working class and it takes the form of a 'socialist' entering a bourgeois government. Some minister-'socialists' change sides openly and join the camp of the bourgeoisie to become left-capitalist leaders like Briand, or right-capitalist leaders like Millerand, MacDonald and Snowden; others consider it more expedient to continue their service to their 'own' bourgeoisie (and in all cases in the last analysis to the world bourgeoisie), within the workers' camp – as in the case of the majority of the minister-'socialists', minister-'communists', including Stalin and his 'Soviet government'.

Reformism – called ***possibilism*** in the Romanic countries[9] – preaches the 'gradual growing of capitalist society into socialist society by means of peaceful reforms'. In effect it aimed and aims to make the capitalist stable more bearable for the human work beasts, and in the last analysis to extend the life of the system of capitalist exploitation. Its real essence entails capitulating to the bourgeoisie in the decisive question (i.e. the question of power) and in giving up on the proletarian revolution. The reformist ideology was extended by Eduard Bernstein – who systematically 'revised' all the theoretical positions of Marxism – to become the system of ***reformism***. The revisionist criticism was based on the general capitalist upswing in the last decades of the nineteenth century, an upswing that in reality did not alter anything at all, could not alter anything with regard to the basic capitalist tendencies. For big as the upswing was, it was entirely of a temporary nature; the revisionist critics had overlooked this 'trifle'; they had simply extrapolated their conclusions, which had been derived from temporary, superficial phenomena, to become something eternal. It was precisely this last, big, general upswing that put a stop to the capitalists dividing up the world, closed the main valve that had been open to capital for liquidating the periodic crises and led over from free competition, from liberal capitalism to capitalist monopoly, to monopoly capitalism, to imperialism. Under the heavy blows of advancing imperialism, the theories of the revisionists burst like soap bubbles. And yet, despite this, they continued their reformist practices.

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[9] For example, Italy, France and Spain: countries that were for many years part of the Roman empire; trans.

In the epoch of capitalist decline, opportunism takes on new forms. In the competitive struggle between the capitalist robbers, especially once it escalates into imperialist world war, the opportunists appear as social-nationalists, ***social-chauvinists*** (socialists in words – nationalists, chauvinists, champions of capitalist defencism in deeds), as ***social-imperialists*** (socialists in words – imperialists in deeds), as ***social-patriots*** (socialists in words – capitalist patriots in deeds) and stepping all this up, ultimately bringing it together into a well-planned, systematic ***coalition policy***, '***people's*** ***front***, policy of collaboration with the class enemy against the proletariat, against the proletarian state, against the proletarian revolution.

> By social-chauvinism we mean acceptance of the idea of the defence of the fatherland in the present imperialist war, justification of an alliance between the socialists and the bourgeoisie and the governments of 'their own' countries in this war, the refusal to propagate and support proletarian-revolutionary actions against one's 'own' bourgeoisie […] Opportunism in the milieu of the war of 1914–1915 leads to social-chauvinism. ***The essence of opportunism is the idea of class collaboration*** (Lenin, [1915] 1921m, p.157).

During the First World War, Social Democracy, the Labour Party and the trade union bureaucracy practised class collaboration; Stalinism, the Stalinist bureaucracy, the Stalinist parties and the Stalinist International have been vying with them in this class collaboration before and during the Second (imperialist) World War. – Collaboration with the bourgeoisie against the proletariat particularly likes to wrap itself in a cloak of deception by using the term 'nation' or the 'people', and appears as 'national politics', as politics that orients itself according to the interests of the 'nation' or the 'people'. By using non-committal phrases about internationalism, it seeks to conceal from the masses the fact that, on the basis of class society, all ***nationally limited politics*** inevitably turns out to be to the advantage of the exploiters and oppressors, at the expense of the workers, the toiling masses and the oppressed, exploited peoples, because it plays off the toiling proletarian masses of one country against the worker masses, the toiling masses of the other countries. The nationally limited politics of the Stalinist bureaucracy ('socialism in one country') – the politics of the Stalinist parties is purely Russian nationally orientated, the Stalinists are Russian nationalists, Russian social-nationalists – serves the world bourgeoisie, serves the new capitalist elements, who are developing in and around the Stalinist bureaucracy, while the Stalinist officials join in the sponging (on the masses; trans.); the Russian workers and peasants, the Soviet state as a proletarian state, the world proletariat, together with the toiling masses and the colonial and semi-colonial peoples and the world revolution foot the bill. The Stalinist bureaucracy cloaks its selfish interests and sinecures with its Russian nationalism. This also applies to the national politics of the SP, LP, AFL, etc.; it serves the interests of their 'own' capitalists and in the last analysis the world bourgeoisie.

Alongside these more or less overt forms of opportunism runs a somewhat concealed form – ***social-pacifism***. It rejects war altogether, proletarian-revolutionary war too, it rejects civil war altogether, proletarian-revolutionary insurrection and proletarian-revolutionary civil war too, as well as national-revolutionary and colonial-revolutionary insurrection. It strives for a peaceful settlement of all quarrels between states, between nations and for eternal peace – all these lovely things, however, without breaking the capitalist yoke, without smashing the capitalist state machine, and it covers up its impotent daydreams with socialist humbug. Consequently, it is against the revolutionary class struggle, it is namely 'for the class struggle' without insurrection,

without revolution… MacDonald and Snowden were into social-pacifism during the First World War.

The more sharply – with the ongoing development of imperialism – the class antagonisms clash, the more cunning are the forms that opportunism seeks out. It must seek them out in order to be able – under conditions that are coming more and more to a head – to nevertheless effectively continue its work for the benefit of the bourgeoisie. Social-pacifism, which frequently went hand in hand with sham-radical phrases, was already one of these forms of opportunism that was concealed and masked in a sham-revolutionary manner and is summed up by the term ***centrism.*** Included in this are all tendencies that in their effect vacillate between opportunism (reformism, social-patriotism, etc.) and Marxism but accompany their fundamentally opportunist attitude with a torrent of more or less, often extremely radical phrases, which in reality only serve the purpose of concealing their fundamentally opportunist attitude from the working class. Those who vacillate more towards the revolutionary line are called ***left-centrists***; those who vacillate more towards opportunism are called ***right-centrists***. With their sham-revolutionary talk, sham-radical to-do, they work at continually deceiving the workers, in order to be able to continue their fundamentally opportunist line and yet not lose the following of the workers.

Already before the First World War, ***Kautsky*** had begun with his centrism. He vacillated to and fro between Social Democracy's right wing and its revolutionary left wing (Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht, Franz Mehring). He held the revolutionary left at bay with Marxist phrases but in actual fact protected Scheidemann, Ebert, David, Noske and Legien. ***Austro-Marxism*** was the Austrian offshoot of Kautskyism and it differed from the latter only by its greater skill in its use of sham-revolutionary phrases. During the First World War, Kautskyist centrism took the organisational form of the ***USPD***, which had the purpose of preventing the formation of a proletarian-revolutionary party in Germany. Amongst other things it also played on a 'revolutionarily'-tuned, social-pacifist piano ('for general disarmament' – under capitalist conditions...), diligently accompanied by the Austro-Marxist social-pacifists. After the First World War, centrism continued with its main (political; trans.) line of frustrating the development of a strong proletarian-revolutionary party and keeping the workers on the fundamentally opportunist line, namely behind the SP, the LP, and behind the Second ('socialist') International in the form of the ***Two-and-a-Half International***, whose leader, Friedrich Adler, had re-positioned himself from social-pacifism during the war to carry out this new centrist task. In the same way as the USPD returned – after its work had been amply done – to the bosom of Social Democracy's right wing, the Two-and-a-Half International returned to the bosom of the Social Democratic Second International's right wing. The centrist task now passed over in part to forces that had lost their belief in Communism and the proletarian world revolution, to Stalinist centrism, to the SAP (in Germany), to the POUM (in Spain) and such like. Alongside them, centrist groupings of Social Democratic origin, like the ILP (in Britain), continued their work and new centrist groupings with the same origin began their work, like the 'Revolutionary Socialists', who, after the political bankruptcy of the Austrian SP in 1934, are preparing the re-opening of the Social Democratic–opportunist business under a new name.

Centrism in all its forms is always only a more or less lengthy transitional phenomenon. Again and again it is proved wrong by the ongoing class struggle; again and again it arises anew at some stage, in a more or less new form, with a more or less new composition. Centrist vacillations are an ever-recurring concomitant of the development of the consciousness of the

working class in its entirety. When the proletarian-revolutionary wave is rising, then revolutionary-minded elements, who are honestly seeking the road to the proletarian revolution, come together, at first on inadequate, namely centrist positions. Opportunists dressed up as 'lefts' mingle with them skilfully in order to hinder, to hold back the process of transition to the left. As the revolutionary wave continues to rise, if it is accompanied by the correct tactics on the part of the proletarian revolutionaries and the proletarian-revolutionary party, those who are revolutionary-minded are clarified and led over into the proletarian class party. The opportunists, however, having done their work return to where they belong, to the party of the opportunists. In the meantime, a more or less large number of those who have become exhausted fall by the wayside.

As the proletarian-revolutionary wave falls and the counter-revolutionary wave rises, a similar process takes place. The defeat of the revolution, the mistakes of the revolutionary party naturally generate stronger criticism. Some examine, criticise and seek the correct road, adhering strictly to the basic proletarian-revolutionary line. Others, with the defeat of the proletariat, begin to more or less consciously lose their belief in the proletarian class line itself, and in doing so veer towards the opportunist line. Opportunists cloaked as 'lefts' mingle with them skilfully in order to lead over as large a number as possible into fully developed opportunism. The duration and intensity of the decline and the clarity, firmness and tactics of the proletarian revolutionaries and the proletarian-revolutionary party, determine the ultimate outcome, in which some become opportunists, some lie exhausted by the wayside and others, clarified and fortified, join the revolutionary ranks.

Stalinist centrism is a special variety of politics of the centre: it is centrism on the basis of the proletarian state. It is the politics of the degenerating Stalinist bureaucracy's 'middle line' between the proletariat and the petty-bourgeois peasantry, and then between the workers, poor peasants and the upcoming new capitalist elements in Russia and is therefore also called ***bureaucratic centrism***. From time to time, here and there it escalates the sham-radical phrases that it uses to conceal its basically opportunist line to unscrupulous sham-revolutionary actions (see, for example, Stalin's putsch in Canton in December 1927). The ***Stalinist faction*** sought to keep to the middle, to the centrist line between the ***Right Opposition*** (Bucharin, Rykov), which championed overt opportunism – for example, it openly advocated boosting agricultural production by promoting the interests of the big peasants ('Let the Kulaks enrich themselves!') and thus openly advocated shifting the relationship of class forces to the advantage of this capitalist stratum – and the proletarian-revolutionary opposition, the ***Left Opposition*** (Trotsky), which consistently continued to champion the proletarian class line and the proletarian world revolution. Stalinist centrism vacillated to and fro between the overt opportunism of Bukharin-Rykov and the proletarian-revolutionary line of Trotsky. It was a continual zigzag, whereby the turns to overt opportunism became longer and longer, more and more enduring, but the turns to the left became shorter and shorter, weaker and weaker. Stalin the centrist fought under sham-radical slogans, with sham-revolutionary actions against both the left and the right, in reality putting into effect the line of overt opportunism against the line of the proletarian revolution.

In the Stalinist parties outside the Soviet Union the centrist process took on a form that was entirely dominated by the power interests and sinecures of the Stalinist clique and was therefore distorted to the point of becoming a caricature – and despite all this the Stalinist sections

somehow or other had to take the concrete circumstances of their country into consideration. The mad and maddest leaps that were made can only be understood, if one bears in mind that the grotesque zigzags in the Stalinist *filialen* (i.e. branches of the Russian Stalinist Party; trans.) outside Russia were totally dictated by the prevailing needs of the Russian Stalinist faction.

The ***Brandler Opposition*** was an offshoot of the Russian Right Opposition, 'an unfinished bridge from centrism[10] to Social Democracy' (Trotzki, 1931b, p.24). In Russia Stalin is right, but not outside Russia: that was its line. That, however, did not prevent it from advocating Stalin's 'People's' Front in France and Spain, from advocating coalition with bourgeois parties under developed capitalist conditions.

Stalinist centrism, too, is a transitional phenomenon. It is a product of the long, deep decline of the revolution, a decline that Stalinist centrism itself – in actual interplay with the SP and the LP – lengthens and deepens. Stalinist centrism became ***Stalinism***, the open Stalinist opportunism, which is developing further and further to the right. Out of the Left Opposition in the various countries arose the proletarian-revolutionary groups and organisations that are fighting for the ***Fourth International.***

In contrast to right opportunism, right doctrinarism, which only takes the transient conditions of struggle, only the temporary interests into consideration, and disregards the constant, fundamental conditions of struggle, disregards the general, enduring, principle-based interests of the entire proletarian class, '***left' doctrinarism*** (über-'radicalism', ultra-'leftism', 'left' opportunism) does the exact opposite: it only sees the enduring, common, fundamental conditions of struggle, the enduring, common, principle-based interests of the class and skips over the prevailing fluctuating, variable, temporary, transient conditions of struggle and the prevailing fluctuating, temporary, transient interests, and for this reason it is adventurist, it is adventurism. In practice all ultra-'leftism', at least in effect, in the last analysis, boils down mainly in actual fact to a complete negation of the party – and therefore also the proletarian party – and to a complete negation of the state – and therefore also the proletarian state. Every 'honest' opportunist, regardless of whether they judge or act from the right or the 'left', is doctrinaire, because they see only one part of reality – even if it is a different part – and make only one part of reality the basis for the way they act politically. Outwardly, über-'radicalism' appears to be the exact opposite of opportunism; however, in terms of its effect and therefore in its actual content, it is purest opportunism. It is inherent in the more or less undeveloped consciousness of the average worker, that they grasp, comprehend, understand the obvious, immediate conditions of struggle, the present-day interests and the day-to-day interests more easily and sooner than the general, enduring, fundamental conditions and the future interests of their class arising from them. Indeed, the seductive nature of opportunism lies precisely in the fact that it 'appeals' to the undeveloped consciousness of the average worker, clings to it, hits the ordinary worker in their weak spot, gives out their weakness as a virtue, as 'realism', as a strength, and sanctimoniously asserts that it is only carrying out the will of the class… It is precisely by means of this that the opportunists work most effectively against the revolutionary unfolding of the workers consciousness, true to their basic task of not raising proletarian consciousness, but

[10] In the first edition of this book – the one used by Melt – it says Communism instead of centrism. This is a typographical error. It is clear from Trotsky's original text that it should be centrism; Ed.

on the contrary misleading it, holding it down, lowering it. Ultra-'radicalism' again and again confronts the workers with the following alternative: fight for the immediate interests, taking into consideration the immediate, variable conditions of struggle, without regard for the constant, fundamental conditions of struggle, and in doing so abandoning the enduring, fundamental interests that the ordinary worker does not see or does not yet see or about which they have been deceived, is still being deceived in one way or another by the right opportunists by means of fine-sounding phrases – or (as the 'left' opportunists propose) fight for the future interests, for the enduring, principle-based interests, on the basis of the constant, fundamental conditions, without regard to the variable, specific conditions, while in actual fact forgoing the struggle for the immediate-burning present-day, day-to-day issues. To the relatively undeveloped consciousness of the ordinary worker, posing the question in this way is reflected, and is bound to be reflected, as the necessity of choosing between honestly meant, but unrealistic, unreal politics and politics that in comparison to this inevitably appears to them to be realistic. Faced with this choice, the mass of the ordinary workers choose according to the old opportunist rule: a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush – as long as the question, posed in a genuinely proletarian-revolutionary manner, and the genuinely proletarian-revolutionary answer to this question, do not convince the mass of the ordinary workers, that both are wrong, that both are opportunism – both the struggle ***only*** for the bird in the hand and the struggle ***only*** for the two birds in the bush – and wins the mass of the ordinary workers for the correct line, for the proletarian class line that combines effectively the struggle for ***both***, and – by means of ***revolutionary criticism and propaganda*** – ***always combines*** the ***immediate*** struggle for the ***present-day*** interests with the ***preparatory*** struggle for the ***future*** interests. The ultra-'lefts' provide the right opportunists with the semblance of realism. Ultra-'radicalism', through its effect, again and again drives the ordinary workers into the arms of the opportunists, makes it difficult to develop the consciousness of the workers and hinders their march towards the proletarian revolution; ultra-'radicalism' has an opportunist effect, it is opportunist.

The most primitive and crudest form of ultra-'leftism is ***anarchism***. It openly negates the party altogether – the proletarian party too; it negates the state altogether – the proletarian state too. It demands the ***immediate*** abolition of all parties and the ***immediate*** abolition of all states. The gigantic struggle that the working class must wage in order to realise the pre-conditions for the liquidation of class, state and party, the gigantic struggle that the proletariat can only wage effectively under the guidance of its class party and can only accomplish successfully by means of the gigantic lever of proletarian state power, this struggle, which is indispensably necessary in order to vanquish, hold down and finally liquidate the enormous capitalist class enemy the whole world over – this struggle, anarchism skips over. Something that can only be the ultimate result of this biggest struggle of all, and that takes up a whole era of humanity, anarchism – gliding over the capitalist conditions of struggle – demands immediately, instantaneously, at once. This anarchist humbug is grist to the mill for the capitalist class. The anarchists are henchmen of the bourgeoisie from the 'left. This applies – in its effect – to the ultra-'lefts' of all shades.

Revolutionary syndicalism developed in the Romanic countries (in its day it was advocated in the United States of America by the IWW, the Industrial Workers of the World), as a reaction against the tangible opportunism of the socialist parties in these countries, as well as the particularly corrupt character of bourgeois parliamentarianism there; starting out from an honest revolutionary frame of mind, revolutionary syndicalism rejected the party out of hand, rejected

taking part in the bourgeois parliament altogether and advocated the basic attitude, that leading the revolutionary struggle for power is singly and solely a matter for the (revolutionary) trade unions. In practice this boils down to the revolutionary-syndicalist trade unions having to play the role of the Party in critical situations, in which the masses are swept into the political struggle, a role that they are not equal to, and – even by virtue of their composition and attitude alone – cannot be equal to; and again this results in the greatest detriment to the working class.

Besides anarchism, manifestations of ultra-'leftism' were relatively rare in the decades before the First World War. Marx and Engels had to repeatedly fight against the use of the ultra-'radical' phrase: the '***homogenous reactionary mass***' of all the classes, strata, parties, etc. facing the proletariat: a phrase that hindered the proletariat from seeing the distinctions, differences, antagonisms in the enemy camp and utilising them in the interests of the revolutionary struggle. Decades later Stalin preached and practised this ultra-'left' nonsense in a renewed form, by throwing the very different forms of capitalist counter-revolution (fascist, Bonapartist, bourgeois-democratic, petty-bourgeois-democratic or Social Democratic and Labour) into the 'homogenous' fascist pot and thus impeded, hindered the revolutionary utilisation of the distinctions, differences and antagonisms existing in the counter-revolutionary front as a whole.

In Russia the ***Otzovists***[11] and ***Ultimatumists*** appeared (1907–09) after the defeat of the first Russian Revolution. In the reactionary phase, when the Tsarist counter-revolution was doing everything it could to isolate the revolutionaries from the masses, they demanded a boycott of the Duma (parliament), which precisely during this period of time was an important platform for the proletarian revolutionaries in Russia, in order to maintain and intensify the broad contact with the masses. Other Russian ultra-'lefts' even preached the necessity of a new religion for the proletariat (*Gottkonstrukteure* [God-constructors]).

The more the class struggle progresses, the more the class antagonisms sharpen, the more the experiences of the workers increase, and with this too the level of consciousness of the worker masses rises compared to the early capitalist period, the more 'left' doctrinarism resorts to ever more complicated, more refined, extremely refined forms of über-'radicalism'.

Immediately after the First World War, ultra-'leftism' took up the following position: rejecting participation in the bourgeois parliament altogether; refusing out of hand to work in the trade unions led by Social Democracy; the workers' council is the supreme organ of the working class, not the Communist Party (i.e. confusing class and party, not understanding the leadership role of the proletarian class party in the revolution, and therefore in actual fact negating the Communist Party); confusing their own (higher) level of consciousness, the consciousness of the revolutionary ***vanguard***, with the consciousness of the masses; rejecting any compromise altogether; rejecting any united front with the SP on principle, rejecting Lenin's united front tactic altogether on principle; rejecting the NEP (New Economic Policy) on principle. The main representatives of this view were the KAPD, the Dutch Tribunists, the Russian Workers' Opposition (Shlyapnikov). Not to mention the most hare-brained form of über-'radicalism', ***national*** '***Bolshevism***' – in 1919, the year of the strongest upsurge in the proletarian revolution

[11] From the Russian word *otozvat* – meaning to recall, in English sometimes translated as recallists; Ed.

in Germany, it strove for an alliance with the German bourgeoisie for the struggle against the Treaty of Versailles, for the struggle against the Entente, misusing the workers' councils for this as a vehicle and cover for these struggles. This went too far even for the great majority of the ultra-'lefts'. Many years later the national-'Bolshevik' corpse was resuscitated by the Stalinist bureaucracy as the 'programme for national and social liberation' in Germany and Austria.

In addition to this there were also ultra-'left' vacillations in the revolutionary camp. For example, the ***theory of the offensive***: the proletariat must, under all circumstances, launch attack upon attack, rejecting any retreat or compromise on principle. The ultra-'radical' slogan of 'uncompromising class struggle', i.e. rejecting any compromise whatsoever on principle, also recurred from time to time.

Besides these still relatively crude forms of hyper-'radicalism', there developed in the course of time a more refined ultra-'leftism', which was characterised in particular by its conduct with regard to the united front tactic. Whereas the KAPD flatly rejected Lenin's united front tactic, the ultra-'lefts', Zinoviev, Ruth Fischer and Maslow, were in words full of enthusiasm for it, but again and again exaggerated the slogans proposed for the common struggle to such a degree that they were – to the greatest satisfaction of the SP – unacceptable not only to the Social Democratic leadership, but also to the Social Democratic worker masses. In words they were for Lenin's tactic of the proletarian united front, but in terms of their deeds and the effect their deeds, they were in actual fact against it. This sham-radicalism of the ultra-'lefts', Zinoviev, Ruth Fischer and Maslow, was turned into conscious sham-radicalism by the Stalinist faction, who used it as a 'leftist' mask for its opportunist 'General Line', which it pursued under cover of the ultra-'left' slogan of the 'united front ***only*** from below'. This Stalinist swindle reached its peak in openly rejecting the proletarian united front with the SP on principle and took the form of the theory and practice of 'social fascism'. The preliminary work and help of Zinoviev, Ruth Fischer and Maslow smoothed the way for this Stalinist swindle.

As the revolutionary wave continued to subside, as the counter-revolutionary offensive intensified, the struggle for ***transitional slogans*** gained added importance for the revolutionary mobilisation of the masses. At once the ultra-'lefts' were there with their rejection ***on principle*** of any kind of transitional slogan. On the basis of rejecting bourgeois democracy on principle, on the basis of the struggle for the proletarian revolution, the appropriate, indeed necessary, tactical slogan of the defence of bourgeois democracy against the bourgeois counter-revolution played a heightened role under these concrete conditions for setting the masses in revolutionary motion (linked, of course, with proletarian-revolutionary criticism of bourgeois democracy and with revolutionary propaganda for the rule of proletarian democracy, for the proletarian dictatorship; this defence is realised by means of proletarian-revolutionary methods, and – in consequence of the developed capitalist conditions – therefore at the same time rejecting on principle any party alliance or trade union alliance with the bourgeoisie or any section of it). Instantly the ultra-'lefts' were there with their rejection ***on principle*** of even what was merely a tactical struggle for the defence of bourgeois democracy. In a still more refined form this ultra-'left' position also presented itself in the following way: for the defence of the bourgeois-democratic rights of the workers – but against even what was merely a tactical defence of bourgeois democracy; fight 'only' for the proletarian dictatorship screeched the Stalinist bureaucrats and the 'left' Social Democrats, who were shoving their way to the Stalinist trough, as the revolutionary curve fell rapidly further and further, a curve that was falling ever further

due to their complicity. When bourgeois democracy, with the help of the ultra-'lefts' too, was finished, in Germany in 1933 and in Austria in 1934, the ultra-'lefts' and Stalinist sham-radicalism too – covering up their capitulation to fascism – continued the exact same game against the transitional slogan of the tactical struggle for the restoration of bourgeois democracy.

Ultra-'leftism' responded to the Stalinist degeneration of Soviet Russia, with all its concomitant phenomena, and to the great disappointments that this process necessarily generated in the revolutionary camp, by flatly ***denying the proletarian class character of the Soviet Union***, by stating that the Soviet Union is now a capitalist state, like any other bourgeois state, and is to be treated as such, and the defence of Soviet Russia during wartime must be rejected. Such doctrinaire views appeared sporadically as early as 1924-25. In the course of time this attitude took on a more and more refined form: the proletarian class character of the degenerated Soviet state was explicitly recognised – in words; it was emphasised that the defence of the degenerated Soviet Union was a solemn duty – in words; in practice, however, politics were pursued that in their actual effect weakened the defence of the proletarian state, and therefore in actual fact negated the proletarian class character of the Soviet state. This took place in all sorts of gradations prior to the Second (imperialist) World War and even more so during it. The usual form of all these ultra-'left' shades and nuances was this: slogans that were correct ***in general*** terms for ***every*** imperialist war were given; but the ***specific*** characteristics of precisely this present imperialist war in its first big phase (the period of the big difference in danger) were not taken into consideration, they were overlooked or glided over, or they were at best only indicated or stated to a certain degree, namely in words; the ***tactical conclusions*** – ***within the framework of the proletarian-revolutionary principles***! – ***resulting from this, however, were not drawn***. It was precisely this tactical question, the determination of which was the immediate pressing issue, namely: what can, should, must the workers and soldiers of the armies of Britain, USA, etc., who are in actual fact fighting in alliance with the Red Army, do, in order to fulfil – within the framework of the proletarian-revolutionary principles – their revolutionary duty of giving ***maximum*** aid to the Red Army, to the proletarian state, which was up against the main force of what was at that time – in the given situation, from the standpoint of the world proletariat – the by far and away more dangerous section of the world bourgeoisie? – It was precisely this question that was either passed over in silence or answered with what were mere general slogans, which were in themselves quite correct but on their own insufficient and not comprehensive – because they ***lacked specific guidance on how to apply concretely the general slogan in the case in hand*** and shifted the task of determining precisely what was for the British, American, etc. (and Russian!) workers and soldiers in practice such a burning question onto the workers and soldiers themselves, i.e. shifted the leadership role of the Party onto the masses.

An incorrect attitude with regard to the relationship to the masses, with regard to the reciprocal relationship between the leadership and the masses, between the masses and the leadership underlies all ultra-'radicalism', at least in effect. All ultra-'leftism' has as its objective tendency the effect of isolating the revolutionaries from the masses, or, expressed in organisational terms, all ultra-'radicalism' is in its effect sectarian, is sectarian.

To demand ***factional freedom*** for the proletarian-revolutionary organisation, for the proletarian-revolutionary party or to give this as a slogan and build up the Party on this principle

is organisational anarchism, which would make it impossible to form a revolution party that would be capable of vanquishing the world bourgeoisie and maintaining this victory.

The ultra-'lefts' rightly draw rigorous conclusions from the disastrous results of opportunism, but in their honest indignation skip over the proletarian class line and again and again go too far, exaggerate, throw the baby out with the bathwater, make the mistake of the opportunists from the other, opposite side, from the 'left' side and land, on their part, by the effect of their actions, in opportunism.

> It is not only 'Right' doctrinarism that is erroneous, 'Left' doctrinarism, is erroneous too. Of course the mistake of 'Left' doctrinarism is at present less dangerous and less significant than that of 'Right' doctrinarism (i.e. social-chauvinism and Kautskyism), but of course this is only due to the fact that 'radical' communism is a very young current that has only just come into being. It is only for this reason that, under certain conditions, the illness can be easily cured (Lenin, 1924a, p.27).

Nowadays, merciless criticism courtesy of the historical facts is dealing the Social Democratic, Labour and Stalinist opportunists such blows, that opportunism is being shaken and compromised in the consciousness of broad masses, at least for the next big phase. At the same time, however, two big sources of opportunism have sprung up, sources that, to a very considerable measure, are nurturing ultra-'left' frames of mind, illusions, moods, attitudes, and new, new kinds of, 'radical' infantile disorders. On the European mainland, in particular, and in Stalinist Russia too, the old generation of revolutionary fighters has, for the most part, been annihilated – in the latter by Stalinism, in the former by fascism. A workers' youth, ablaze with a burning thirst for revenge and action and almost completely lacking in Marxist-Leninist knowledge, is emerging from the sufferings of the counter-revolutionary pre-war phase and the terrible torments of the Second (imperialist) World War. There is a very great danger that its revolutionary drive for action, which justifiably gives rise to the greatest hopes, can be misled into all kinds of sham-radical, useless, energy-wasting actions that are detrimental to the revolution. In addition, this danger is enormously increased as a result of fascism having literally ruined, proletarianised very broad strata of the petty bourgeoisie, and driven their petty-bourgeois radicalism to boiling point; the fact that they were pressed into the factories with the most brutal force, in no way means that they have from one day to the next turned their petty-bourgeois mindset (*Gedankenwelt*) into proletarian consciousness. Under these circumstances, for the next phase, the 'left' opportunist, ultra-'left' danger is not at all smaller, but is, on the contrary, at least as big as the right opportunist danger.

> The theoretical-abstract recognition of these truths (namely the truths about the petty-bourgeois-revolutionary spirit and petty-bourgeois 'radicalism'; auth.) does not at all rid the revolutionary parties of the old errors (namely the 'radical' infantile disorders; auth.), which always crop up on some unexpected occasion in a somewhat newer form, in unprecedented garb or surroundings, under more or less novel circumstances (Lenin, 1920b, p.14).

If there is one thing able to help bankrupt opportunism back onto its feet again and prolong its life, it is the failure of proletarian revolutionaries in the face of the 'radical' infantile disorders. Only if proletarian revolutionaries and their organisation are completely clear and firm in

demarcating themselves, not only from right opportunism, but also from every variety of old and new 'left' opportunism, from every form of über-'radicalism', only then will they be able to shorten as much as possible the coming wave of 'radical' infantile disorders, through which the workers' movement will inevitably pass within the foreseeable future, and overcome this wave in the interests of the proletarian revolution with the least possible loss of proletarian class strength and fighting strength, to the advantage of the proletarian-revolutionary party and the proletarian revolution.

> Our party cannot make headway unless it decisively liquidates liquidationism. And liquidationism does not only include the direct liquidationism of the Mensheviks and their opportunist tactics. It ***also*** includes ***inverted Menshevism***. It includes 'Otzovism' and 'Ultimatumism', which are working against the fulfilment of the immediate task that constitutes a particular characteristic of this present time, namely the task of utilising the Duma platform and creating bases out of all the semi-legal and legal organisations of the working class. The 'god-constructors' and the defence of their tendencies are also included in this (Lenin, [1909] 1925b, pp.258-259).
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> One of the most necessary conditions for preparing the proletariat for victory is a lengthy, persistent, ruthless struggle against opportunism, reformism, social-chauvinism and other such bourgeois influences and trends, which are inevitable in so far as the proletariat is operating in a capitalist environment. Without this struggle, ***IF OPPORTUNISM (AS WELL AS ANARCHISM) IN THE WORKERS' MOVEMENT IS NOT UTTERLY DEFEATED BEFOREHAND THERE CAN BE NO QUESTION OF A DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT***. Bolshevism could not have defeated the bourgeoisie in 1917-1919, if before that in 1903-1917 it had not learned to defeat the Mensheviks, i.e. the opportunists, reformists and social-chauvinists and to ruthlessly drive them out of the party of the proletarian vanguard (Lenin, [1919] 1920d, p.26).
>
> Of all the defeated opposition and revolutionary parties, the Bolsheviks effected the most orderly retreat, with the fewest losses to their 'army', with its core best preserved, with the least significant splits (in terms of depth and incurability), with the least demoralisation, and with the greatest ability to resume the work on the broadest scale, and in the most correct and energetic manner as possible. The Bolsheviks achieved this only because they ***ruthlessly exposed and expelled the revolutionary phrase-mongers***, who did not wish to understand that one had to retreat, that one had to know how to retreat, and that one absolutely had to learn to work legally in the most reactionary parliaments, in the most reactionary of trade unions, co-operatives, insurance societies and other organisations (Lenin, [1920] 1930c, p.14).
>
> It is not yet well enough known in other countries that Bolshevism grew up, developed and became steeled in the long years of ***struggle against the petty-bourgeois revolutionary spirit that is similar to anarchism or borrows many things from it***, and, in all essential matters, deviates from the conditions and requirements of the consistent proletarian class struggle. […]

> When it came into being in 1903, Bolshevism took over the tradition of ***ruthless struggle against the petty-bourgeois, semi-anarchist (or one that flirted with anarchism) revolutionary spirit*** (Lenin, 1920b, pp.13, 14).

Lenin demands 'victory over opportunism ***and*** left doctrinarism within the workers' movement' (ibid., p.70).

> While the first historical task (that of drawing over the class-conscious vanguard of the proletariat to the side of Soviet power and the dictatorship of the proletariat) could not have been solved without the complete ideological and political victory over opportunism and social-chauvinism, the second task – which is now becoming the immediate task and consists in leading the masses to a new position capable of securing victory for the vanguard in the revolution – this immediate task (namely: the ***winning of the masses for the proletarian revolution***; auth.) cannot be accomplished without the ***liquidation of left doctrinarism***, and without ***completely overcoming its mistakes***, without ***being rid of these mistakes*** (ibid., p.71).

If the Bolshevik Party had not resisted ultra-'leftism', then it would not have become a mass party. Only after Bolshevism had fought out the struggle with left liquidationism, did it take on its final form. Only through its never-yielding struggle against right opportunism and on this basis against über-'radicalism' in every form too, did Lenin's party gain that steely hardness and, at the same time, that elasticity that enabled it to lead the proletariat to power and to maintain proletarian power. Exactly the same holds good for the proletarian revolutionaries of today: only in a never-yielding struggle against all opportunism, against opportunism from the right and on this basis against opportunism from the 'left' too, only in a never-yielding struggle against ultra-'leftism' in all its forms are they able to build up a real proletarian-revolutionary party, win the masses for it, lead them to victory and maintain this victory. Only on the basis of a consistent struggle against right opportunism is the firm demarcation from ultra-'radicalism' a mark of a genuine, conscious, fundamentally proletarian-revolutionary standpoint.

A particularly important question with regard to opportunism is the ***giving up of the leadership role of the proletariat and of the proletarian party***. Firstly, the leadership role of the ***proletariat*** is given up by the opportunists: for example, in the bourgeois-democratic revolution, once there are already somewhat more developed conditions, as in the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia from the early years of the twentieth century on; or in alliance with the middle masses, with the peasants/farmers, with the petty-bourgeois-democratic parties, with Social Democracy, etc.; or in the colonial-revolutionary liberation struggle, once the colonial bourgeoisie begins to turn away from the bourgeois-democratic revolution: Stalin's politics in China subordinated the Chinese proletariat to the Chinese bourgeoisie – Chiang Kai-shek's first *coup d'etat* in March 1926 already provided the tangible proof that the Chinese bourgeoisie had played out its bourgeois-revolutionary role and that the bourgeois-democratic revolution in China could be completed only by fighting against the Chinese bourgeoisie – it was precisely through this that Stalin's politics deprived the Chinese proletariat of the leadership of the Chinese peasant masses, and with Leninist politics, the Chinese proletariat could have easily and surely gained this leadership. Secondly, they give up the leadership role of the proletarian ***party***. It is precisely this question that is of particular importance today, because it is the most cunning form in which the opportunists conceal from the working class, the fact that they are to

blame for the catastrophes into which they have led the proletariat. This question will be discussed separately elsewhere.

V. The Class Relationship between the Proletariat and the Bourgeoisie

The relationship to the class enemy, the bourgeoisie, is ***the*** main practical question for all proletarian politics, strategy and tactics altogether.

The Marxist ***principle of class struggle*** – it arises out of historical materialism – states in general terms that the motion of a society split into classes is driven by the struggle between the classes. The struggle between states, peoples and nations too, i.e. ***war***, is, in class society, in reality class struggle: it is armed struggle between exploiting, ruling classes, who, by force and cunning, compel the oppressed classes that they exploit to wage war, war that serves the exploitation interests and power interests of their exploiters and oppressors – or it is armed struggle between exploited, oppressed peoples, or sections of peoples, and the peoples who are exploiting and oppressing them, and who in class society, on their part, are exploited and oppressed by their own exploiters' class (or armed struggle to subjugate the exploited, oppressed peoples or sections of people and subject them to exploitation by their own exploiters' class) – or it is armed struggle between the working class in alliance with the non-exploiting, themselves exploited middle masses, and organised as the proletarian-democratic state, and the exploiters' states. The ***exploitation and oppression of peoples by peoples*** is, in class society, class struggle; for in truth it is the plundering, sucking dry and oppression in the interests of the exploiting, ruling class, in the interests of the people carrying out the exploitation and oppression, an exploiting, ruling class that throws a few morsels to its own exploited and oppressed masses – in the main to its upper stratum – in order to bribe them and keep their support.

The Marxist principle of class struggle in ***capitalist*** society – this principle arises as a result of the laws of motion of the capitalist mode of production, which Marx has analysed and described in such a masterly way in his work *Capital* – states: the class antagonism between proletariat and bourgeoisie is ***irreconcilable***; the general, enduring, fundamental, in a word, the class interests of both classes contradict each other point for point, they are diametrically opposed to each other, they are mutually exclusive, and are incompatible and irreconcilable with each other. The working class has, neither with the capitalist class as a whole, nor with any section of it, any enduring, principle-based interests in common. Let us examine this point by point:

1. The bourgeoisie and every one of its sections is for capitalist property in the decisive means of production.

> 1. The proletariat is for the abolition of the property of the capitalist class in the decisive means of production; the decisive means of production should be the property of the proletarian-democratic state, which ultimately – in the same measure as the classes are liquidated – leads them over into becoming the property of society as a whole, placing them at the disposal of society as a whole, to be administered by society as a whole.

2. The bourgeoisie is for production through the exploitation of wage workers.

> 2. The proletariat is for the abolition of wage labour and is against any exploitation of human beings by other human beings altogether.

3. The bourgeoisie is for the highest possible degree of exploitation of the wage workers; the coercive law of capitalist competition, which no capitalist or capitalist group can evade, drives, compels the bourgeoisie to work continuously at reducing real wages.

> 3. The proletariat is for the greatest possible increase in real wages; this includes a reduction in labour time, limits on the intensification of labour, continuous employment and earnings, effective protection and ample insurance against the dangers of the labour process and a secure old age worthy of human beings for every working, toiling, non-exploiting human being.

4. The bourgeoisie is for the biggest possible profits.

> 4. The proletariat is against all profit, against all private appropriation of the social surplus product and surplus value, against all enriching of a private individual at the expense of society; the proletariat is against production for profit for a stratum of capitalists or the capitalist class; it is for production organised for the purpose of meeting the needs of human society in its entirety.

5. The bourgeoisie is for capitalist command, for command by individual capitalists, capitalist groups, capitalist states and international capitalist associations over the social reproduction process; it is for the capitalists to determine whether to produce, and what and how much is to be produced, whether to accumulate, and what and how much is to be accumulated, and how whatever has been accumulated is to be used. It is for the capitalists to determine whether, when, to what extent and for how long production is to be reduced or stopped and the workers employed in an undertaking thrown into unemployment.

The bourgeoisie is for production that at the societal scale is anarchic and planless, that leaves it up to each capitalist, each group of capitalists, each capitalist state or each international capitalist association to produce or not to produce as they see fit, to produce whatever and however much they please. If, and in as far as, the bourgeoisie organises production, it only does this in order to boost its profits and boost exploitation; by doing this it abolishes the planlessness of the capitalist mode of production only in certain sectors or spheres, and only to a certain extent; in reality it does not get rid of competition, but centralises and concentrates the fragmented competition and escalates it to ever more concentrated, rapacious, violent, ever more explosive competition.

> 5. The proletariat is against capitalist command over the social reproduction process; the proletarian-democratic state and ultimately human society as a whole – organised as a world co-operative that administers itself fraternally, in liberty and equality – has to decide whether, what and how much is to be produced, whether to accumulate, and what and how much is to be accumulated and how whatever is accumulated is to be utilised; whether, when, to what extent and for how long production is to be reduced or stopped. The proletariat is for production by all human beings that is organised systematically in such a way that it is free from all exploitation; it is for a systematic shortening of labour time, etc., so that unemployment is made impossible altogether, and – until this process of organising the economy has been completed – it is for providing

support for the unemployed, support that is worthy of human beings, throughout the period of their unemployment.

The proletariat is for production organised systematically at the scale of the proletarian-democratic state and at a world scale. In the last analysis, it is ultimately the world co-operative, a co-operative that encompasses all human beings and administers itself fraternally in liberty and equality, that will determine what and how much to produce and how the social product, and especially the social surplus product, will be utilised at any given time.

6. The bourgeoisie, and each of its sections, is for the capitalist state – for the purpose of carrying on capitalist exploitation and profit making permanently, for the permanent subjugation of the wage workers, above all for permanently securing its class property in the decisive means of production, in short, for permanently maintaining the capitalist conditions of production.

6. The proletariat is for the smashing of the capitalist state, whatever form it may take, even if it takes a (bourgeois-)democratic form; the proletariat is for the proletarian-democratic state – i.e. for the dictatorship of the proletariat in alliance with the non-exploiting, themselves exploited peasant/farmers and petty-bourgeois masses, led by the working class, against the capitalist class – as the necessary transition, in order to create the pre-conditions for a humanity without classes, states or parties and, is in the last analysis, for a world co-operative of the whole of humanity, which administers itself fraternally as an association of free and equal human beings.

Point for point the fundamental, general, ***enduring*** interests of both classes, in short, the proletarian class interests and the capitalist class interests are diametrically opposed to each other and no reconciliation whatsoever is possible between them. Between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie there is therefore ***on principle*** no other relationship than that of class struggle.

But what is the position with regard to the relationship of the two classes in relation to specific interests, to interests that can change, to temporary, ***transient*** interests? Are there non-fundamental interests that are ***temporarily*** common to both the proletariat ***as a class*** and the bourgeoisie or a section of the bourgeoisie? In order to answer this question, one must distinguish between the various phases of the process of historical development and between the three great epochs of capitalist development.

1. In ***undeveloped capitalism, at the very beginning of the epoch of capitalist ascent***, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie have in actual fact certain transient, non-fundamental interests in common. At first, the bulk of the bourgeoisie fights for the overthrow of feudal rule, for the abolition of the feudal economic system, against feudal exploitation – and for capitalist exploitation, for a capitalist economy, for capitalist rule, for bourgeois democracy and – where these problems are not yet resolved – for national freedom and independence and for national unity, i.e. for a national market for the national bourgeoisie. Here there are not only in negative terms, but also in actual fact in ***positive*** terms, very important common interests of a transient nature. The pre-proletariat, and also the modern proletariat at this very first stage, is still lacking proletarian consciousness; the workers do not yet recognise their own, independent interests that conflict with those of the bourgeoisie, and thus, because of the illusions they have, also

take at face value the fine words about justice, liberty, equality, fraternity, humanity, etc., strewn around very liberally by representatives of the ascending bourgeoisie as positive common interests. And yet, over and above this, there really does exist a temporary positive community of interests in the very important question of developing the productive forces hindered by feudalism and replacing feudal rule – which has to be overthrown – by bourgeois democracy, and defending bourgeois democracy against the feudal counter-revolution. Hand in hand with this – where these questions are not yet resolved – goes the transient positive common interest of establishing national freedom and national unity, as an important requirement for the development of the productive forces, for the development and ascent of the working class. In comparison to feudal absolutism, bourgeois democracy does in actual fact bring the workers considerable positive advantages. It gives them far greater scope; it provides, to a considerable extent, the basis for developing their struggle; the illusions to which the worker masses succumb for a more or less lengthy period of time with regard to bourgeois democracy does not alter anything in this regard. As ***the workers are still without proletarian consciousness, or at best have extremely undeveloped proletarian consciousness***, they do ***not yet*** make ***any independent proletarian demands***; the working class does not yet make its appearance as the leader of the masses in the revolutionary struggle; the bourgeoisie is still entirely in a position to drag the workers behind itself as followers, and to make use of their fighting strength for itself, and precisely for this reason it remains bourgeois-revolutionary, bourgeois-revolutionary-democratic; the bourgeoisie does not yet fear the proletariat and thus carries through the bourgeois revolution consistently, as it did in France in the eighteenth century. This period, where there is a positive ***community of interests*** between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, moves entirely on the basis of the fact that the proletarian consciousness of the workers does not yet exist.

2. As the ascent of capitalism progresses, in the ***transitional phase from undeveloped capitalism to mature, developed capitalism***, the workers begin to become aware of their independent worker interests and to stand up for them. In the same measure the bourgeoisie sits up and takes notice – the strikes, the revolutionary moods, the revolutionary struggles by the working class fill it with worry. With growing disquiet, it sees the first indications that show the prospect of the proletariat becoming the revolutionary leader of the broad toiling masses, and in particular the peasant masses. Positioned between the feudal exploiters and the wage workers, the capitalist exploiters are inclined to vacillate more and more towards making a ***compromise*** with the feudal or semi-feudal, absolutist monarchy and the feudal or semi-feudal estate owners – a compromise that is directed against the working class. Fearing ***independent action by the workers***, ***who are becoming conscious of their interests***, the bourgeoisie increasingly gives up on carrying through and finishing its own bourgeois-democratic revolution; the bourgeois-revolutionary, revolutionary-democratic role of the bourgeoisie increasingly comes to an end, till nothing at all is left of it: the bourgeoisie has completely played out its revolutionary role. From time to time, moving towards the proletariat, the bourgeoisie, or at least its left wing – again and again supported by the opportunists – tries to make use of the workers as followers in the vacillating, waning struggle of the bourgeoisie against the feudal or semi-feudal remnants. This is the period when there is a ***vacillating community of interests*** between proletariat and bourgeoisie. Already advanced in terms of its consciousness, the revolutionary section of the proletariat no longer lets itself be used by the bourgeoisie, not even by its left wing; it is no longer taken in by the opportunists, but on its part makes use of the

vacillations of the bourgeoisie by means of an appropriate tactic. When, where and insofar the bourgeoisie fights against absolutism, feudalism or semi-feudalism and for national freedom, independence and unity, the revolutionary proletariat 'supports' its actions, that is to say it supports any action of this kind by the bourgeoisie; however, at the same time, it consistently continues direct action by the proletariat – appropriately graded – against the bourgeoisie, while preserving the absolute, political and organisational autonomy and independence of the proletarian class party and fighting with perseverance for the revolutionary alliance with the peasant masses.

3. In ***developed capitalism***, in the ***epoch of capitalist decline***, the vacillating community of interests disappears too, and indeed even with that of the left-bourgeois wing. This is the epoch where there is a ***complete antagonism of interests*** between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. In the developed capitalist countries, feudalism has, by and large, been liquidated, the feudal lords have shed their coats and have become interwoven with the bourgeoisie; national freedom, independence and unity have, by and large, been established. The bourgeoisie has fully and clearly recognised the revolutionary character and the revolutionary role of the working class. Now as before the bourgeoisie – especially its left wing – tries to make use of the fighting strength of the proletariat for itself and for this purpose, it tries, with the help of the opportunists, to mislead, weaken, lower and disintegrate the consciousness of as large sections as possible of the working class; under certain conditions, the entire capitalist class, under the leadership of the monopoly bourgeoisie, tries, by means of fascist methods, to eradicate as far as possible the proletarian consciousness of the worker masses, which has been paralysed by the countless treacheries of the opportunists. The capitalists no longer entertain any illusions about roping in a proletariat conscious of its interests; they no longer vacillate in this direction. The bourgeoisie has completely given up its bourgeois-revolutionary task and has finally played out its socially progressive role; it has clearly, completely, ***finally become a counter-revolutionary force***, not only with regard to the proletarian revolution, but even with regard to finishing the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, where and in as far as such remaining bourgeois-democratic tasks have, in exceptional cases, still not been completely finished in a mature bourgeois country. Clearly, consciously and without any vacillation, the capitalist class directs its front against the working class – both the bourgeoisie as a whole and all its sections, i.e. the monopoly bourgeoisie as well as the non-monopoly bourgeoisie. Where the non-monopoly bourgeois still give themselves out to be (bourgeois-) liberal and (bourgeois-)democratic, this is in essence only a trick, in order to deceive backward sections of the working class and make use of them in the competitive struggle against the monopoly bourgeoisie and to maintain and hold on to their own position as capitalist exploiters and masters more easily; at best it is a fall-back position kept for extremely critical situations, in order – in the event of proletarian revolution – to save and restore the overall position of the capitalist class, with the help of its liberal, democratically freshly-dressed up left, non-monopoly wing, in collaboration with the agents of the bourgeoisie in the workers' movement, i.e. the opportunists, just like in 1918 and the years that followed. In the countries with mature capitalism there is, even in non-fundamental, purely tactical questions, no longer any positive community of interests between the proletariat as a class and the bourgeoisie or any section of it, not even a vacillating, transient, temporary positive community of interests; this does not hinder the opportunists in their unceasing efforts to again and again pretend to the workers and lie to them that such a community of interests exists. ***IN THE COUNTRIES WITH DEVELOPED***

CAPITALISM THERE IS NO COMMUNITY OF INTERESTS WHATSOEVER BETWEEN THE PROLETARIAT AS A CLASS AND THE BOURGEOISIE OR ANY SECTION OF THE BOURGEOISIE, NOT EVEN A VACILLATING, TRANSIENT ONE; THERE IS WITHOUT EXCEPTION IN ALL QUESTIONS, IN BOTH FUNDAMENTAL AND NON-FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS, IN BOTH ENDURING AND TRANSIENT QUESTIONS, IN PRINCIPLE-BASED AS WELL AS TACTICAL QUESTIONS, ONLY ANTAGONISM BETWEEN ALL PROLETARIAN AND ALL CAPITALIST INTERESTS THAT ARE DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSED TO ONE ANOTHER AND ARE COMPLETELY MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE. Insofar as here and there, now and then, a transient ***negative*** community of interests arises between this or that ***section*** of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat ***as a class***, this must be taken into consideration, i.e. made use of tactically to the advantage of the world proletariat, the proletarian state and the world revolution; this, however, in no way suffices for a party alliance (trade union alliance, etc.), for this requires a positive community of interests that – even if it is only transient – is nevertheless indispensable. To be sure there are, now as before, differences, conflicts of interests of all kinds within the capitalist class, in particular too in relation to the capitalist tactics to be applied with regard to the wage workers; it is precisely as a result of this that a transient negative community of interests arises temporarily between this or that section of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat as a class. The proletariat must – using a suitable tactic – again and again make revolutionary use of these antagonisms. However, not a single one of the inner-capitalist antagonisms creates any ***positive*** community of interests – not even a vacillating, temporary, transient one – between the workers as a class and any section whatsoever of the capitalist class. In developed capitalism the Marxist principle of class struggle takes on its sharpest form: ***IN COUNTRIES WITH MATURE CAPITALISM, ANY SUPPORT, ANY COMMON FRONT, ANY COLLABORATION, ANY ALLIANCE WHATSOEVER BY THE PROLETARIAN PARTY (TRADE UNION, ETC.) WITH THE BOURGEOISIE OR ANY SECTION OF IT, OR WITH ANY OF ITS ORGANISATIONS, PARTIES WHATSOEVER – EVEN IF IT IS THE PARTY OF THE MOST LEFT NON-MONOPOLY CAPITALISTS – IS COMPLETELY IMPERMISSIBLE.***

The development of capitalism proceeds by no means evenly; quite the contrary, it proceeds extremely unevenly. Side by side with the capitalistically developed countries, there are capitalistically ***backward*** countries. They are at extremely varied levels of economic and social development. With regard to the class struggle, therefore, the individual nature of every single backward country at any particular time must be kept very firmly in mind. Nevertheless, as parts of the capitalist world economy, they have common basic features. The Marxist principle of class struggle in capitalist society applies to them too. However, in these countries the class relationship between proletariat and bourgeoisie is reproduced under peculiar and, in comparison to the old mature bourgeois countries, more and more advanced conditions.

In the backward countries, capitalist relations of production develop under progressively more and more developed conditions. Capitalism is transplanted to these countries in what is – at any given time – its most advanced form. The many stages and intermediate stages through which it had to pass in Britain, from medieval handicrafts via manufacturing to the modern factory, from the small undertaking via the middle-sized to the large undertaking are not replicated in these countries, but are, to a greater or lesser extent, skipped: in these countries, capitalist production makes its appearance – as was the case most recently in Russia, China and India – in the form of modern, large-scale, factory-based undertakings, indeed gigantic

undertakings. The later capital spreads to a backward country, the higher the level of capitalist development at which it begins its course. For this reason, the consciousness of the proletariat in the backward countries develops relatively much more quickly than in earlier times in the long-established countries. What required centuries in the latter, takes place in the former over a few decades. Far more quickly than in the long-established countries, the workers in the backward countries begin to come forward with independent, proletarian demands and begin to develop proletarian consciousness, develop a level of proletarian organisation. Russia and China demonstrated this particularly clearly.

In the backward countries, the uneven course of capitalist development reproduces the conditions for the positive community of interests between proletariat and bourgeoisie – or at least the left wing of the indigenous bourgeoisie – against the feudal/semi-feudal economy, rule and fragmentation, and for bourgeois democracy and national unity ***during the very early period*** (i.e. when there is a positive community of interests; trans.), just like in the long-established bourgeois countries in their time. But ***in the backward countries this phase when there is a positive community of interests passes far more rapidly***, because the workers in these countries begin to come forward much sooner with their independent worker demands and the bourgeoisie in these countries very soon shrinks from consistently carrying through the bourgeois-democratic revolution; its bourgeois-revolutionary, revolutionary-democratic role is played out much more rapidly, and turns much more quickly into a counter-revolutionary force, i.e. counter-revolutionary even from the standpoint of its own revolution, the bourgeois revolution. The period of the very early positive community of interests and then too the ensuing phase of vacillating community of interests, are over in a relatively much shorter period of time. Where and when during this second phase, i.e. the period of vacillating community of interests, the bourgeoisie (which is going over more and more to counterrevolution) zigzags to the left, these zigzags must be utilised for the (proletarian; trans.) revolution by means of an appropriate tactic; this never suffices, not even in this case, for a party alliance or trade union alliance and such like.

At the beginning of the ascent of the capitalist economy in Britain, France, etc., there was no question yet of there being a capitalist world market. Even at the time of the German and Austrian revolutions of 1848, it was only in the process of coming into being. The British and French bourgeoisie, indeed even the German, Austrian, etc. bourgeoisie had at that time initially developed internationally as more or less independent forces. It is quite otherwise in the case of the bourgeoisie in the backward countries. Today, no country may be considered in isolation, let alone a backward one; on the contrary, it must always be considered ***internationally*** in its world-economic and world-political context. In a backward country the building up of capitalism takes place from the start under much more advanced conditions internationally than in its day in Britain and France or even Germany and Austria. In a backward country this accelerates the process of awakening the proletariat to the recognition of, and the struggle for, its own interests even more. Here, from the start, the commercial capitalists are to a large extent dependent on the foreign bourgeoisie: they act as intermediaries in the trade between foreign capital and their pre-capitalist hinterland. The industrial bourgeoisie of the backward country tries to make use of the fighting strength of their own workers (and peasants) in order to free itself from competition from foreign capital and in order to bring about the country's independence from imperialism. As long as these workers either do not make any working-class demands or only direct them against the foreign capitalists, the industrial bourgeoisie is for the anti-imperialist struggle.

However, once the workers begin to make independent proletarian demands that are against (the interests of; trans.) the indigenous capitalists too, the industrial bourgeoisie abandons the national-revolutionary struggle and the anti-imperialist struggle along with the struggle for the bourgeois-democratic revolution; it makes common front with the indigenous feudal/semi-feudal lords, and even with the imperialists, to oppose the workers. This applies even more so to the money capitalists and the bank capitalists. (In addition, in China, the Chinese capitalists are themselves mostly landowners and, therefore – together with the semi-feudal landowners – have an interest in the semi-feudal exploitation of the peasants.)

Thus, in the more or less backward countries, above all in the ***colonial***, and ***semi-colonial countries***, like China, India, etc. – apart from the earliest beginnings, when the proletariat still has no consciousness or only an extremely undeveloped one (and it is only during this period that the bourgeoisie acts in a revolutionary manner) – there is no longer a positive community of interests between the proletariat as a class and the bourgeoisie, or even its left wing. The result of this is that ***in these countries the bourgeois-democratic revolution can only be completed by the working class***, supported by the peasantry in its entirety, as long as the class antagonism in the countryside has not yet opened up; but once this class antagonism becomes evident, the working class can only do this with the support of the poor, non-exploiting, themselves exploited peasant masses. A bourgeois-democratic revolution that is led with the utmost consistency by the proletariat will, in the course of time, ultimately turn into a ***socialist*** revolution. (In ***China*** the big peasants are – as village usurers – in actual fact agents of urban bank capital; here the bourgeois-democratic revolution can only be completed by the proletariat in alliance with the ***poor*** peasants.) Where, therefore – as in the case of backward ***Spain*** in 1936-39 – the proletariat is misled and forced into an alliance with sections of the bourgeoisie by treacherous parties, this is – given the lack of a positive community of interests – bound to lead to a catastrophe for the proletariat. This had already been demonstrated (1926-27) in the ***Chinese catastrophe***, when the Stalinist bureaucracy ensnared the Chinese workers and forced them into an alliance with the Chinese bourgeoisie, even though there was no longer a positive community of interests between the two classes.

The intensified imperialist struggle between the monopoly capitalists in the epoch of capitalist decline leads to the imperialist subjugation, oppression and exploitation even of countries that are to a greater or lesser extent ***capitalistically developed***, but on a world scale are weaker in terms of power. Straightaway the opportunists construe a positive community of interests between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, or at least its left wing, as a basis for their coalition, their ‘people’s’ front, their social-patriotism. However, the Dutch bourgeoisie does not cease to be imperialist, because its colonies are occupied by Japan. The Norwegian bourgeoisie indeed has no colonies, neither is it striving for any, but through its financial interests it is closely linked to and interwoven with imperialism and goes through thick and thin with it. In all civilised countries, in Switzerland too, capitalism has become imperialist capitalism (Lenin states in *Twelve Brief Theses on H. Greulich’s Defence of Fatherland Defence*, January 1917). Needless to say, we must – using a suitable tactic – make revolutionary use of the differences and antagonisms between the subjugating and the subjugated imperialist bourgeoisie, but be absolutely clear that there is no positive community of interests whatsoever between the proletariat and any weaker imperialist bourgeoisie (or even its left wing) that is being subjugated by a more powerful imperialist power. In all countries where capitalism is to a certain extent developed, the bourgeoisie is at the very least closely connected financially with imperialism

and is becoming ever more closely connected. No subjugation, oppression or exploitation by a more powerful imperialist power creates any kind of positive community of interests between the proletariat as a class and the bourgeoisie or a capitalist faction of the subjugated, oppressed, exploited country. What we have here is and continues to be only an antagonism between weaker and stronger sections of the imperialist bourgeoisie, and we must make revolutionary use of this, using a suitable form of tactics.

Non-monopoly, non-fascist, anti-fascist bourgeois elements may here or there resist the fascist dictatorship, especially when a particular monopoly capitalist dictatorship looks like coming to an end. Opportunists of all kinds seek to entice the proletariat into an alliance, into a 'people's' front with these bourgeois elements, by pretending – with the aid of purely ***negative*** slogans such as 'against fascism!', 'anti-fascist struggle!', 'anti-fascist war!', 'anti-fascist government!', etc., – that a positive community of interests exists – one that in reality does not exist. Our analysis later on will show that behind the identically sounding negative slogans used by a section of the monopoly world bourgeoisie (or, on a national scale, by the non-monopoly bourgeoisie, or used by all its helpers) on the one hand, and when used by the proletariat on the other, there are entirely different positive interests, purposes and aims, which brand any supporting, making common cause, collaboration or alliance as treachery. However, this in no way excludes 'supporting'; on the contrary it makes 'supporting' – i.e. the revolutionary utilisation of the prevailing inner-capitalist antagonisms by using an appropriate tactic to the advantage of the proletariat, the proletarian state included and to the advantage of the world revolution – a duty.

A big setback in social development can throw the working class back to the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, or to the tactic of fighting for the restoration of bourgeois democracy. This is a possibility that unfortunately cannot be excluded. Let us assume, for example, that Germany is defeated, subjugated and torn into pieces by Anglo-American imperialism. The German working class would then be hurled back, admittedly not to the task of abolishing feudalism – which has long since been liquidated – but to the task of regaining national freedom and unity (within the framework of the slogan of the united proletarian-democratic, socialist states of Europe, of the world). In the face of forms of the overt capitalist dictatorship, it is possible that the working class could – as long as it and its party have not substantially worked their way out of the powerlessness into which they had been hurled back – be thrown back to the tactical transitional slogan of fighting for the restoration of bourgeois democracy (combined of course with proletarian-revolutionary criticism of bourgeois democracy and with propaganda for the proletarian-democratic dictatorship). As already stated, this is a possibility. But this in no way means that as a result of this the conditions would be created for a positive community of interests, for collaboration, for a party alliance or trade union alliance with the German (Italian, etc.) bourgeoisie or with a section of it! Yet this is precisely what the opportunists of all genres – like the LP, the SP, the StP, the centrists, etc. – have in mind. This is a repeat of the same (political; trans.) difference that Lenin already had at a lower level with the Mensheviks. The revolution is bourgeois, said the Mensheviks, therefore the working class must support the bourgeoisie, must ally itself with the bourgeoisie and even leave the leadership of the revolution to the bourgeoisie. Yes, the revolution is bourgeois, Lenin replied: this means that the bourgeois-democratic task has still to be completed, but this in no way means that the proletariat has to entrust the carrying out of this task to the bourgeoisie or even leave the leadership of the revolution to it. Just the opposite, said Lenin: under the given conditions

nowadays (namely in Russia at that time), this task can no longer be carried out in alliance with the bourgeoisie or with a section of it, but can only be carried out in alliance with revolutionary bourgeois democracy, i.e. with the revolutionary-democratic peasants and petty bourgeois, and indeed under the leadership of the working class against the bourgeoisie! Lenin's whole pamphlet *Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution* (July 1905) is devoted to proving this. What applied in Russia back then, applies all the more so nowadays, and indeed more sharply under what are substantially more advanced conditions: if, in Germany, Italy, etc., as a result of a big setback, bourgeois-democratic tasks are placed on the agenda again, then these are tasks that nowadays can only be carried out in these countries in alliance with the ***poor, non-exploiting, themselves exploited peasants/farmers and petty bourgeois under the leadership of the working class against the bourgeoisie***, and never ever in alliance with the bourgeoisie or with any wing of it – no matter how 'left' it may be!

In itself, the proletarian ***state*** supporting capitalist states, making common cause with them, collaborating or allying itself with capitalist states in no way contradicts the Marxist principle of class struggle. Firstly, in specific situations, there do in actual fact exist certain transient common positive interests between the proletarian state and this or that bourgeois state, or this or that group of capitalist states. Secondly, however, the proletarian state is the organisation embodying the alliance between the proletariat and the non-exploiting, themselves exploited peasant/farmer and petty-bourgeois masses, and, even if the working class has the leadership, the hegemony within it, the alliance of the proletarian state with a capitalist state is – strictly speaking in terms of class – not an alliance between the working class and a section of the bourgeoisie, but an alliance comprising a state-based coalition of the proletarian class and the genuine middle class, and led by the working class, with a section of the world bourgeoisie. Such an alliance is, depending on the situation, an appropriate, indeed necessary, form of action, in order to make use of the antagonisms between the capitalist powers, for the proletarian state, for the world proletariat and the world revolution. Incidentally, there is in addition another fundamental difference between the alliances concluded by the proletarian state and the alliances concluded by the proletarian party. This is dealt with elsewhere.

Both the question of the class relationship of the working class to the bourgeoisie and the question of the alliance of the proletarian party with the bourgeoisie must not be raised undialectically, abstractly, i.e. without regard to the particularity of the different phases of capitalist development. But here, the question is posed dialectically, concretely and answered concretely, i.e. it does take account of the specific particularity of the prevailing phase of capitalist development. The SP, the StP, the LP, the centrists, etc., in short the opportunists, do the opposite. The transient positive community of interests in certain non-principle-based, purely tactical questions, which did in actual fact exist in the earliest phase of the epoch of capitalist ascent and therefore in actual fact did make it possible, permissible to temporarily support and/or make common cause, collaborate, or form an alliance with the bourgeoisie or sections of it – and indeed on the basis of and within the framework of the fundamentally irreconcilable class antagonism and class struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie – is presented by the opportunists as an abstract, a general, an enduringly given fact; they abstract, disregard the specific concrete, economic, social and political conditions of the different stages of development and make out that what was the case and what was possible and permissible under quite specific economic, social and political conditions – namely in the early phase of the epoch of capitalist ascent – to be something that is the case, is possible and permissible under

all conditions and circumstances whatsoever, even under the conditions of the epoch of capitalist decline, i.e. of mature, overripe capitalism.

The politics of a proletarian party (or of those parties that give themselves out to be such, or of the trade unions and the like), which is bent on supporting the bourgeoisie, making common cause or collaborating with it, in short which is bent on forming an alliance with the bourgeoisie or a section of it, and even more so politics that in actual fact pursues this supporting, making common cause, collaborating with the bourgeoisie, being allied to it is called: ***coalition politics***, '***people's***' ***front politics***. Moreover, it essentially makes no difference what such politics is called, whether it is pursued openly or secretly, explicitly or tacitly, voluntarily or under duress, within a capitalist government or outside it. For many years, the entire politics of the SP, the LP and the StP amounted to bringing, to forcing the bourgeoisie or sections of it into party-based, trade-union-based, co-operative-based, etc. collaboration, coalition or 'people's' front with the Social Democratic, Labour and Stalinist bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy. Nowadays, in developed capitalism, any coalition, any 'people's' front is conscious, or at best unconscious, ***betrayal*** (this applies in full measure too to promoting or supporting a forced coalition). This is the political expression of the social fact that capital in its motion inevitably broadens, deepens all class antagonisms, above all the fundamental antagonism between the working class and the capitalist class, and that it is precisely developed capitalism that has sharpened this class antagonism to such a degree, that the question as to the fate of the whole of human society is, inevitably, directly on the agenda. By completely disregarding and giving up the struggle for the class interests of the proletariat, above all its power interests, a coalition, a 'people's' front always brings only transient advantages, and besides, in the main, only for the thin ***upper stratum*** of the class, and indeed, at the expense of the broad proletarian ***mass***. And even these advantages are only illusory. Even the privileged upper stratum, who, for the sake of this mess of pottage, sells, abandons, betrays the basic position of the class as a whole, ultimately loses the advantages with which it let itself be bribed; indeed it loses even much more still and in certain circumstances it loses everything. See Social Democracy and the Stalinist bureaucracy in Germany (1933), in Austria (1934), in Spain (1938-39, in France (1940), etc. Coalition politics, the 'people's' front has such grave, and at the same time disastrous, consequences for the fate of the working class that it must be investigated and described in a very detailed way. This will be carried out very thoroughly in the section of this work where alliances in general are examined as a form of action, and what is characterised as a coalition (in the narrower sense), or a 'people's' front, is only a sub-category of this.

VI. The Class Relationship between the Bourgeoisie and the Middle Class

The bourgeoisie has an extremely contradictory relationship with the non-exploiting, themselves exploited peasants/farmers and petty bourgeois. Economically, it seizes more and more of their market through the superiority of capitalist commodity production over simple commodity production. Again and again, it ruins some of the simple commodity producers and commodity sellers and hurls them into the proletariat, while others it robs more and more of their independence, reducing them to ever greater economic dependence on capital, driving, forcing them to increased self-exploitation as the only possible way of alleviating the growing pressure on their own standard of living to a certain degree – but in truth merely slowing it down. Above all, conquering the internal market – this is the line that guides capital in its ascent, apart from the earliest, mercantilist beginnings, when commercial capital put the main emphasis of its actions on the external market. This line turns into a capitalist offensive that extends ever further and deeper in waves, against the handicraft and small-peasant/small-farmer commodity producers and shopkeepers/traders. In times of cyclical economic crisis, it assumes particularly sharp forms. Hand in hand with this goes the capitalist conquest of the external market, that is to say above all of the markets in the backward countries. Specifically, one of the main features of capitalist colonisation is outcompeting the colonial petty bourgeois (handicraftsmen and small shopkeepers/traders), ruining them, and integrating the colonial peasant/farmer producers into the conditions of capitalist exploitation and subjecting them to these conditions; it is the same offensive, only more brutal in its form.

The urban petty bourgeoisie feels the effects of this constant capitalist offensive most tangibly. This offensive is carried out in other, more complicated forms against the small-peasant/small-farmer producers; the effects of this offensive are also expressed in other forms, but they are in essence the same, as in the case of the urban handicraftsmen, small hauliers, small shop-keepers/traders, small publicans, etc. Improvements to the farm, dowries for the children and dividing up inheritances are just some of the many occasions, when the small, non-exploiting peasant/farmer has to borrow money. Mortgages, continual compulsory payments to capital in the form of mortgage interest and a growing dependency (on capital; trans.), on a wavelike trajectory, are the inevitable consequences. Co-operatives of all kinds – praised by the bourgeoisie and the opportunists as remedies, bring about transient and only apparent alleviation. Soon the co-operatives are completely in the hands of the big capitalist peasants/farmers and the upper stratum of the middle peasants/farmers, the majority of whom exploit (workers; trans.) and are instruments for increasing the dependence of the non-exploiting peasants/farmers on the bourgeoisie in the countryside even more.

In declining capitalism these two basic tendencies become all the stronger, and indeed at an escalating rate; here and there, now and then they take on catastrophic dimensions and the most brutal forms. The world market is divided up. Every attempt to bring about a re-division encounters the sharpest, and ultimately armed, resistance from the very biggest imperialist robbers. Hence the intensified capitalist offensive at first takes the line of least resistance: absorbing the internal market, openly liquidating a section of the handicraftsmen, small shopkeepers/traders, etc. and incorporating them forcibly in great numbers as workers in the factories, as in Nazi Germany – turning some of them into subordinate managers of small branches of the big capitalist undertakings. An increase in agricultural prices from time to time –

especially in times of war – takes place via the mechanism of capitalism, in the last analysis at the expense of the mass of the workers, white-collar workers and urban petty bourgeois. It brings the small peasants/farmers only temporary relief; soon the downward pressing tendency proves to be stronger, to be enduring and, in a word, to be the fundamental tendency of capital. At the same time the situation of broad sections of the poor peasants/farmers under monopoly capital becomes such, that the monopoly bourgeoisie sees only one possible way to ward off – in a capitalist way – the rising gigantic social danger in the countryside: land robbery on a gigantic scale, including that of the peasants/farmers too, by means of imperialist war, in order to give part of the land that is robbed to the small peasants/farmers back home for the purpose of 'pacifying' them for a certain period of time, in order to save the big landowners from the agrarian revolution.

The basic line of the requirements of the capitalist economy therefore sets the bourgeoisie more and more against the genuine middle masses. It is the exact opposite with the social, political and power requirements of the capitalist class. The more the working class increases in size, the more it awakens and grows in consciousness, fighting strength and fighting spirit, the more it begins to act in a revolutionary manner, the more it becomes necessary for the bourgeoisie – which is an extremely thin stratum – to keep as broad a class barrier as possible between itself and the proletarian masses, i.e. the middle masses. The basic position of the middle masses is one of private property in the means of production. As representatives of an antiquated, obsolete mode of production, they are understandably imbued with politically antiquated, obsolete views. All this makes it possible, makes it easier for the bourgeoisie – who make use of the politics of bankruptcy of the opportunists – to win over this stratum, to keep it in the following of the capitalists, to set it, incite it and indeed in certain circumstances, to hurl it bloodily against the proletariat, as it does – under the leadership of monopoly capital – when it is fighting to establish a fascist dictatorship.

In order to rope in the middle masses, the bourgeoisie makes use of a continuous string of suitably adjusted politico-economic measures. For example, economic-political alleviations at the expense of the proletariat. Thus, for example, it holds open for them, amongst other things, the opportunity to thoroughly exploit apprentices, journeymen and male and female farm servants, by removing this stratum, completely or partially, from legislation to protect workers, from workers' insurance[12], etc. This only directly benefits those who belong to the non-genuine, exploiting 'middle stratum', but some genuine petty bourgeois and small peasants/farmers are also enticed and lured by this because they think they see in this the possibility that in the future it will be easier to maintain their position as simple commodity producers, and indeed rise into the bourgeoisie. In addition to this there are various economic-political alleviations or enticements (*Köder*) of very different levels; very small in comparison to the size of the burdens shifted onto this same stratum by the bourgeoisie, they nevertheless do not fail in their effect as enticements. Finally, the capitalist class fills nearly all the middle levels of its large state apparatus and its even larger economic apparatus overwhelmingly with the sons and daughters of the petty-bourgeois and small-peasant/small-farmer strata. Imbued as they are with a petty bourgeois mindset, the bourgeoisie turns most of them into good supporters of capitalism. By means of these relatively well-paid, relatively comfortable and respected cushy jobs and

[12] Literally workers' insurance; what is known, for example, in the UK as 'National Insurance'; Ed.

positions – the costs of which are squeezed out of the wage workers by means of capitalist taxes and in the last analysis by the capitalist mechanism of downward pressure on wages, increasing prices, lengthening labour time and increasing the intensity of labour, etc. – the bourgeoisie kills two birds with one stone: it keeps the broad middle masses in tow and, when it needs to, it plays them off against the working class.

VII. The Class Relationship between the Proletariat and the Middle Class

The proletariat and the non-exploiting, themselves exploited middle strata in town and country again and again have common interests. Both are exploited by the bourgeoisie, even if in a different way; both are oppressed by the bourgeoisie, even if in a different form. In some cases, the economic pressure of capital on those strata of the petty bourgeoisie and the small peasants/farmers that are particularly weak even exceeds the capitalist pressure on the workers. The middle strata are differentiated and fragmented to such a degree that they are only with difficulty able to get together for joint action against the capitalist offensive; by themselves, as experience shows, they prove to be altogether incapable of doing this and are only able to do this effectively in alliance with the revolutionary proletariat and under its leadership. In ***negative*** terms therefore, the interests of both classes run counter to capitalist exploitation, counter to capitalist oppression, counter to the capitalist state. In itself this purely negative common position is not without significance. What is essential, however, is that again and again temporary ***positive*** interests, day-to-day interests and present-day interests of more or less great, often very great importance arise, interests that are common to both classes. If one examines the enduring interests, the basic interests, however, the result is as follows: in as far as a section of the middle class wants to enduringly maintain its antiquated, obsolete mode of production (simple commodity production) and clings to it, this section is reactionary. Only 'in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat' (*Das Kommunistische Manifest* [1848] 1891, p.16) do sections of the middle masses become revolutionary. In ascending capitalism, the first tendency predominates, but as the decline of capitalism advances, the second tendency becomes more important.

Particularly important common positive interests between the proletariat and the peasants/farmers arise on the basis of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. Actual experience shows the peasant/farmer that the bourgeoisie does not want to carry out or finish the agrarian revolution in particular, because it is inclined to make a compromise with the feudal landowners (for fear of the revolutionary proletariat). As long as the class antagonism in the countryside has not surfaced, there is – in order to finish the bourgeois-democratic revolution – an extremely important positive community of interests between the proletariat and the peasantry ***as a whole***. In the course of time the class antagonism opens up in the countryside too, and the positive community of interests then shrinks to one between the working class and the ***poor*** peasants/farmers. In ***China*** the rich peasants were and are, as usurers, entwined with urban bank capital; the agrarian revolution had to and has to be directed against them too. In China, therefore, ever since the Chinese bourgeoisie abandoned its bourgeois-revolutionary task (something it did very quickly), there was and is, a revolutionary-democratic community of interests only between the proletariat and the ***poor*** peasants.

Petty-bourgeois and small-peasant/small-farmer property in the small means of production is ***labour-property*** (***Arbeitseigentum***), i.e. property acquired by the petty-bourgeois and small-peasant/small-farmer producers by means of their own labour, i.e. something fundamentally different from the ***exploitation-property*** (***Ausbeutungseigentum***) of the capitalists, i.e. property that the capitalists have acquired and acquire by exploiting wage workers and the genuine middle masses, as well as subjugated peoples. The capitalist class uses all available means, and indeed with great success, to foster the fears of the petty bourgeois and small

peasants/farmers that the proletarian revolution wants to take their private property in the means of production from them too. The same petty bourgeois and small peasants/farmers – drawn by their interests to be against the capitalist machine of oppression – thus, in the question of property, swing back again towards the capitalist state. By persistently, systematically and patiently making it clear to the genuine middle masses in town and country that the proletarian revolution would not dream of forcibly touching their hard-earned labour-property but only wants – by convincing them of the tangible advantages for themselves – to lead them over gradually step by step to socialist production, proletarian revolutionaries will smooth the way to the indispensably necessary alliance of the two classes. This can be and must be an enduring alliance. Ultimately this alliance is realised in the form of the proletarian-democratic state: it is the organisational form that this alliance takes. Because even the best petty-bourgeois and small-peasant/small-farmer strata – in consequence of their intermediate ('centrist') class position between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie – inevitably vacillate from time to time (and indeed do so precisely in especially critical situations), it is the ***proletariat*** – this class, which is the only class that is revolutionary to the end – that must have the ***leadership*** in this alliance, as the main safeguard against the vacillation of the petty bourgeois and small peasants/farmers; because the struggle against, and victory over, the bourgeoisie and the maintaining of this victory – all indispensably necessary for the emancipation not only of the proletariat, but also the middle strata from capitalist oppression and exploitation – requires the greatest firmness. That the revolutionary proletariat finds ways and means to help the genuine middle masses – to help them ***at the expense of the bourgeoisie***, that it is in addition also in a position to offer them big, increasing, economic and social advantages, that it is therefore able to finally win over the middle masses onto the side of the proletariat and keep them firmly on its side – more about this later.

VIII. How Classes Change

A class is not something rigid; it is a living thing and continuously changes its size, its structure, its social weight, its centre of gravity and its consciousness. Each class continually changes in terms of its ***numerical strength***. At the beginning of the ascent of capitalism the number of capitalists increases continually in relation to the total population. In the course of time this process of growth slows down in relative terms. In the epoch of decline the bourgeoisie becomes numerically an ever thinner stratum within society, even if its headcount increases.

In the course of capitalist development, the numerically strongest class, the middle class, decreases continually in relation to society as a whole. One must not let oneself be deceived about this by the statistics of the exploiters, who have the greatest interest in pretending that the exact opposite is the case. Millions upon millions of petty-bourgeois and small-peasant/small-farmer elements – who have in actual fact already lost any trace of their independence, have only the semblance of a tiny private property and in reality exploit themselves more and more severely for the benefit of the capitalists, and in reality therefore sink more and more into the proletariat – appear in the statistical tables and commentaries given out by the capitalist states, their professors and their agents in the ranks of the workers' movement as so and so many 'independent' shopkeepers/traders and 'independent' peasants/farmers.

On the other hand, the working class continually increases – on a wave-like trajectory – numerically throughout the entire capitalist era. Again one must not let oneself be misled by the statistics of the exploiters' states and the commentaries of the capitalist academics and those of the opportunist henchmen, who understandably again and again seek to pretend that the opposite is the case, by smuggling millions upon millions of objectively proletarian (and half-proletarian) elements into the '*Mittelstand*' (i.e. the middle class; trans.[13]) into the statistics.

The ***structure*** and ***composition*** of each class changes continuously. Capitalists sink into the petty bourgeoisie or even into the proletariat. Petty bourgeois and small peasants/farmers sink into the working class. Crushed and oppressed elements from all the classes sink into the lumpenproletariat. Workers rise into the middle class and in exceptional cases – but ever more rarely – even into the capitalist class. Petty bourgeois and small peasants/farmers become capitalists – this too more and more rarely.

The ***social weight*** of each class changes continuously depending on the increase or decrease in its numerical size, on the extent to which it disposes over the means of production, on the extent to which it contributes to the production of the total social product, on the degree of its concentration at the economically and politically most important centres or on its degree of dispersion and fragmentation, and finally, according to the degree of growth in its consciousness and degree of organisation. More and more the bourgeoisie amalgamates its control in actual fact over an ever greater share of the means of production and the sources of life of the whole of society – its social weight rises. At the beginning of the capitalist era the capitalists were not only exploiters, they also performed a greater or lesser amount of productive labour: they actively worked in one form or another alongside the workers and

[13] The author uses the term *Mittelstand* in its original sense to refer to the genuine middle class, i.e. the petty bourgeoisie; trans.

performed the necessary work of directing the process of production. In the course of capitalist development, the more the size of the individual capitalist workplace increases and the more centralisation and concentration increase, the more the active participation of the capitalists in working alongside the workers increasingly becomes the exception. Even the function of directing passes over more and more into the hands of paid officials, directors or whatever else they are called. The capitalist exploiters increasingly become mere *Kuponschneider*[14], rentiers, profit-sucking do-nothings; they increasingly become superfluous, useless, harmful drones and parasites, who sponge on the social process, on the process of production and hamper a higher development of the productive forces. – Their social weight falls. With the further development of the motion of capitalism, the capitalist mechanism inevitably encounters ever bigger objective obstacles. The coercive law of capitalist competition, which is admittedly constrained by the emerging monopolies but nevertheless intensified all the more by them, drives the capitalists again and again to boosting the productive forces, to boosting production, in order to drive their competitors out of the market by reducing the price per unit and, despite this reduction in price, to achieve higher profits; in order to sell the mass of commodities and masses of value that are growing in this way and bring in the profit, the capitalists therefore indispensably need a market that increases again and again in terms of its purchasing power – the very same coercive law of capitalist competition, however, tends to drive the capitalists to push real wages down further and further, and thereby depress the purchasing power of the masses further and further in relation to the increased productive forces. At the same time, in capitalism, the development of agriculture, and especially the development of small-peasant/small-farmer agriculture, lags behind the development of industry. This brings with it – at least relatively – a tendency for the purchasing power of the small-peasant/small-farmer multi-millioned masses to fall. Turning the increasing mass of commodities, masses of value and the surplus value into money, i.e. realising the profit – and profit, ever higher profit is really the only main concern of capital, is really its only purpose in life – encounters ever greater objective difficulties. Two consequences inevitably result from this: in order to continue to exist as capitalists, the bourgeoisie – in spite of the growing difficulties – must continually step up its efforts to bring in its profits; it must continuously exert downward pressure on the real wages of the worker masses and on the real incomes of the small-peasant/small-farmer and petty-bourgeois masses. Inevitably the class antagonism between the thin stratum of the capitalist exploiters and the enormous multi-millioned masses of workers, small peasants/farmers and petty bourgeois thus becomes ever starker – this weakens the social position of the bourgeoisie – its weight falls. The same circumstances, however, also sharpen more and more the inner antagonisms in the camp of the bourgeoisie itself. In order to overcome their growing difficulties of profit realisation the strongest capitalists are driven more and more strongly by competition to beating the weaker exploiters at home in competition and overcoming the weaker exploiters in other countries. Seeing no way out other than that of climbing ever higher, ever more recklessly up the narrowing spiral of capitalist centralisation and concentration, the capitalist economy and society stagger and lurch into an ever deeper crisis of the entire capitalist system, from ever bigger economic crisis to ever bigger war crisis. More and more, as its last remaining way out, it finds itself compelled to resort to going over from the capitalist form of exploitation to *naturalwirtschaftlichen* (i.e. an in-

[14] Literally coupon cutters: those who merely cut off the detachable portion of their share certificate or bond to claim their ‘dividend’ (share of the profit) or interest; trans.

kind economy; trans.), to feudal, indeed to slave-based forms of exploitation, to forms of exploitation based on barbarism, i.e. to take the path of economic and social retrogression and turn back the wheel of history, in order simply to maintain its exploiter-role (which retroactively again sharpens the antagonism all the more between the bourgeoisie and the exploited, oppressed worker masses, the middle masses and the masses generally). The inner antagonisms in the camp of the capitalist class become sharper and sharper – its social weight falls. The more the bourgeoisie sinks on the social scales, and the more it is in objective terms shaken and weakened in terms of its social weight by the tendencies inherent in capitalist motion, the more, with the further development of capitalism (and especially in the epoch of decline), it strengthens, boosts and makes more powerful the subjective root of its class strength, i.e. its capitalist class consciousness, the political centralisation and concentration that it builds up, in order to strengthen its social weight to the utmost and, despite all the growing difficulties, nevertheless maintain its position as a capitalist exploiters' class, as a capitalist ruling class.

The ***centre of gravity*** within the capitalist class shifts continuously. At the start of capitalist development, it lay with commercial and usury capital; then it changed to industrial capital, subsequently to bank capital and with the beginning of capitalist decline it shifts more and more to lie with finance capital, with monopoly capital.

The class of wage workers is completely excluded from ownership of the means of production. However, it is this class that sets the decisive means of production in motion and keeps them in motion; it is this class that produces an ever bigger part of the total social product. More and more, human society in its entirety lives and develops through the labour of the proletariat. At the same time, capital itself concentrates the workers more and more at the economically and politically decisive centres in every country, organising them in the workplaces more and more into a veritable industrial army – the social weight of the working class thus inevitably becomes objectively ever greater. But the recognition of this basic objective tendency in terms of its entire socio-economic context and its entire significance, in a word proletarian consciousness, grows much, much more slowly in the worker masses; but it does grow with the ongoing experience of the wage workers and under the guidance of their conscious elements organised as the party of the proletariat. If the working class suffers severe setbacks, if it is thrown back in terms of its power, then this is not due to objective factors – these, on the contrary, are becoming more and more favourable for the proletariat's rise to power – but due to subjective factors, in the last analysis due to the failure of the proletarian party, or more correctly, due to the treachery of those parties, who deceitfully give themselves out to the workers to be parties of the working class. But all setbacks in terms of cognitive faculty, in terms of the consciousness of the workers, however severe they may be – and these setbacks are the main causes of the defeats brought about by the parties of betrayal, causes that in turn are exacerbated by these defeats – are only transient. The wage workers are irreplaceable: without them there is no surplus value, no capitalist economy and no capitalist society. The objective tendencies of capitalist motion work unceasingly on the proletarian consciousness. The experiences of the workers accumulate and deepen. Proletarian consciousness ultimately rises up again, deepened and strengthened, even from the heaviest defeats. Despite all the setbacks, in the last analysis, the level of proletarian cognitive ability, and along with this its degree of organisation too, increases – again and again, higher and ever higher – despite all the setbacks – the social weight of the working class increases. The process of unfolding proletarian

consciousness, unfolding it once again is objectively furthered by the capitalist social process. We have seen that as the epoch of capitalist decline progresses the objective difficulties of the capitalist mechanism in economy and society surge upwards, in a wave-like trajectory, inevitably higher and higher. The masses recognise more and more plainly the unavoidable alternative for capitalism: ***back to barbarism – or forwards to Communism***! In social terms this manifests itself in the camp of the working class in such a way that inevitably, in a wave-like trend, the inner diversities, frictions and differences among the wage workers (for example, too, the occupational differences, the differences between skilled and unskilled workers, male and female workers, young and old workers, etc.) are tendentially drowned out more and more, overshadowed more and more by their common antagonism towards the capitalist exploiters and oppressors. This social process facilitates the growth in the recognition of their own class situation and their own interests, in a word the growth in proletarian consciousness among the wage workers; and the role of the most class conscious elements of the class, the role of their organisation, i.e. the role of the proletarian class party is and remains decisive for the subjective realisation of this growth of proletarian consciousness, under all circumstances.

The ***centre of gravity*** is constantly shifting within the working class too. At first it lay with the print workers, it then shifted to the textile workers, then the metal workers[15], the miners, the railway workers, who are subsequently joined by the workers in the chemical industry, the electrical workers and the transport workers, who are all gaining more and more in importance.

Taken all in all, therefore, the motion of the capitalist economy and society, as it marches on, strengthens the social weight of the ***two*** main classes, both of the bourgeoisie as well as that of the proletariat. This is merely an expression of the basic fact that the motion of the capitalist economy and capitalist society ***develops the inevitable tendency*** to broaden and deepen ***the irreconcilable class antagonism between its two decisive classes more and more***, in a word: to ***sharpen*** it.

What the millions of petty bourgeois and small peasants/farmers actually own in terms of their small means of production shrinks more and more in the course of capitalist development. Not only does the quantitative magnitude and the level of efficiency (*Leistungsgrad*) of the petty-bourgeois and small-peasant/small-farmer means of production become lower and lower in comparison to the total apparatus of the means of production of society, but the command of the small peasants/farmers and of the petty bourgeois over their small means of production is also hollowed out internally in qualitative terms more and more: the ability to dispose over their means of production *de facto* passes over more and more into the hands of the capitalist class, via countless, more or less veiled paths. Despite its gigantic headcount, the middle class in town and country produces an ever smaller share of the total social product. It becomes more and more differentiated, which increases its geographic fragmentation. Objectively, therefore, the social weight of the middle class falls more and more in the course of capitalist development. Torn more and more to and fro by the tendencies that draw the mass of the petty bourgeois and the small peasants/farmers towards the bourgeoisie and the tendencies that draw them towards the proletariat, the middle masses become less and less able to develop their own, independent, autonomous power role. They continue to be, now as before, an extremely

[15] In English these workers are usually called ‘engineers’ or workers in the engineering industry; trans.

important social factor, not with an independent power role, but as a class that follows, as strata that follow the bourgeoisie or the proletariat – and depending on circumstances – in alliance with, and under the leadership of the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. One section, the upper stratum, the right wing, the conservative petty bourgeoisie leans towards the bourgeoisie – the other section, the petty-bourgeois and small-peasant/small-farmer lower strata, the left wing, the radical, democratic petty bourgeoisie, as a rule leans towards the proletariat. The objective, general basic tendency – especially as capitalism continues to decline – is for the left wing to become stronger and stronger; with of course very big vacillations, as happens again and again in the case of the middle masses: seeing no way out and gravely disappointed by Social Democracy, Stalinism and such like (the middle masses erroneously equate them with Socialism and Communism respectively) – they are the battering ram of the bourgeoisie led by monopoly capital when it establishes its fascist dictatorship. The objective, general basic tendency draws ever bigger sections of the petty-bourgeois and small-peasant/small-farmer multi-millioned masses towards the proletariat. But whether, how far and when they actually take this road depends – under objectively mature capitalist conditions – on the class consciousness of the two main classes, who battle with each other for the allegiance, for the leadership of the small-peasant/small-farmer and petty-bourgeois masses – that is to say on the consciousness and the political skill of the class conscious elements of each of the two main classes; and, therefore, on the politics, strategy and tactics of the capitalist class party on the one hand and of the proletarian class party on the other.

A class is a living thing; it is continually changing in terms of its numerical size, its composition, its centre of gravity, its level of consciousness, its degree of organisation and its social weight – this is the case for every class, in every country, throughout the world. Correct politics, strategy and tactics must not operate solely with an abstract, general concept of class that is the same in every country, at any given time, for a specific social epoch, but must on this basis always also take into consideration the class with regard to its specific, living existence at the given time and with its specific features. Both are important and only by continuously keeping the two together does it lead to the correct result, whereby the politics, strategy and tactics must remain conscious (of the fact; trans.) that all the specific, variable, prevailing, concrete, transient, temporary, changing manifestations in the life of a class only take place on the basis and within the framework of the abstract, general, enduring, constant, basic, fundamental conditions of life, circumstances of life, conditions of production and relations of production, which bring members of the class together into an (abstract, general, enduring, constant) class within the framework of capitalist conditions and for the entire duration of these conditions.

The ***interrelations of the classes*** are the social expression of the economic role of human beings in relation to each other in a process of reproduction based on exploitation and the inter-relations into which they enter in the process of production as a whole in class society, i.e. the relations of production in human society, a society that is divided into classes. The relations of production – and therefore the interrelations of the classes too – are in a state of continuous change, change that is always concrete, but moves and must move in the river-bed of general capitalist motion, the laws of which Marx investigated and depicted. The ***general line*** of the mutual relations of the classes asserts itself in the motion, in the life process of class society as a result of the relationship of the classes to the means of production, as a result of their role in production and as a result of their class interests, but it asserts itself through all kinds of

vacillations, vacillations that are also accompanied by retrogressive processes; it therefore by no means moves evenly. Correct politics must move on the general line of class relations, but at the same time it must, on this line, always also take into consideration these specific oscillations, vacillations and changes, in a word, it must in every situation examine, assess and work out as concretely as possible the interrelations of the classes within their general framework.

The classes are by no means separated from one another by rigid, once and for all firm boundaries. All kinds of ***intermediate elements***, hybrid forms, transitional stages and ***transitional forms*** exist in between the classes and move between them – elements, forms and stages that themselves are also continuously changing. These transitional elements develop and transform themselves in different directions and at different rates. These intermediate stages cannot be correctly assessed in terms of class, if the different directions of development and the different rates of development with regard to their formation and transformation are not grasped correctly in concrete terms at any given time. And in turn this is only possible by correctly assessing and grasping the general class structure of capitalist society.

In any case, a correct assessment of classes, class relations, and the interrelations of the classes must be static ***and*** dynamic; they must be examined in their 'resting state' ***and*** also in their continuous state of flux, in their coming into being and in their passing, with regard to the direction and rate of their development, in short in their motion and development; at the same time, judging dynamically must always be the basis of any 'fixed' assessment in terms of place and time. This holds good not only for every class, but also for all its sections, strata, factions, subsections, and also holds good for their interrelations.

IX. The Coming into Being and Passing Away of the Classes

Classes are not eternal. Class society is a transitional society; classes are transitional social entities. Since developing out of the animal world, humanity has lived for hundreds of thousands of years without classes. Human society has only been divided into classes for about 6000 years. This cleavage will not last much longer. The human beings of the future will not be divided into classes. Classes come into being, develop and pass away.

Primeval human beings were not divided into classes. There was a division of labour among human beings that had arisen naturally, evolved and was handed down from family to family on the basis of tradition and became interwoven with family. These differences made the subsequent development of the classes easier, but they themselves were not yet class differences, were not differences between human beings with regard to their role in production and with regard to their relationship to the means of production, i.e. to those decisive means by which everything that is necessary for the sustaining, unfolding and development of human life and the life of human society is produced.

The prehistoric *Geschlechtsverband* (a social group based on lineage; trans.) – the gens, which subsequently expanded to become the tribe – lived as a real fraternal community of blood relations on the basis of the communist mode of production. The product of the total labour of the *Geschlechtsverband* was understandably very small; it just about sufficed for its members to survive at the very simplest level and propagate the gens; sometimes it did not even suffice for this. The productive forces that were at the disposal of humanity in prehistoric times, were extremely undeveloped and developed exceedingly slowly. Hence the prehistoric communities led an existence that was altogether meagre and extremely precarious. Only by means of their thoroughgoing communism and the complete brotherliness that corresponded to this, were the *Geschlechtsverbände* of primeval times, the primeval human beings, able to sustain themselves under those enormously difficult conditions.

In the course of immensely long periods of time, the productivity of labour finally reached a level, where on average the labour of a human being began to yield a surplus product, i.e. produced more than was necessary for maintaining and propagating their labour power. As a rule, the primeval communities lived at war with each other. Communism and brotherliness prevailed only within the gens, within the tribe; whoever did not belong to the gens or tribe stood outside its laws. Whoever was not related by blood was not a brother, but an enemy. Until then, prisoners of war were usually killed, sometimes they were also eaten, because no-one knew what to do with them. Henceforth using them as labour power for the production of surplus product became possible and necessary for augmenting the productive forces and increasing production.

Slavery, and along with it the cleavage of society into ***classes*** was the first inevitable step[16], in order to raise production above the low primeval level. In this way at first at least a small

[16] The oldest economic order that emerged from ancient communism was the ***old-Asiatic mode of production.*** Although it was of great significance and predominated for a lengthy period (in particular in India and China), it was in essence a transition from ancient communism to a pure exploiters' economy. The producers still produced on a communist basis. In a process lasting thousands of years involving the

section of society was raised above the meagre primeval level of existence. Up until then all members of the tribe had to work the whole day long simply to secure that primitive existence. Henceforth, through the use of slaves – they were one of the first objects of emerging private property in the means of production – a section of society was set free from the necessity to produce and work. The slave owners, slaveholders who emerged and rose to the top in this way were the ruling class in antiquity. Their elevated position enabled them in the course of time to develop elements of a higher culture and the first beginnings of science, and thus in actual fact prepare the prerequisites for a higher development of human society in its entirety. The first beginnings of astronomy, geometry, indeed all of mathematics, of physics, geography, history and philosophy, of art, not to mention the very significant and very important improvements in language and writing fall into this epoch. A division of labour based on class asserted itself, driven by the urge to boost the productive powers. This big step forward was inevitably combined with an enormous disadvantage. However meagrely primeval human beings lived, the relationships among the members of the gens, of the tribe, who in truth were communities of blood relations, were fraternal. Where slavery arose, appeared, the old, fraternal relationships within the *Geschlechtsverband* were disintegrated and destroyed. But in order to call these fraternal relationships into being again and this time on a broader basis – throughout the whole of humanity and not on the basis of a very meagre standard of living, but at the highest cultural level – a slave-based economy, the emergence of slavery, a slaveholder society, slave-based society, and therefore the emergence of classes and class society was the first, indispensably necessary step.

At a certain high point in its development, the slave-based economy began to lose its progressive character. More and more it proved to be the biggest obstacle to a higher development of technology, production, the economy and society. It was impossible to put better tools into the hands of a slave. A slave had not the slightest interest in production. A slave treated both the animal means of production as well as the material means of production badly; only the crudest means of labour could be put into their hands. Thus, within the slave-based economy, a serious impetus to improve technology, the means of labour and the methods of labour and production was lacking. Production could only be increased, and was increased, by deploying a greater number of slaves. However, it ultimately became more and more difficult, and in the end impossible, to augment the number of slaves. The biggest state in antiquity, the ancient great Roman empire, waged wars to the absolute limit; it could not go any further, the recruitment area for procuring slaves could no longer be enlarged. At the same time, under the living conditions of slavery, the fecundity of the slaves inevitably declined more and more, just like the fecundity of zoo animals robbed of their freedom.

The same factor that had at first led to the continuous and continuously changing influx of slaves – war, war and more war – led, in the course of time, to a tremendous impoverishment of the great mass of the population. The destruction and plundering of communities and their

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bloodiest of struggles, the communist producers were turned more and more into serfs, and in actual fact into slaves or villeins. The extremely primitive ancient communist mode of production gave way more and more to what was, in comparison, more developed slave-based and feudal production, in one combination or another, on the basis of private property becoming more firmly established. The pure exploiters' economy emerged more and more from the old-Asiatic economy.

economies alternated without interruption. This, together with carrying off the bulk of the population into slavery, slowly but surely reduced the purchasing power of the masses more and more. At the same time the free peasants and handicraftsmen back home were progressively ruined by the never-ending military service. More and more of the peasant land fell into the hands of the *latifundia* owners, who, with their big farms worked by slaves, made it more and more difficult for free-peasant farms to emerge again and indeed prevented it. Although it was to a large extent subsistence production, in the course of time slave-based production increasingly became commodity production too, i.e. an ever bigger portion of the total product was produced for sale. However, the market for the slave-based economy – due to the contradictions within it – disappeared more and more from under its feet; it became increasingly difficult for it to sell the production surpluses achieved over and above its own needs. Thus, the production carried on by slaves generated ever smaller net yields. It became less and less viable. The economy of the antiquity finally began to contract. The economic decline was bound to, and did, result in social decline; it was the main cause of the decline and fall of the great old Roman Empire. The progressive role that slavery had played throughout a great epoch, finally, through the motion of its inherent contradictions, turned into the opposite; it now had a retrogressive effect, hampering economic and social development more and more.

This led to the development of the feudal mode of production and feudal class society. Compared with the declining slave-based economy in antiquity – and also compared with the more or less primeval economy of the primitive barbarian tribes that invaded during the *Völkerwanderung* (migration of peoples) – ***feudalism*** was a step forward. Despite all the burdens in terms of labour and products with which feudal peasants were saddled by the feudal lords, they did after all have a plot of arable land that they leased, in 'fee' and on which they worked for themselves. What they produced here belonged – completely or in part – to them. Even for the slaves, the introduction of slavery had been a step forward; it was, at any rate, better to live and to work than to be killed and possibly eaten. In other respects, slaves were objects, like any other objects, like work beasts; they were in the literal sense of the word human beasts. The slave owners could do with them as they pleased, as with any other bit of their property. Only their property interests, only what was for their own benefit, induced them to make sure that their human beasts got fodder and a stable. In comparison with this the villeins (the serfs, the bondsmen) were, admittedly, extremely unfree, they were chained to the land, not allowed to marry, etc. without the approval of the feudal lord, had to perform a great deal of unpaid labour and, in addition, had to make many payments in kind, and all in all, as serfs, they were in terms of their standard of living scarcely much above that of slaves, but they were no longer completely objects, and were, in essence, already workers paid in kind, whose freedom was very much curtailed, but who had somewhat more freedom (*könnnten sich mehr regen*) than slaves.

The feudal economy brought with it a relatively stronger impetus to improve the means of labour and the methods of work and production. At first – even if only to a minor extent – in agriculture, but then also and especially in ***handicrafts*** (*Gewerbe*). Already on the *Fronhöfen* (the feudal estates worked by corvée; trans.) it led to some small-scale division of labour based on the different trades. This was transplanted into the first beginnings of urban settlements. Here the division of labour based on the different trades was driven forward further and further; tools, methods of work and production became more and more specialised. Hand in hand with this there developed highly-skilled handicraftsmen, in all kinds of specialisations and in ever

bigger numbers. Thus, one of the basic conditions for industrial development was worked out, one that in the first instance brought about the transition from handicraft to manufacture. Even the subsequent progress to the machine age could not have taken place without the tools and handicraftsmen specialised in this way; only they made it possible to invent the first machines and made it possible for the first time to manufacture, reproduce and repair them.

From a certain stage of this process onwards, the progressive character of the feudal economy began to wane. Handicrafts ossified in the ***guild economy***. As the number of handicraftsmen increased, the constraints of the feudal market became more and more palpable. The former handicraft masters, who had become guild masters, entrenched themselves behind the guild monopoly. The transition to independent handicraft undertakings (*Gewerbebetrieb*) became more and more difficult for the journeymen. At the same time the number of journeymen and apprentices that a master was allowed to keep, was extremely restricted, making the transition to factory-based, capitalist undertakings appreciably more difficult. The tremendous fragmentation of the market (every feudal lord was a small king with a tiny kingdom, but with many copious customs duties, tolls, etc.), the privileges of the feudal nobility and the feudal clergy, the guild barriers, the countless feudal fetters of all kinds at every step hampered trade and industry, which needed a bigger market, greater scope, in a word needed 'freedom', namely freedom to exploit, price freedom (the freedom to fix prices at will, unhampered by any official regulations), the freedom to sell commodities at a substantial profit, etc. Through the interplay of its inner contradictions the progressive role of feudalism finally turned into the opposite; its retrogressive role became more and more unbearable, and its liquidation became the indispensable prerequisite for a further ascent in terms of production, for developing a higher mode of production, and for a higher form of class society.

It goes without saying that the change from primeval production to exploitative production, from classless primeval society to class society, from one form of class society to another form, that all these transitions were accompanied by very great struggles, by the most violent and bloodiest of struggles, by class struggles, each time this transition was fought out, completed. The change from the primitive communist mode of production to the slave-based mode of production, and from classless primeval society to slaveholder society took place via the bloodiest of struggles – which went on for millennia – of the slaveholders against the ancient communist communities. The change from the slave-based mode of production to the feudal mode of production, from slave-based society to feudal society was realised by means of the mighty, centuries-long class struggles of declining antiquity, by means of the revolutionary struggles of the slaves, by means of revolutionary early Christianity and by means of the great struggles in which the declining slaveholder society of antiquity clashed with the more or less primitive communist barbarian tribes – who were caught up in the *Völkerwanderung* (migration of the peoples). The change from the feudal to the capitalist mode of production, from feudal to capitalist society was achieved by means of a centuries-long gigantic struggle, the main stages of which were: the peasant wars of the 14th – 16th centuries, with the German Peasant War of 1525 being the highpoint; the brutal colonisation of America and India; the German Reformation; the English Revolution of the 17th century; the great French Revolution of 1789; the revolutions of 1848 in Germany and Austria; finally the Russian Revolution of 1905 and of February 1917, as well as the Chinese Revolution of 1911 and of 1925–27.

The modern proletariat, the class of wage workers, evolved from the peasants driven off the land by the feudal lords as a money economy emerged, and from the handicraft masters and handicraft journeymen, who were atrophying in consequence of the guild monopoly and subsequently ruined by capitalist competition. Compared to the serfs/villeins, the wage workers were free of all feudal fetters, but also free of all means of production, they were free of the little plot of land that the serf/villeins could cultivate for themselves, free of the tiny means of production of the handicraftsmen. They had nothing but their labour power. In order to eke out their existence, they had to again and again sell their labour power piecemeal as a commodity. The slave-owners provided the fodder and stable for the slaves; the feudal workers procured food and housing for themselves as best they could by cultivating their little plot of land; the wage workers were free of all this too, no-one provided for them, they had and have only their meagre wage – part of which is provided by the capitalist welfare institutions and capitalist social insurance. This is not a transient fate, as in the case of the genuine handicraft journeymen and apprentices – who were, indeed, often made to slave away, but ultimately did nevertheless become handicraft masters – but a lifelong fate, from which there is no longer any escape in capitalism for the ever growing mass of wage workers. Nevertheless, the step from feudal worker paid in kind to capitalist worker paid in money was an enormous step forward. In order to be victorious against the feudal lords, in order to liquidate the feudal economy, the upcoming bourgeoisie had to mobilise the masses and set them in motion: this took place under the slogan of (bourgeois) democracy, (formal) equality and (bourgeois) 'liberty, equality and fraternity'. The modern proletarians gained the possibility of organising themselves and unfolding their struggle on a much broader scale and at a much higher level than the slaves and even the serfs and villeins had ever been able to do. In comparison to the slaves and to the serfs, wage workers are free. They can even – as a rule – change their master. But they cannot escape the capitalist class. The invisible chains of hunger compel them to endure this fate for their whole life.

The advance of the ***capitalist economy*** brought a gigantic upswing in the productive forces, an enormous increase in total production, together with, at the same time, the ongoing supplanting of all older antiquated modes of production. Upcoming, ascending capitalism played an exceedingly progressive role. But from the very first it was permeated by an inner contradiction, which, as capitalist development progressed, was inevitably bound to evolve more and more, and indeed did evolve more and more. The growing productive forces led to a surge in production. The growing mass of products, the growing quantity of value has to be transformed into money, has to be sold. Without this the capitalist production process cannot continue and profits cannot be realised; for capitalist production is not carried on to satisfy the needs of human beings but is only carried on for as long as it yields profit for the capitalists. But the very same competition, which again and again drives the capitalists to boost the productive forces and production, leads just as inevitably to the lowering, to the sinking of the purchasing power of an ever bigger proportion of the masses. In the last analysis capital again and again in the main overcomes the economic crises that periodically result from this, by dragging more and more new hitherto untapped areas of the world into the capitalist economy and subjugating them to capital and integrating them into it. Ultimately, however, around the turn of the 19th century into the 20th, the whole globe is under the control of capital, and with this the decline of capitalism begins.

From being the most powerful engine for the development of the productive forces, capitalism became, and is becoming, more and more a gigantic brake on their further development. An all-round capitalist upswing is now no longer possible – instead only an upswing of sections of the capitalist economy, or sections of the capitalist class, at the expense of all other economies, at the expense of all other human beings, at the expense too of some other section of the bourgeoisie. Cartels, syndicates, trusts – horizontal, vertical, combined, international – the highest degree of centralisation and concentration by means of capitalist state 'planning'; the political concentration of bourgeois states under a unified capitalist exploiters' command, which is given out again and again as the means to overcome this contradiction economically and politically, has in reality ultimately proved, and proves inevitably again and again, to be just a whole variety of means of tearing open the contradiction even more deeply, more broadly and more enormously. Never before have the productive forces been so enormous – but human society as a whole is not advancing; an ever more gigantic section of humanity is sinking ever deeper, and inevitably so, in consequence of the ***capitalist*** form of production and in consequence of the ***capitalist*** application of the means of production.

Nothing mirrors the contradiction, the absurdity of the capitalist economy so crassly as ***the capitalist crises*** and the ***capitalist wars.*** It is these that make it most abundantly clear to the immense majority of human beings, that capitalism hampers the further unfolding of the productive forces, hinders the further ascent of humanity and, indeed, threatens the existence of human society altogether. The capitalist giants lurch to and fro between massive economic crises and enormous war crises – crises that are becoming and ***are bound to*** become more and more enormous – without finding a way out, because on a ***capitalist*** basis there is no way out that will prolong the life of profit-making, other than the way back to obsolete forms of exploitation in kind, other than the road back to barbarism, other than the way back to the decline, to the ongoing decline and in the last analysis to the destruction of the entire human economy, of human society in its entirety. Capitalist crises lay waste to an enormous quantity of productive forces. Capitalist war destroys an enormous quantity of productive forces: this is the only way left for capitalism, in order to again create some scope, to create a breathing space for some years for profit-making, at least for the victors – till an even bigger economic crisis or an even bigger war crisis repeats the whole business at a higher level and in an even tighter spiral, or till the ***revolutionary struggle*** of the exploited and oppressed multi-billioned masses, under the leadership of the world proletariat, mercilessly puts an end to the pitiless game of the capitalist profit hunters, and leads the capitalist mode of production over into the ***socialist mode of production***.

The cleavage of human society into classes was unavoidable, was necessary, because it was only in this way that production could be raised above the low level of the primitive communist economy. In the course of the slave-based form, the feudal form and finally the capitalist form of production, humanity has succeeded, by its exertions over several millennia, in developing the productive forces to such a level, that the cleavage of society into classes is no longer necessary and has become superfluous. The cleavage of society into classes finally became, and is becoming more and more, a barrier, an obstacle to the further ascent of human society, and is, on the contrary, threatening to take human society back into barbarism, and indeed ultimately to destroy it. It can, must and will be abolished, because it is only in this way that the further development of humanity can be realised. The productive forces are so gigantic that – with substantially reduced labour time – world production in its entirety could easily be

enormously increased and the standard of living and education of everyone without exception be raised to a high level. In the past, the productive forces only sufficed to raise a small section of humanity to a higher level; economic and intellectual progress could, therefore, only emanate from this stratum, only this stratum could develop, acquire and unfold the ability to organise and direct the economic and social life-process, only it could effectively carry out the leadership functions in economy and society. Now, however, the prerequisites exist to raise all human beings without exception to this level, and to a far higher one, so that economic, intellectual and social progress can emanate from all human beings without exception and the leadership functions in economy and society can be successfully carried out in turn by all human beings without exception. It will then be possible to systematically develop the abilities of all human beings more and more in an all-rounded way, so that they no longer remain tied lifelong to one and the same branch of production, or to one and the same occupation, but can in a well-planned way alternate more and more the kind of occupation they undertake. The cleavage of society into classes has become superfluous, indeed it has become an obstacle to the further ascent of the economy and of human society altogether. The class cleavage only continues to be maintained by the beneficiaries of this cleavage, i.e. the capitalist class. However, the number of those who suffer under this – the workers above all, and the poor, non-exploiting, themselves exploited toiling masses in town and country – is inevitably becoming ever bigger. At the same time, despite all the setbacks, and precisely as a result of these setbacks, not only is there a growing realisation among the masses of the need to get rid of the classes, but their understanding of the requisite economic, social and political aims, means and ways necessary to achieve this is also growing. The class cleavage of society can be overcome; it will be overcome by the ***victorious proletarian world revolution***, by the ***dictatorship of proletarian democracy*** directed against the capitalist exploiters' class, and ultimately by ***Communism***.

It is the task of the ***proletariat*** to abolish the cleavage of society into classes and along with this abolish itself as a class. All the efforts of the working class throughout the long epoch of the transition from capitalism to Socialism, and beyond this through the whole era of Socialism, this ***first phase of Communism***, in the last analysis serve the purpose of ***liquidating the classes*** and have as their basic aim the realisation of the economic and social preconditions that ultimately bring about the disappearance of the classes. Abolishing the class inequality between human beings, i.e. their inequality in relation to the means of production, is a difficult, very difficult task. It is much more difficult still and far more protracted to do away with all the detrimental effects that the division of society into classes has left behind on the feelings and thoughts, on the customs and habits, as well as on the character of all human beings without exception, and most of all of course on the character of the exploited and oppressed human beings. What has become engrained over millennia, will need the work of decades, probably centuries, to obliterate all traces of class society and overcome it worldwide. Liquidating the classes begins with the abolition of capitalist property in the big, decisive means of production; this creates the economic and juridical prerequisite for liquidating the classes. This is the relatively shortest period of this enormous revolutionary upheaval. The transformation and dissolution of the small commodity producers as a class requires a far bigger period of time. But liquidating the entire legacy that 6000 years of class cleavage has left behind in the hearts and minds, and in the customs, habits and traditions, and in the character of human beings requires the persistent, systematic and greatest of efforts through many, many generations.

> To abolish classes means not only ousting the landowners and capitalists – that is something we have done with comparative ease – it also means ***abolishing the small commodity producers***, and they cannot be ousted or crushed; we ***must*** come to an understanding with them, we can (and must) transform them and re-educate them by means of very protracted, slow, organisational work. They surround the proletariat on all sides with a petty-bourgeois atmosphere, imbue the proletariat with this, demoralise it, constantly cause relapses within the proletariat into petty-bourgeois spinelessness, disunity, individualism and alternating moods of exuberance and despondency. The strictest centralisation and discipline within the political party of the proletariat is necessary in order to counteract this, in order to carry out correctly, successfully and victoriously the organisational role of the proletariat (and this indeed is its *principal role*). […] It is a thousand times easier to vanquish the centralised big bourgeoisie than to 'vanquish' millions upon millions of small proprietors. The latter, however, through their everyday, mundane, inconspicuous, imperceptible demoralising activity, produce the *very* results that the bourgeoisie needs in order to *restore* its rule (Lenin, 1920b, pp.25-26).
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> Under Soviet power, your proletarian party and ours will be invaded by a still larger number of ***bourgeois-'intellectual'*** elements. They will push their way into the soviets and into the courts and into the administration, for Communism can only be built out of the human material that capitalism has created, for the bourgeois 'intelligentsia' cannot be crushed and annihilated, it must be 'vanquished', remoulded, reconstructed and re-educated – just as we must re-educate the proletariat itself in a lengthy struggle on the basis of the dictatorship of the proletariat; the ***proletariat*** cannot free itself from its own petty-bourgeois prejudices at a stroke, not by means of a miracle, nor through inspiration from the Virgin Mary, nor at the behest of a slogan or resolution or a decree, but only through a long and difficult mass struggle against the influences of the petty-bourgeois masses (ibid., pp.92-93).
>
> All thoughts, speeches and hypotheses about the disappearance of the classes before Communism (that means before the second phase of Communism, before ***completed*** Communism; auth.) have been mercilessly ridiculed by Marx and Engels, for they declared, only Communism can abolish the classes (Lenin, 1925b, p.631).

In the light of this, one must judge the irresponsibility, indeed the confidence trickery of the Stalinist bureaucracy, which talks drivel about the liquidation of the classes in the Soviet Union being nearly completed, nearly concluded. The former Russian landowners and capitalists were liquidated, not by Stalin, but by the October Revolution. The process of liquidating the classes that had been initiated in this way was not furthered by Stalin, but impeded, interrupted, and indeed on the contrary was transformed into a process of formation of new capitalist class elements. We must be no more deceived about this by the temporarily extremely radical Stalinist phraseology, than by those mechanical Stalinist measures that, it is true, cost this or that kulak or bureaucrat their head, but do not in the slightest change anything with regard to the formation of new bourgeois elements under Stalinism.

> The bourgeoisie in our country has been vanquished, but it has not yet been uprooted, not yet destroyed, and not even utterly crushed. A new and higher form of struggle against the bourgeoisie is therefore on the agenda, the transition from the very simple task of further expropriating the capitalists to the much more complicated and difficult task of creating the conditions in which it will be impossible for the bourgeoisie to exist, ***or for a new bourgeoisie to arise***. Clearly, this task is immeasurably more significant than the previous one and ***until it is fulfilled there will be no Socialism*** (Lenin, 1918b, p.10).

In Russia, Stalinism is creating conditions, under which a new bourgeoisie – a much more dangerous one than the old one – is coming into being; in order to deceive the world proletariat about this, the Stalinist bureaucracy is propagating the lie that in Russia Socialism has already been more than 90% achieved.

The development of the Stalinist ***workers' aristocracy***, i.e. the shock brigaders, the Stakhanovites, etc., with a wage that is 10-20 times that of the ordinary wageworker, is clearly evident. Just as obvious is the formation of the ***Stalinist bureaucracy***, especially its upper stratum, which – if one adds up all its advantages and privileges – stands way above the workers' aristocracy, and therefore towers above the standard of living of the average worker. In the depths of this process of social regrouping that is taking place on the surface and is therefore visible, there are invisible molecular processes of regrouping taking place that are of far greater importance and only come to the surface on very rare occasions. Now and then, here and there, one hears that Stalin has had high-up economic or state functionaries executed for corruption on a gigantic scale. In place of the ten heads that he now and again chops off the hydra of corruption, new heads quickly grow again in an even greater number. It cannot be otherwise. The sole remedy for this, i.e. effective control by the workers themselves and by the communists, has been completely suppressed by Stalinism. Workplace democracy, trade union democracy, soviet democracy and party democracy have been done away with completely by Stalin. New capitalist elements are forming within and around the Stalinist bureaucracy. By means of theft, embezzlement, abuse of authority, abuse of the leadership functions in the workplace, in the state trusts, etc., they are gathering their initial stocks of capital in secret. It is a veritable ***original capitalist accumulation*** by means of plundering the proletarian state and is in actual fact going on here under the wings of the Stalinist bureaucracy; it is the accumulation of bigger amounts of capital in the hands of individuals. Outwardly, the embryonically, already developed capitalist elements very cunningly camouflage themselves in extremely red colours. Stalin is their instrument. They are pushing him further and further to the right, to act more and more sharply against the proletarian world revolution, against the world proletariat, against the proletarian dictatorship, against the Russian working class. Once they have completely squeezed the Stalinist lemon dry, they will throw it on the rubbish tip. They want the property in the means of production, which the proletarian state owns in the name of the working class. Naturally they have no intention of leaving this property to, for instance, the German monopoly bourgeoisie. The point in time is approaching, when they will set about taking counter-revolutionary action, to give their trailblazer, the Stalinist bureaucracy, the boot, in order to fully and openly enjoy the fruits of the Stalinist period of reaction. Neo-capitalist elements are in the process of developing in Russia in and around the Stalinist bureaucracy, and are much more cunning, much more unscrupulous than the former capitalists – they are ***elements of the coming Russian monopoly bourgeoisie***. It may be that, in order to be able to continue to

deceive the masses for even longer, they will for a while make use of some kind of collective form of capitalist monopoly property, but ultimately they will in one way or another set about dividing the property in the means of production among themselves. Only the revolutionary struggle of the Russian working class – whose class consciousness, class organisation and class strength have been extremely weakened by Stalinism – can prevent this, a revolutionary struggle that to a large extent is determined by the course, tempo and momentum of the revolutionary development in the countries outside Russia, revolutionary development that on its part has been hindered in the extreme and continues to be hindered by the actual interplay of Social Democracy, the Labour Party, the American and other sections of the trade union bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy, and the Stalinist bureaucracy.

There is also no question that Stalin might have liquidated the ***kulaks*** as a class. On the contrary, in consequence of the adventurist, precipitate tempo of agrarian collectivisation that far exceeded the strength of the Russian proletariat, and what was actually feasible for the Russian proletariat, a great many kulaks were brought in, because the necessary number of agronomists, the necessary manpower trained in agriculture was lacking – agronomists and manpower that would have been capable of carrying out the leadership functions in the big agricultural organisations. A considerable number of kulaks hold office in the agrarian collectives, have a strong economic and social influence, and are in high-up positions that provide great opportunities and at the same time have the highly desired cover, the camouflage, afforded by Stalin. They are important allies of the developing new Russian monopoly bourgeoisie.

Stalin and Co. are not working at liquidating the classes, but at liquidating the proletarian revolution, at liquidating the proletarian state, at liquidating Communism. In actual fact they are working into the hands of those who want to restore capitalism in Russia and want to stabilise the capitalist system of exploitation and rule on a world scale for a long period of time: the international class of capitalist exploiters and oppressors.

A country that victoriously carries through the proletarian revolution, cannot on its own overcome the class cleavage of its population completely; it can do this only in conjunction with the victory of the revolution, and with the liquidation of the classes in at least several advanced, large, important countries. The process of liquidating the classes can certainly be started in a country that has victoriously carried through the proletarian revolution, but it can ***only*** be completed ***on a world scale***.

BOOKLET 2:

THE STATE

THE STATE

I. Every State is a Class State

The bourgeoisie is in numerical terms an extremely thin stratum in comparison to the working class. Nevertheless, it maintains its class property in the means of production; nevertheless, it forces the worker to accept working conditions that correspond to the needs of capitalist valorisation; nevertheless, it seizes the entire surplus product of the labour of the world proletariat for itself; nevertheless, it disposes at will, and according to its interests, over the total product and over accumulation; nevertheless, it thus maintains the conditions of capitalist production and capitalist exploitation. It achieves this by means of a special organisation: the capitalist state power, the ***capitalist state***. It is the organisation of rule (*Herrschaftsorganisation*) of the capitalist class for maintaining and securing the capitalist conditions of production, above all for holding down the wage workers, but also the exploited peasants/farmers and the petty bourgeois.

What applies to the capitalist state, applies to every state in general. The ***slaveholders' state*** is the organisation of rule of the slave owners for maintaining the conditions of production based on slavery, above all for holding down the slaves. The ***feudal state*** is the organisation of rule of the feudal lords for securing the feudal conditions of production, above all for holding down the serfs and villeins. The slaveholders' state, the state of the feudal lords and that of the capitalists are the three main forms of the ***exploiters' state***: it is the organisation of rule of the exploiters for maintaining the conditions of production for exploitation, above all for holding down the exploited. Only by means of a machine, which constantly exercises this organised compulsion, are the exploiters, who are a small minority, able to compel the exploited, who are the huge majority, to continuously work for the exploiters' class. The ***proletarian state*** is the state of the exploited directed against the exploiters: it is the organisation of rule of the alliance of the working class and the class of the non-exploiting, themselves exploited peasants/farmers and petty bourgeois, under the leadership of the proletariat, for holding down and liquidating the capitalist exploiters' class, for liquidating the capitalist conditions of production and for establishing and securing the conditions of production leading to Socialism and ultimately to Communism. The ***state*** is the organisation of rule of one class for holding down, oppressing another class. Every state is a class state and must be – this is its very essence. The bourgeoisie seeks to blur the class character of its state as much as possible. It gives out the class state as an organisation of the entire population of a country, an organisation that floats above the classes in the interests of this total population of a state's territory, in the interests of the general public. In order to make it easier to dominate and exploit the classes it exploits and oppresses, the bourgeoisie seeks to deceive them as much as possible about the fact that its state is the machine of rule of the tiny ***minority***, namely the capitalist exploiters, directed against the proletariat and the non-exploiting, themselves exploited peasants/farmers and petty bourgeois, i.e. against the ***overwhelming*** majority of the population.

The accomplices of the capitalists, the opportunists, the agents of the bourgeoisie in the workers' movement, are working in the same direction. They endeavour to mislead the workers, the exploited generally, about the class character of the (capitalist) state by using terms that are

as vague as possible, like people's state or people's republic – all opportunists like to make use of ambiguous, vague terms and formulations in order to deceive the masses more easily. They participate in (capitalist) government, they strive for this participation, indeed, in situations that are especially critical for the bourgeoisie, they themselves take in hand the government of the (capitalist) state – all 'in the interests of the working class' as they say... It is precisely for this reason that they take the trouble to not let a clear awareness about the capitalist class nature of this state, and its very essence, gain a firm foothold among the workers, and to conceal from them as much as possible, that it is a state for holding down the working class, indeed all the exploited toilers, and for securing the capitalist profit economy and exploiters' rule.

Decades ago Engels acknowledged the temporary justification of the slogan: 'free people's state' for purposes of agitation, despite its unscientific, opportunist character, something that he stated explicitly. However, that was under the conditions of what was essentially an absolutist regime, which made any other form of agitation impossible. However, Social Democracy was still using this slogan even in 1918, when the masses swept absolutism away completely and the proletarian revolution was on the agenda.

The proletariat does not deceive anyone about the class nature of the proletarian state; it also has no reason to do so, for this state is the organisation of rule of the alliance between the proletarian class and the non-exploiting, themselves exploited peasant/farmer and petty-bourgeois class, under the leadership of the working class, i.e. the organisation of rule of the exploited, i.e. the ***overwhelming majority*** against the ***tiny minority***. Whereas the bourgeoisie seeks to maintain the capitalist state permanently, the proletariat, from the outset, points out the transient character of the proletarian state, which has the task of making itself superfluous, by liquidating the classes.

II. Every State is a Class Dictatorship

That a class's organisation of rule, intended for the oppression of another class, would have been established with the voluntary consent of the oppressed class, has not happened, does not happen and will not happen. Every state was, is and will be established without, indeed against, the will of the oppressed class. Any consent to the establishment of a state, any compromise – which perhaps underlies this consent – between the oppressed and the oppressors, is in reality in the last analysis gained by force. Every class that establishes, maintains its organisation of rule, its machine of oppression against another class, in the last analysis does this singly and solely by virtue of its own revolutionary or counter-revolutionary class will and volition; in order to maintain its economic power against a specific class permanently, it establishes and maintains its political power, above all its armed power against the oppressed class. ***EVERY STATE IS IN THE LAST ANALYSIS THE ORGANISATION OF RULE – BASED ON ARMED POWER, ON ARMED FORCE – OF ONE CLASS FOR THE DOMINATION AND OPPRESSION OF ANOTHER CLASS. IN A WORD, EVERY STATE IS THE DICTATORSHIP OF ONE CLASS AGAINST ANOTHER***. Every state is sole rule, is all-encompassing rule, is ***dictatorship***, i.e. 'unrestricted power, power that is not bound by any laws, is completely uncurtailed by any rules and based directly on force' (Lenin, 1921k, p.15). What are called the ***laws*** of the state, are regulations that the dictatorship enacts and issues, and whose observance it enforces. Insofar as there are 'limits' to the dictatorship, they are introduced by the ruling class itself, above all in its own interests, for reasons of expediency; if their appropriateness changes, then it extends or curtails the 'limits' and, when the interests of the ruling class require it, abolishes them altogether. Every state is ***class dictatorship***. ***IN WHATEVER FORM IT IS EXERCISED, AND HOWEVER MUCH IT IS WRAPPED IN COTTON WOOL, AND HOWEVER MUCH IT 'DEMOCRATICALLY' 'DRAWS INTO PARTICIPATION IN POWER' THE DOMINATED AND OPPRESSED, OR SECTIONS OF THEM, THIS CHANGES NOTHING IN THE FACT, THAT EVERY STATE IS CLASS DICTATORSHIP, IS DICTATORSHIP***. The slaveholder state is the dictatorship of the slaveholders; the feudal state is the dictatorship of the feudal lords, the capitalist state is the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie – the proletarian state is the dictatorship of the proletariat in alliance with the non-exploiting, themselves exploited peasants/farmers and petty bourgeois, under the leadership of the working class, and is the dictatorship of the exploited toiling people.

Class dictatorship takes on the most varied ***political forms***, depending on the needs of the ruling classes, depending on the stage of development of the classes and the situation in general; however, its ***social content*** must be one and the same in terms of the basic interests, the class interests of the ruling class, as long as it is to remain the dictatorship of this specific ruling class. Whatever political form the exploiters' state assumes, its social content stays the same: safeguarding the exploiters' class property − property that they have derived from exploitation; holding down the exploited class; maintaining the state machine built up according to the interests of the exploiters' class – whatever political form the proletarian state takes on, its social content must stay the same: safeguarding the collective property of the working class in the decisive means of production, achieved by means of it being the property of the proletarian-democratic state; holding down the exploiters' class; maintaining the proletarian state apparatus built up on the basis of class; proletarian democracy; the emancipation of all workers, of all the exploited of the entire world and therefore of the oppressed peoples too, in particular the

colonial and semi-colonial peoples; working towards the proletarian-democratic dictatorship of the world proletariat, towards the world soviet state, in other words: the consistent adherence to the line of the international proletarian revolution; the construction of Socialism, the liquidation of classes, states, parties; realising a fully communist world co-operative without classes, states and parties, a world co-operative that encompasses all human beings without exception, administering themselves in a fraternal way in freedom and equality.

> Bourgeois states are most varied in form, but their essence is the same: all these states whatever their form are in the final analysis inevitably the *dictatorship of the bourgeoisie*. The transition from capitalism to Communism is certainly bound to yield a tremendous abundance and variety of political forms, but the essence will inevitably be the same: the *dictatorship of the proletariat* (Lenin, 1934a, p.54[17]).

With regard to those who are dominated, are oppressed, the state − whatever its form − is always a dictatorship. The relationship among the members of the ruling, oppressing class itself is quite another matter. The dictatorship of a class does not mean that the entire mass of the class, that all class members always participate directly in the dictatorship or exercise it directly. The states of ancient Greece were, for the most part, extremely democratic − that means the following: with regard to the slaves the dictatorship of the slaveholders was extremely strict, but among the latter themselves there frequently existed an exemplary democratic relationship; for the most part they exercised their dictatorship over the slaves as exemplary democratically organised slave masters. In the case of other states in Antiquity the class dictatorship of the slave masters was actually only exercised by a section of the slave-owners, mostly the very biggest ones. These dictatorships were oligarchically organised slaveholder dictatorships.

The feudal state was in all cases dictatorship of the feudal lords against the feudal peasants. In some cases, among themselves, the feudal barons were more or less democratic and had a feudal parliament. The fact that later on, representatives of the Third Estate, of the upcoming bourgeoisie were also drawn in, in a more or less democratic manner, does not alter the fact that the feudal organisation of rule was a dictatorship of the feudal lords. In other cases, the feudal dictatorship was organised oligarchically, was actually exercised only by a small minority of feudal lords, mostly the very biggest.

This is also the case with the capitalist dictatorship. The capitalist exploiters in this or that case are organised democratically among themselves. Again, in other cases the capitalist class dictatorship is exercised in an oligarchic manner by only a small minority of the capitalists – mostly the biggest capitalists.

THE PROLETARIAN DICTATORSHIP IS DICTATORSHIP ONLY AGAINST THE CAPITALIST CLASS. WITH REGARD TO THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE WORKERS AND EXPLOITED PEASANTS/FARMERS AND PETTY BOURGEOIS TO ONE ANOTHER, THE PROLETARIAN DICTATORSHIP IS THEIR STATE-BASED, <u>DEMOCRATICALLY</u>

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[17] This quotation is actually from Lenin's *The State and Revolution* and is part of an extract from this work that has been included in the first volume of *Karl Marx: Selected Writings* at the end of Lenin's 'Karl Marx'; Ed.

ORGANISED ALLIANCE UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE WORKING CLASS; THE PROLETARIAN STATE, THE PROLETARIAN ORGANISATION OF RULE, THE PROLETARIAN DICTATORSHIP, THE PROLETARIAN-DEMOCRATIC STATE IS THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE TOILING PEOPLE, THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE TOILING PEOPLE ORGANISED DEMOCRATICALLY AMONG THEMSELVES, IT IS THE DEMOCRACY OF THE TOILING PEOPLE UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT ORGANISED AS A STATE.

An exploiters' dictatorship that is exercised and organised more or less oligarchically – one that in certain circumstances is escalated to a dictatorship of one person, who is in reality an exponent of a more or less tightly knit oligarchy – in no way contradicts the essence of the dictatorship of the exploiters' class, indeed in certain circumstances, in certain situations it is even a necessary form for maintaining the class dictatorship of the exploiters against the exploited and oppressed – necessary from the standpoint of the needs of the exploiting, ruling class with regard to exploitation, rule and oppression.

It is otherwise in the case of the proletarian dictatorship. This is and ***must*** be a democracy of the toiling people, proletarian democracy, or else it is threatened in its foundations as a proletarian dictatorship, as a dictatorship of the toiling people. ***EVERY OLIGARCHIC EXERCISING, ORGANISING OF THE PROLETARIAN DICTATORSHIP INEVITABLY MEANS LIQUIDATING THE PROLETARIAN CLASS CHARACTER OF THIS DICTATORSHIP, AND ACTUALLY MOVING IT OVER, LEADING IT OVER INTO AN ANTI-PROLETARIAN, ANTI-REVOLUTIONARY DICTATORSHIP.***

Given that every exercising of power by an oligarchy, every oligarchic organisation contradicts the proletarian dictatorship on principle and threatens its class character, then all the more so if it is exercised by a monarch or organised on the basis of a monarchy. Proletarian dictatorship and dictatorship by a monarch (or usurped by one person), whatever its form, are fundamentally incompatible with one another. Every striving for or working towards a (usurped) ***personal dictatorship*** or towards a monarchy in a proletarian state, is anti-proletarian, anti-revolutionary.

III. The Nature of State Power

1. Economic power

The state, the organised power of the ruling class, is in the last analysis an economic power. Only its economic power enables the ruling class to establish, extend and maintain its state organisation. Fundamentally, in every respect the state serves the ruling class as a lever for its economic interests. In any case, in the last analysis the entire power position of every class is based on its economic power.

The main source of the economic power of the bourgeoisie arises from its property in the decisive means of production. Besides this has at its disposal exceedingly powerful secondary sources of its economic power position, which in the last analysis arise from its class property in the decisive means of production: it has accumulated the heritage of many thousands of years of exploiters' experiences in directing and organising production; it has at its disposal powerful international economic connections, etc.

Prior to establishing a proletarian dictatorship, the working class draws its economic power in the last analysis from the fact that it is indispensable and irreplaceable in the production process; the individual worker is replaceable, the working class is irreplaceable. Furthermore, this is also due to the fact that the overwhelming and ever bigger part of the total social product is produced by wage workers; it is also due to the concentration of the workers in the big, decisive workplaces and of the worker masses at the most important centres in the country, something which has been brought about by capitalist production itself. In a proletarian dictatorship too, the workers' role in production is, now as before, the main source of proletarian power. It is only because this economic power position is strengthened by the collective property of the workers, poor peasants/farmers and petty bourgeois and by the collective property of proletarian democracy, by the collective ownership of the proletarian-democratic state in the decisive means of production that the economic foundations arise, on the basis of which alone it can be said that the proletariat is constituted as the ruling class. This collective property is the basic ***economic*** condition for the proletarian state.

2. Political power

In order to protect and secure its economic power position, every class establishes and organises its ***political power***. This is a special superstructure erected by a class for permanently securing its economic foundations. From its economic basis the class gains the means and thereby the power to erect, maintain and extend its political superstructure. ***IN THE LAST ANALYSIS POLITICAL POWER IS ROOTED IN ECONOMIC POWER***. 'Force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one. It is itself an economic power' (Marx, [1867] 1914b, p.680). But as a power structure of a special kind, which has been ***added*** by a class to the economic foundation, political power is an autonomous, enormous force of power (*Kraftpotenz*), in so far as it gives the economic class power a far more stable character than it would otherwise have. Furthermore, where and when there is a somewhat more developed class cleavage of society and the disproportionate relationship between exploiters and exploited is in numerical terms becoming ever greater, the exploiting minority could ***not maintain*** its economic power position ***at all*** in the face of the huge and ever growing exploited majority, if it

did not create for itself out of its economic power an enduring ***additional*** protection that lies outside its economic foundations in the form of an exploiters' state power created by the exploiting minority and in this sense ***autonomous***. Conversely: even after a victorious proletarian revolution, the defeated bourgeoisie is for a long time far more powerful than the revolutionary proletariat; it is precisely this fact that makes it indispensably necessary to establish and to maintain the proletarian dictatorship; only by means of the proletarian state power is the working class (in alliance with the exploited peasant/farmer and petty-bourgeois masses) able to strengthen its power position in such a way that it is able to permanently hold down the exploiters class.

The fighting organisations that it develops in its struggle against the feudal powers form the political power of the ascending bourgeoisie. The capitalist state that it establishes on the ruins of the feudal state that it has defeated is the consolidated, strengthened political power of the bourgeoisie, after it has risen to become the ruling class by means of the bourgeois revolution.

The fighting organisations that it develops in its struggle against capitalist power, constitute the political power of the ascending working class. The proletarian state that the ascending working class establishes on the ruins of the bourgeois state that it has defeated is its consolidated, strengthened political power, after it has constituted itself as the ruling class by means of the proletarian revolution.

Only if one clearly separates what distinguishes economic from political power does one gain a clear picture of the class nature of the ***degenerating, degenerated Soviet state***. Now as before the economic role of the Russian working class continues to exist, and the Soviet state's collective property in the decisive means of production also continues to exist. Admittedly, the latter now only continues to exist formally, because a significant shift in political power has taken place and thereby also a very important change of form: Stalin & Co. have strangled proletarian democracy, and the fruits of the Soviet state's collective property in the means of production, the fruits of collective production no longer flow to the working class, but to the degenerated, petty-bourgeoisified Stalinist bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy who sponge on the proletariat and skim off the cream for themselves. The main source of the economic power of the Russian working class continues to exist − even if, with regard to the collective property in the means of production, it exists only formally, because the fruits of this collective property are reaped, seized by the degenerated Stalinist bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy. The political power of the Russian working class is extremely curtailed – proletarian democracy is liquidated – however, despite all the Stalinist demoralisation, the degenerated Soviet state retains its ***proletarian*** class character. Why? Because the collective property in the means of production – at least formally – still continues to exist. But on its own this is insufficient, because the collective property of the Soviet state in the decisive means of production is only one part of the economic power of the proletariat, and of its political power, only in so far as the latter is built up on the basis of economic class power and is in the last analysis rooted in it. Trotsky's formulation: 'So long as the forms of property created by the October Revolution are not overthrown, the proletariat remains the ruling class' (Trotzki, [1933] 1934, p.6) carries with it a certain danger; after the victory of the capitalist counter-revolution, the new Russian bourgeoisie could for a period of time continue to retain the collective form of property in the means of production, in order to give the deceptive appearance to as large sections of the masses as possible that it is not at all a matter of radical change (*Umwälzung*) of such importance, in order

to consolidate the counter-revolutionary dictatorship, etc. The degenerated Soviet state is on the contrary a ***proletarian*** state, because not only does the collective property in the means of production exist, but also and above all because the proletariat has still not been decisively crushed in open, violent, bloody struggle and it is precisely for this reason that even after the liquidation of proletarian democracy – a last, even if in consequence of the Stalinist degeneration extremely small and ever smaller, remnant of the ***proletarian*** dictatorship established against the capitalist exploiters class still continues to exist, despite all the Stalinist degeneration. Today this small, ever smaller remnant of proletarian state power, of the proletarian state apparatus, is invisible – otherwise it could not survive at all in the face of the Stalinist gangsters – but in the critical hour, when the capitalist counter-revolution pushes forward to the last decisive battle, this remnant will emerge to fight together with the workers against the capitalist counter-revolution. The degenerated Soviet state is still a proletarian state in spite all of this – the Russian working class is still able to avert its fate, it is still able to prevent the ultimate victory of the capitalist counter-revolution and is still able to defeat the capitalist counter-revolution in open, bloody mass struggle – if the international proletarian revolution comes to its aid in time.

3. What is state power?

If we take the ***purpose of the capitalist state*** in its entire breadth, then in class terms the bourgeois state has three tasks to fulfil. Firstly, and above all, it has the task of holding down the working class; this is, and continues to be, in all circumstances its main task, its main purpose. It is precisely for this reason that every capitalist state is fundamentally orientated against every proletarian state; using all means at its disposal, the capitalist state works at liquidating the socialist orientated economy organised and developed in the direction of socialism by the workers' state, and the proletarian state itself. Secondly, it has the task of holding down the exploited peasants/farmers and petty bourgeois and compel as large a mass of them as possible to become part of the following of the bourgeoisie and to keep them there. This applies to the pre-capitalist producers in general. Capital cannot stand still, it must move unceasingly, driven by insatiable profit greed. It is continually working – together with its state organisation too – at subjugating, integrating and swallowing up all pre-capitalist producers, even if they are organised on a state basis. Thirdly, the bourgeois state has the task of ensuring that the capitalist class interests prevail in the face of the special interests of individual capitalists and individual capitalist groups. This applies internally, but also externally. Once the scope for capital has become too limited in economic terms, it, by necessity, increasingly and ever more systematically, together with its state organisation too, seeks to beat down, to incorporate its weaker capitalist competitors, even if they are organised on the basis of a state. All three tasks are brought together in the overall task of permanently securing the existence and development of capitalist class property; by virtue of the coercive law of capitalist competition – something that is only reinforced by the transition of individual-capitalist, individual competition to monopolist competition – capitalist class property can only survive by developing more and more.

Could the bourgeois state permanently hold down the workers in wage slavery with a state apparatus composed of proletarians? Certainly not. Would the proletarian state be able to hold down the bourgeoisie with a state machine formed out of capitalists? Definitely not. The state,

as Engels aptly puts it, above all comprises detachments of armed persons, with adjuncts such as prisons, etc. ***THE STATE IS THE STATE MACHINE, THE STATE APPARATUS***. 'The (exploiters; auth.) state in the proper sense of the word, is an ***apparatus*** with whose help certain formations of armed, privileged persons subordinate the masses to their orders'. (Lenin, [1917] 1925, p.406). In order to comply with the purpose of the state, and above all in order to fulfil the main purpose of the state, the state machinery must be ***built up*** strictly ***according to class***. ***THE STATE, STATE POWER IS THE STATE APPARATUS BUILT UP STRICTLY ON A CLASS BASIS, IT IS THE STATE MACHINE BUILT UP STRICTLY ON THE BASIS OF CLASS.***

Ideally, the bourgeoisie would prefer to put together its state machine using only members of the capitalist class. However, it needs a very broad-based state apparatus, to fulfil its state purpose, but it itself forms an extremely thin stratum of society. It can therefore only fill the commanding heights, the key centres, the nodal centres and the most important parts with capitalist elements. Over and above this it resorts to carefully selected, bourgeois-orientated elements in large numbers, elements who belong above all to the upper layer of the middle class, by means of whom it at the same time draws behind it broad sections of the (petty-bourgeois; trans.) middle layers. For the lowlier posts it draws on the lower strata of the petty bourgeoisie, on the small peasants/farmers and on the proletarian strata trapped in the mindset of the petty bourgeoisie, whereby the candidates are likewise well-sifted and carefully chosen. The non-capitalist elements that have been incorporated into the bourgeois state apparatus are worked on systematically and ideologically (in schools, on courses and such like); they are intensively steeped in and impregnated with a bourgeois spirit and kept continually under systematic supervision with regard to their reliability for the capitalist class. In its armed forces especially, the capitalist class uses the method of systematically mixing elements who are from different national or social backgrounds or are at different educational levels; as its last line of defence it forms special detachments composed of elements who are particularly reliable in class terms, like, for example, the 'S.S.' ('*Schutzstaffeln'*; 'Protection Squads') of the German monopoly bourgeoisie.

The class conditions for the formation of the apparatus of the proletarian state differ from those for the formation of the bourgeois state apparatus, but with regard to the basic question of building up the state machine on the basis of class, the proletariat must act in exactly the same way as the bourgeoisie, in the same way as every ruling class – but of course with a proletarian class orientation. ***THE WORKING CLASS MUST BUILD UP THE STATE MACHINERY OF THE PROLETARIAN STATE STRICTLY <u>ON A PROLETARIAN BASIS IN TERMS OF CLASS</u> IF THIS STATE IS TO BE ABLE TO FULFIL THE <u>PURPOSE</u> OF THE <u>PROLETARIAN STATE</u>: WHICH IS TO PERMANENTLY HOLD DOWN THE CAPITALIST CLASS; TO EMANCIPATE THE WORKERS, THE EXPLOITED AND OPPRESSED MASSES AND THE OPPRESSED PEOPLES; TO BUILD UP WORLD SOCIALISM, TO LIQUIDATE THE CLASSES; AND, FINALLY, TO BRING ABOUT THE CLASSLESS, STATELESS, PARTYLESS, FULLY COMMUNIST SOCIETY ON A WORLD SCALE, AND MAKE IT A REALITY***.

State power is, in essence, a state machine built up strictly on the basis of class, a state apparatus built up strictly on the basis of class. It takes the highest political skill for a class to build up its state machine on the basis of class in such a way that it always and under all

circumstances works reliably in the direction of the class interests of this class, and only in this direction. By working consciously and effectively in this direction, i.e. towards holding down the bourgeoisie, towards emancipating the workers, and all the exploited and oppressed, including the oppressed peoples as well, towards world Socialism, towards liquidating the classes and towards the world revolution, the proletarian state is working towards the ascent of the whole of human society. In contrast the exploiters' state is working consciously against the interests of humanity and for the interests of the thin stratum of exploiters at the expense of society as a whole; it is creating the prerequisites for the emancipation of humanity, but only objectively, against its will.

Whatever the written constitution, whatever the written laws of a bourgeois state, the capitalist state apparatus – by virtue of its capitalist class structure – in terms of what it does and does not do, automatically pushes again and again, daily, hourly, incessantly in the direction of the capitalist interests. This is the ***automatic of the capitalist state apparatus***. For this reason, in a bourgeois state, every alliance (coalition, 'people's' front) of a workers party (or a party which gives itself out as such and which worker masses follow) with a bourgeois party, whether it is outside or inside the government, is inevitably bound to turn against the working class – because the capitalist state apparatus automatically acts in the direction of bourgeois interests. In contrast, a proletarian party (or a petty-bourgeois party that gives itself out as such, like the LP, the SP, the StP, the anarchists, POUM, etc.) has no proletarian state apparatus, and even if it is sitting together (with bourgeois representatives; trans.) in the government of the bourgeois state, or even if it has filled all the government seats in the bourgeois state, it does not have the capitalist state apparatus at its disposal. (Likewise, the same applies to an alliance of any proletarian mass organisation, such as a trade union, etc., with any capitalist group or organisation.) It is precisely for this reason that a ***party alliance*** (trade union alliance and such like) must be clearly distinguished from a ***state alliance***: a proletarian state, which concludes alliances with capitalist states, bases itself on its proletarian class state apparatus and, precisely by means of this, thwarts the capitalist automatic of the bourgeois state machine. The working class must establish, must build up a state apparatus with a ***proletarian automatic*** that can be relied upon in terms of class. Not the paper constitution, no paper laws, paper orders, paper decrees of any kind, nor any seats in the government, even if it is all the seats in the government, decide the class nature of a specific state, but singly and solely its actual constitution, i.e. the actual structure of its state apparatus in class terms.

The nature of state power, and what inevitably is its structure in class terms, has consequences of the utmost importance:

a) Changes in the leadership of state power within the same class

When state power passes over from the hands of one stratum into the hands of another stratum belonging to the same class, changes in personnel and organisational changes are carried out to a greater or lesser extent, institutions are dismantled, are reconstructed, are rebuilt, names and emblems are abolished or altered, and new ones introduced. Outwardly in certain circumstances, many, often very important, things change, but when a change like this takes place one thing remains in essence completely unchanged: the class structure of state power, i.e. the class character of the state, and, fundamentally, the form property relations take, the specific relationship of the ruling class to the decisive means of production. When in the USA power passes over from the Republicans to the Democrats, or in Britain from the Liberals to the

Conservatives, or in France from the right-bourgeoisie to the left-bourgeoise and back again to the right-bourgeois, or in Germany from Brüning via Schleicher and Papen to Hitler, or in Spain from Primo de Rivera to the bourgeois Republicans and finally to Franco, then state power changes hands within the same class. Strictly speaking, it is not the state power that changes, but merely its ***leadership***: whatever personnel changes, organisational changes, etc. are carried out, the state apparatus remains in all such cases strictly capitalist in terms of its class composition.

One can say, for example, that in the USA a Republican state apparatus has been replaced by a Democratic one, or in Britain a Liberal by a Conservative one, or in France a right-bourgeois by a left-bourgeois one and then again by a right-bourgeois one, or in Germany a (bourgeois-) democratic one by a Bonapartist one, and finally by a fascist one, or in Spain a monarchist one by a republican-democratic one, and finally by a semi-fascist state apparatus – these abbreviated terms express specific changes that are very important, they are good and useful, if and as long as one remains aware that as a result of these developments no changes whatsoever have taken place with regard to the ***capitalist*** class nature of these state apparatuses, i.e. with regard to the ***capitalist*** class character of these states, and are therefore also not expressed by these terms. But this is precisely what the accomplices of the bourgeoisie want to make the workers believe. The SP, the LP, the StP and such like especially like to declare that the ***fascist*** state apparatus must be destroyed; by means of this they are seeking to deceive the workers about the fact that they have no intention of smashing the ***capitalist*** state machine but merely wanting to recast its fascist-capitalist form into another (capitalist!) form, namely into its (capitalist-)democratic form. In order to cloak this even better they give out the slogan: '***anti-fascist*' *state apparatus***. However, one must examine every purely negative slogan for its positive content! The anti-fascist state machine of the SP, the LP, of Stalinism, etc., i.e. the ***capitalist***-democratic state apparatus, which does indeed differ from the fascist one in terms of methods, in the ways and means of oppressing, but is completely at one with it with regard to the main capitalist task of holding down and exploiting the working class under all circumstances and therefore too – through all changes in personnel – with regard to the ***capitalist*** composition of the state apparatus.

The bourgeoisie corrupts and bribes the upper strata of the working class, i.e. the workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy and makes use of them as capitalist agents in the workers' movement. In certain situations, the bourgeoisie draws its Labour, Social-Democratic, Stalinist and other such agents into the capitalist government. A ***coalition government*** (or 'people's' front government, as in France and Spain, or a 'national' government, as in Britain), is formed with the task of lulling the 'agitated' ***workers***, stalling them and keeping their allegiance with promises, so that the bourgeoisie gets over a more or less critical phase safely and as cheaply as possible. ***A COALITION GOVERNMENT CHANGES NOTHING AT ALL WITH REGARD TO THE CAPITALIST CLASS CHARACTER OF THE BOURGEOIS STATE***. Even if Labour, Social-Democratic, Stalinist, centrist or anarchist ministers sit in it, even if they are *Oberpräsidente* (governors; trans.), *Landräte* (chief administrative officers in local authorities; trans.), police chiefs or whatever, even if they make paper laws or issue paper regulations, however much they want and whatever the content, the automatic of the ***capitalist*** state apparatus works, drills, pushes again and again, daily, hourly, unceasingly in a ***capitalist*** direction until the coalition government, by means of its Labour, Social-Democratic, Stalinist centrist, anarchist, etc. agents, has sufficiently soothed, disintegrated and weakened the

workers and the coalition episode is liquidated; and in doing so the bourgeoisie, if necessary, assists using its extra-state capitalist instruments of power. This is without exception the inevitable outcome of every coalition government, unless, under the leadership of the proletarian-revolutionary party, the actions of the masses, who have been betrayed and disappointed by the coalition government, thwart the treacherous game and turn it in a proletarian-revolutionary direction; only by means of this does the coalition government – against the will of the bourgeoisie, against the will of its helpers! – become a precursor to the establishment of proletarian-democratic power, of the proletarian dictatorship. Conversely: because the entire politics of the LP, the SP, the StP, etc., has, in reality, as its basic line, collaboration with the bourgeoisie or a section of it against the working class, against the proletarian revolution, and bringing about a coalition, it is precisely for this reason that their entire politics can never ever and will never ever bring about a change in ***proletarian*** class terms of the capitalist state apparatus, because the bourgeoisie and every section of the bourgeoisie only concludes an alliance with someone on the basic condition that the state machine built up on a capitalist class basis is left essentially intact. ***EVERY COALITION GOVERNMENT IS BOUND TO TURN AGAINST THE WORKING CLASS, IS IN ESSENCE DIRECTED AGAINST IT***, because it ***has to*** keep the capitalist state apparatus – neither the bourgeoisie nor a bourgeois faction, even the most left-bourgeois faction, enters into any other kind of coalition – and because even the mere existence of the capitalist state machine hangs over the heads of the workers like a capitalist sword of Damocles. All politics that aims to form an alliance of the working class or a proletarian party (or one which proclaims itself as such – the LP, the SP, the StP and such like), or a proletarian mass organisation (a trade union, a co-operative, a sports club, etc.) with the bourgeoisie or a section of it, i.e. ***ALL COALITION POLITICS IS INEVITABLY BOUND TO TURN AGAINST THE PROLETARIAT, AGAINST THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION***. The mechanism that makes this inevitability into a reality is the state machine, which acts automatically and which is built up on a capitalist basis in terms of class – the proletarian class, proletarian party, proletarian mass organisation on their own, cannot counterpose anything equivalent to this. It is only when there is an alliance between states that this automatic cannot work against the proletarian state, because (and for as long as) it has at its disposal a state apparatus built up in class terms on a proletarian basis.

In particularly dangerous situations, if the bourgeois state apparatus is shaken, and large masses are getting into a state of revolutionary ferment, the bourgeoisie, for a certain period of time, entrusts the ***whole*** government, the leadership of the ***capitalist*** state power to its agents in the workers' movement. A Labour, or Social Democratic, or Social Democratic–Stalinist government formed in this way – it could also be a purely Stalinist government – presents itself to the workers as a 'workers' government', a 'workers' and peasants' (workers' and farmers') government', a 'socialist government' and such like – in certain circumstances it assumes the title of a 'revolutionary-democratic dictatorship', a 'revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the workers and farmers' or an otherwise revolutionary designation – in order, using these even more cunning methods, to fulfil the same purpose that the coalition government had to fulfil for the bourgeoisie under somewhat less dangerous conditions. The fraudulent character of all these governments, no matter what name they use to dress themselves up, can be recognised from the fact that they leave the bourgeois state machine essentially intact with regard to its ***capitalist***-class-based structure and at best seek to deceive the workers about it by the use of sham measures. It is exactly the same with regard to capitalist class property in the decisive

means of production. See, for example, the SPD-USPD 'workers' government' (this 'government of people's representatives') in 1918 in Germany and the 'workers' governments' (i.e. the Labour governments; trans.) in Britain, Australia and New Zealand.

Any elections, whatever the outcome, even if they result in a majority of voters, result in a majority in ***parliament***, any votes or resolutions in parliament, passed with whatever majority – all this changes nothing at all with regard to the fundamental ***capitalist*** class structure of the bourgeois state apparatus. In order to maintain its class power – the economic and the political – and in order to maintain its state power, every ruling exploiters' class is – depending on the circumstances of the situation – inclined to make this or that manoeuvre or concession; but it is never under any circumstances whatsoever prepared to abandon, give up or sacrifice its state apparatus built up on a class basis. Never in the history of the class struggles has this ever occurred, never does this ever occur and never will it occur; it cannot occur because ***NO RULING EXPLOITERS' CLASS GIVES ITSELF UP VOLUNTARILY***. Individual exploiters commit suicide, a ruling exploiters' class never! It can make the most serious mistakes, which in their objective take further effect and accelerate its downfall, but it never consciously gives itself up. An investigation that digs deeper shows that a ruling class, whose economic system is in decline, inevitably makes, and is bound to make, against its will, bigger and bigger mistakes that stem from the ever bigger contradictions in which it is inevitably enmeshed by the decline of its economic system. The more the decline of its system of production and its mode of production advances, the less it is able to keep its policies for its current and day-to-day interests in harmony with its policies for its class interests, its policies for its enduring interests and its policies for its interests in the long term. It inevitably becomes more and more opportunist and digs its own grave in that in the last analysis it strengthens its enemies, not by any means of its own conscious will, but on the contrary against it. Because the more it feels its own economic basis sliding from under its feet, the more strongly indeed, it concentrates all its class consciousness and all its class will, in order to maintain its economic power by means of its political power, by means of its state power, i.e. to maintain this under all circumstances, the more it holds fast at any price to its state machine which is built up on the basis of class. The politics of the French and the British bourgeoisie show this particularly clearly in recent years[18].

The transfer of the leadership of the state from the hands of the bourgeoisie into the hands of the LP, SP or StP is subjectively a change in the leadership of the state power within the

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[18] Something similar applies to the politics of the LP, the SP and the StP. The more the economic conditions for the parasitic politics of the Labour, Social Democratic and Stalinist workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy recede, the less they are capable of keeping their policies for their day-to-day interests in harmony even with their fundamentally egotistical interests in the long term. They are becoming more and more opportunist – even from the standpoint of their selfish basic interests: even if they succeed in postponing their ultimate bankruptcy – they themselves – against their own will – are digging the ground from under their own feet. This is only another expression of the fact that the course of the era of capitalist decay is improving the objective conditions for the revolutionary victory of the working class, through all fluctuations and setbacks. In the long term this makes revolutionary action easier, but, now as before, this remains indispensably necessary for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, for proletarian victory.

capitalist front as a whole, from the capitalist masters to their bourgeois agents within the workers' movement. Objectively, however, this is also a change of state leadership within the same class, namely the capitalist class. Because the fact that the capitalist class in this case does not take care of the directing of its affairs of state itself, but lets petty-bourgeois agents whom it has corrupted and whom it employs in the workers' movement, take care of it, alters nothing in the fact that not only the economic power of the capitalist class (its class property in the decisive means of production), but also its political power (the state apparatus, which in essence has been built up on a capitalist class basis) continues intact, i.e. it actually remains at the disposal of the capitalist class. ***WHETHER THE BOURGEOISIE STEERS THE CAPITALIST STATE DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, ONLY THE FORM IN WHICH THE CAPITALIST CLASS EXERCISES POLITICAL POWER IS CHANGED, BUT IN NO WAY IS ITS ESSENTIALLY CAPITALIST CLASS CONTENT CHANGED***. This only expresses in another way, that, by virtue of its petty-bourgeoisified, petty-bourgeois class character, the degenerated workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy is not capable of having an ***independent*** power role; it objectively, inevitably serves its own capitalist class and in any case in the final analysis serves the world bourgeoisie. In order to get back the helm of the state directly into its own hands, the bourgeoisie pushes its petty-bourgeois agents more or less roughly aside; only in exceptional cases, where the latter, with the support of the masses, ***attempt*** to play an independent (petty-bourgeois) power role, does the bourgeoisie resort to violent action against them, in order to bring the helm of the state out of the hands of the petty-bourgeois agents directly into the hands of their capitalist masters.

b) Changes in state power from one class to another

In order that the state power actually passes over from one class to another, it is indispensable that the state machine of the ruling class is not merely purged, but actually ***destroyed*** and a new state machine established by the victorious class, a new state machine structured on the basis of class. This applies to the transition of state power from one propertied class to another propertied class – for example, from the feudal lords to the bourgeoisie – but applies even more so to the transition of state power from a propertied, exploiting class to a non-propertied, exploited class and vice versa. ***THE TRANSITION OF STATE POWER FROM ONE CLASS TO ANOTHER, OR TO PUT IT ANOTHER WAY, A REAL CHANGE IN THE CLASS CHARACTER OF THE STATE CAN SINGLY AND SOLELY BE BROUGHT ABOUT BY MASS ACTION USING FORCE, BE IT BY REVOLUTION OR BY COUNTER-REVOLUTION***.

A ***putsch*** is a revolutionary or counter-revolutionary attempt to bring about a change in state power by means of a small, determined group, a small minority; it is an attempt of a minority to impose its will on the majority. On the other hand, revolution and counter-revolution are ***mass actions using force*** on a class scale, or at least of decisive sections of the class and a very considerable part of the mass of the class, and in addition strengthened by allied strata from other classes.

When the revolutionary or counter-revolutionary process begins to come to a head, then a system of *de facto* ***dual rule*** often develops: the revolutionary or counter-revolutionary class suddenly shifts over to forms of its political power that – in their objective tendency – already contain the embryo of the new state machine that is to be built up on the basis of class. The old state power continues to exist, but alongside it a new, developing state power begins to unfold. This co-existence (*Nebeneinander*), which is a state of opposition (*Gegeneinander*), creates a

state of volatility in the power question, a state of volatility that can only be a transient one. Either the old state power asserts itself, liquidating its opponent – or vice versa. Dual rule in itself does not bring about a transition of the state power from one class to another – this indispensably necessitates a victorious revolutionary or counter-revolutionary mass action.

Without a revolution or a counter-revolution, there is at best a change of personnel, a 'purge', a change of ministers, a change of government or an alteration in the facade of the state, but never a change in the class character of a state, never an actual transition of state power to another class. The proletariat cannot seize the capitalist state machine, it cannot set it in motion for its own purposes, for its own class interests: ***THE WORKING CLASS CANNOT SIMPLY CONQUER CAPITALIST STATE POWER, BUT ON THE CONTRARY MUST DEMOLISH, SMASH, DESTROY THE STATE POWER OF THE BOURGEOISIE AND ESTABLISH, BUILD UP, ORGANISE ITS OWN PROLETARIAN STATE POWER***. This is the ***Marxist theory of the state***. It is nothing other than the Marxist class struggle principle of the irreconcilability, incompatibility of the capitalist and the proletarian class interests, applied to the state, and confirmed by historical experience.

> One thing in particular was proved by the Commune, namely that the working class cannot simply take possession of the state machine that is already in place and set it in motion for its own purposes (*Das Kommunistische Manifest* [1848] 1891, p.3).
>
> If you look at the last chapter of my 'Eighteenth Brumaire' you will find, that I say that the next attempt of the French revolution will be no longer, as before, to transfer the bureaucratic-military machinery from one hand to another, but to ***smash*** it (Marx, 1934a, p.544).
>
> The supersession of the bourgeois state by the proletarian state is impossible without a violent revolution. [...]
>
> The workers, after the seizure of political power, will smash the old bureaucratic apparatus to pieces, destroy it to its foundations, not leave one stone upon another; they will replace it by a new one, formed from the same workers and white-collar workers, [...]
>
> The revolution consists in the proletariat ***destroying*** the 'administrative apparatus', indeed the ***whole*** state apparatus and replacing it by a new one made up of the armed ***workers***. [...] The revolution must not consist in the new class commanding and governing with the aid of the ***old*** state machine, but in this class ***smashing*** this machine and commanding and governing with the aid of a ***new*** machine (Lenin, [1918] 1933a, pp.14, 72, 76).
>
> The winning of state power [...] is a formulation [...] that makes a concession to the opportunists, inasmuch as it ***admits*** the possibility of seizing power ***without*** destroying the state machine (ibid. p.71).
>
> Creating a ***proletarian class apparatus*** for administration and for the suppression of the resisting bourgeoisie [...] means conquering political power (*Kommunistische Internationale*, 1920, p.43).

In March 1848, the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Germany and Austria was victorious all along the line. However, instead of smashing the apparatus of rule (*Herrschaftsapparat*) of the absolute monarchy, the bourgeois-democratic heroes made great speeches in the Frankfurt Parliament and in the Krems Parliament. In the autumn of 1848, the revolution was bloodily crushed and feudal-monarchist absolutism was once more in the saddle. Despite this, Social Democracy repeated the same thing in 1918 in Germany and Austria. It left the capitalist state apparatus essentially intact. When the revolutionary worker masses themselves set about smashing the state machine of the bourgeoisie and creating new organs of workers' power, organs out of which proletarian state power would have developed, Social Democracy prevented this from happening, if need be by force of arms, with the support of the old capitalist state apparatus and made it possible for the old capitalist state apparatus to consolidate itself again and become stronger and stronger. Furthermore, already in 1918 the bourgeoisie began to organise, to equip extra-state armed capitalist combat organisations and gangs. Social Democracy not only did not prevent this, although they could have done this easily with the aid of the worker masses; on the contrary, using all means available it prevented the workers from liquidating the extra-state combat organisations; indeed they even helped to arm these organisations and gangs. In Austria, for example, the bourgeoisie as early as 1918 set up the *Heimwehren* (home guards), at first in the form of '*Flurwachen*' ('field guards'). Social Democracy provided weapons, munitions and equipment for these '*Flurwachen*' – 'for protection against anarchy'... On the other hand the worker-soldiers returning from the front were disarmed with the utmost haste by Social Democracy… Initiatively the workers repeatedly made tremendous attempts to bring about a correction to the disastrous effects of Social Democracy's actions, and there was every prospect of this succeeding. Social Democracy thwarted this. For example, in 1920, when the German workers had crushed the Kapp Putsch, Social Democracy once again immediately, with the support of the generals and with force, prevented the workers, who had armed themselves in and through the struggle, from making any use of the victory and disarmed them again with the help of the generals. When the workers of Vienna rose up on 15 July 1927 (the storming of the *Justizpalast*), Social Democracy prevented them from arming themselves, disintegrated the masses and let them be shot down by the capitalist police, without lifting a finger. In this way Social Democracy laid the foundations for the catastrophes of 1933 (Germany) and 1934 (Austria).

In 1936-37 the Stalinist party and Social Democracy together did the same thing in Spain. They certainly got rid of feudal elements, carried out all sorts of changes, but they left the capitalist structure of the state apparatus untouched in its essentials. All attempts of the workers to create independent power organs of the working class were sabotaged, thwarted and suppressed by the StP and the SP using all available means. Finally, in Barcelona on 4 and 5 May 1937, the Spanish workers attempted – through violent revolutionary mass action – to create independent proletarian power organs. With the help of the bourgeois state apparatus – which they had deliberately preserved – and, above all, with the help of the capitalist police, the Stalinist party and Social Democracy bloodily crushed the revolutionary workers. In this way the StP and the SP laid the foundations for the Spanish catastrophe of 1938-39.

As a result of all this they enormously weakened the entire world proletariat. As a result of all this they smoothed the path to the Second (imperialist) World War for the world bourgeoisie. As a result of all this they enormously weakened the overall position of the Soviet Union as a proletarian state, in particular for the world war. 'This time round we'll do it differently than in

1918!' – in this way these traitors' parties are courting new trust among the working class. Do not trust them! Their betrayal was not a coincidence! It was and is the ***inevitable*** consequence of their ***attitude towards coalitions*** (***Koalitionseinstellung***), of their 'people's' front, of their nationally restricted attitude and, in the case of the Stalinist parties, in the last analysis the consequence of what is their fundamentally purely Russian-nationalist attitude. Nothing at all has changed with regard to this. Just like the SP in 1918 and subsequently, just like the StP in alliance with the SP in the Spanish Revolution, and already earlier and subsequently, were again and again bent on collaboration with the bourgeoisie or with sections of it – they are still doing the same thing today, this is in actual fact still their basic line today, no matter what 'revolutionary' phrases they use. If, after all the catastrophes for which the SP and the StP are to blame, the workers were to make the enormous mistake of placing their trust in them once again, they would inevitably pay for this with new catastrophes.

Today, are there exceptionally any countries whatsoever where the working class could establish proletarian state power without a revolution, without violent revolutionary mass action and without destroying the capitalist state machine? Many decades ago, Marx and Engels regarded such an exception as possible for Britain at that time.

> Today, in 1917, at the time of the first great imperialist war, this qualification (*Einschränkung*) made by Marx is no longer valid and both Britain and America, the biggest and the last representatives in the whole world of Anglo-Saxon 'liberty', in the sense that they had no militarism and bureaucratism, have sunk completely into the European-wide, filthy, bloody morass of bureaucratic-military institutions, which subordinate everything to themselves and suppress everything. Today, in Britain and America too, the 'precondition of every real people's revolution' is the ***smashing***, the ***destruction*** of the 'state machinery in its finished state' (which in these countries attained the 'European', general imperialist, perfection in the years 1914-17) (Lenin, [1918] 1933a, p.24).

Twenty-five years have passed since Lenin wrote this. Today Britain and the USA have a far stronger bureaucratic-military state apparatus. Only by means of revolution, of violent revolutionary mass action will the working class be able to seize power; but seizing power means: smashing the capitalist state machine and building its own state apparatus, strictly proletarian in its class composition – this is the basic lesson of the Marxist theory of the state that today applies everywhere ***without exception***.

A revolution is preceded by a ***pre-revolutionary*** period, a period of more or less lengthy preparation for revolutionary mass action. Likewise, violent counter-revolutionary mass action, a counter-revolution is preceded by a period of ***reaction***, a period of preparation for a counter-revolution. In the preparatory period the old state power is shaken and undermined; this can go a long way, can go further and further and can bring about very significant results – but no matter how long this lasts, and no matter however much the old state power may be degenerated internally and disintegrated in class terms, this does not eliminate the old class nature of the state machine. The exertions, the changes during the preparatory period do not change the class nature of the state, they only prepare for this change. A change in class nature is carried out singly and solely by the revolutionary action of a class that is progressive from the standpoint of society or by the counter-revolutionary action of a class that is retrogressive from the standpoint of society.

This applies fully to the ***degenerated*** proletarian state too. The Stalinist reaction has undermined the Soviet state to the utmost as a ***proletarian*** state and is disintegrating it more and more as a proletarian state. It has liquidated and finally murdered the left wing, i.e. the proletarian-revolutionary wing, and the ultra-'left' (the 'left'-opportunist) and the right (the openly opportunist) wings of the old Russian CP. But the Stalinist centre – which at first served the bourgeoisie more or less covertly, and, with the murder of the old Bolsheviks, is serving the bourgeoisie more and more openly – still continues to exist. Objectively, the Stalinist bureaucracy is an instrument in the hands of the capitalist counter-revolutionaries, the actual drivers and beneficiaries of the reactionary process; it is the instrument of the Russian counter-revolution of the neo-capitalist elements, which are developing in and around the Stalinist bureaucracy; in the last analysis it is the instrument of the international counter-revolution of the world bourgeoisie. The new Russian bourgeois elements still have to work secretly and disguise themselves carefully, in a very cunning manner, preparing for the hour when they will establish their power, because they also want to, and must, rid themselves of the Stalinist bureaucracy, which has prepared the way for them, once they have made use of it and weakened it sufficiently. Things have not yet gone this far; the Stalinist bureaucracy is still capable of delivering very sharp blows against the extreme right. This reactionary process in Russia is dragging on considerably longer than it did 150 years ago in France. Because the Soviet Union comprises one-sixth of the earth's surface, and is inhabited by roughly 170 million people, who, despite the tremendous advances, for the most part still live under insufficiently developed and in many cases backward economic conditions, in particular as regards communications. In France during the great Revolution, the reactionary process took place throughout under pressure from the most acute counter-revolutionary danger, from invasion by the enemy from outside and a counter-revolutionary uprising from within; this dramatically speeded up the reactionary process in France. In Russia, on the other hand, the Stalinist reaction from 1923-24 to 1939 took place under relatively peaceful conditions. In the first instance it is this creeping nature of the reactionary process taking place in Stalinist Russia that is concealing its class nature from the ordinary worker and in the course of time this illusion is in addition reinforced by the fact that the average worker does not consider Russia in class terms, but 'per se'. On the surface they see a growth in Russian power. For the time being they overlook the very thing that is crucial for the working class, i.e. that in Russia the proletarian elements, the tendencies driving towards Socialism are being weakened more and more and, on the other hand, the tendencies pushing towards capitalism, the neo-capitalist elements, are being strengthened more and more; that the Stalinist 'strengthening of Russian power means an increase in power against the world proletariat, against the Russian proletariat, against the proletarian state, against Socialism, Communism, against the international proletarian revolution – and for the world bourgeoisie, for the new bourgeois elements in Russia, for the restoration of a capitalist state in Russia, for capitalism, for the international capitalist counter-revolution. This is precisely the reason why Churchill, Roosevelt, and their Social-Democratic, Labour and other lackeys, like Stalin & Co. more and more.

The Stalinist reaction is tiring the worker masses, is disintegrating their proletarian class consciousness and is paralysing their proletarian-revolutionary activity. Thus, the Stalinist centre is isolating itself more and more from the masses, who are fighting heroically against the Nazi invasion – not due to Stalin but in spite of him. The capitalist counter-revolutionaries are lying in wait for the point in time that is most favourable for them, when the weakening of the working

class and at the same time the self-isolation of the Stalinist centre will have reached a critical point. As in the Great French Revolution, this reactionary process in the not yet completely extinguished Russian Revolution, is being complicated by the war. Only after the invasion had been beaten back in 1794, did the counter-revolutionaries overthrow Robespierre. The new Russian bourgeois elements, who are developing under Stalin's wing, are not contemplating leaving the gigantic inheritance of the Russian Revolution to the foreign capitalists – they themselves wish to be the heirs. They want to establish their own capitalist dictatorship over the Russian masses. The reactionary process in Russia is still not finished. No matter how far the capitalist counter-revolutionaries drive the Stalinist reaction, through a process of merely undermining, they can only prepare, further and facilitate the establishment of power; however, they cannot carry it through. No matter how far they drive forward the disintegration of the revolutionary spirit and revolutionary activity of the masses, however much the success of their exertions grows, there still remains a more or less large remnant, which can only be crushed in open, bloody struggle. A struggle that, despite all of this, demands the utmost exertion, because in the hour of greatest danger, when its rule is threatened, the working class, even if it is disintegrated, will strain its last remaining revolutionary powers to the utmost, in order to maintain its rule. The capitalist counter-revolutionaries are finally forced to appear openly, are forced into open, bloody struggle, into counter-revolution. Only if they are victorious in this open mass struggle can they build up their state apparatus, the state machine of the new Russian bourgeoisie, on a capitalist class basis on the ruins of the proletarian state machine, which they have smashed in open counter-revolutionary struggle. However, the Russian working class is still able to prevent the final victory of the capitalist counter-revolution, to defeat the counter-revolution and reform the Soviet state in a Leninist manner by liquidating the Stalinist regime and restoring proletarian democracy – if the international proletarian revolution comes to the aid of the Russian proletariat in time.

The proletarian state can only be established by proletarian revolution – this is the basic thesis of the Marxist theory of the state. Only by counter-revolution, only by counter-revolutionary mass action, only in open, bloody struggle with the masses can the proletarian state be destroyed, annihilated, eliminated – this is the inevitable conclusion from the teachings of Marx on the state. This is the lesson of the whole history of the class struggles, which shows again and again that the class character of any state whatsoever could only be changed, can only be changed by means of victorious revolution or victorious counter-revolution. This victorious counter-revolutionary mass action has ***not yet*** been carried out in Russia. For this reason the Soviet state is – despite all its Stalinist degeneration – still a ***proletarian*** state, for this reason the Soviet state apparatus is, despite all its Stalinist disintegration, nevertheless still a ***proletarian*** state machine – admittedly one that is degenerating more and more and is already very highly degenerated.

Those ultra-'lefts', who, disappointed by the Stalinist degeneration with all its criminal, treacherous manifestations, deny the proletarian class character of the degenerated Soviet state, declare Soviet Russia to be a capitalist state, and in actual fact treat it as such, with all the resultant treacherous consequences, have left the basis of the Marxist theory of the state theoretically, they are enemies of Marxism and in practice they stand on the other side of the barricade, in the camp of the world bourgeoisie. By just focusing on the treacherous Stalinist bureaucracy, they 'overlook' the fact that the Russian working class has not yet been finally defeated by the capitalist counter-revolution, has not yet at all been defeated in open, bloody

mass struggle, and that on the contrary it can still prevent, it can still defeat the capitalist counter-revolution. Contrary to all the facts, they treat the Russian proletariat as if it has already been finally defeated, crushed by the capitalist counter-revolution; in practice they deny the Russian proletariat revolutionary political help, they de facto negate proletarian internationalism, they de facto negate the Russian proletariat and therefore inevitably the world proletariat altogether; because whoever leaves the working class of any single country in the lurch politically, in actual fact leaves the whole world working class in the lurch! Never ever in the entire many thousand-year history of the class struggles has any class that has established its state power by means of revolution, that has defended and maintained it victoriously in a civil war, never ever in the whole history of class society has a class ever surrendered its state power without a struggle. Any point of view that maintains or amounts to the view that of all classes the working class would be capable of surrendering in this way – without a struggle – its state power that it established by means of revolution and defended it successfully, any such point of view has nothing at all to do with proletarian class consciousness. Whoever maintains or is of the standpoint that the Russian working class, which established its state in 1917 by means of revolution, who with boundless heroism successfully defended and maintained it in a three year civil war, then, with indescribable sacrifices, built up and extended collective production and, finally, held its ground victoriously in the Second (imperialist) World War against German imperialism, despite the Stalinist politics of bankruptcy – whoever advocates the view that the Russian working class has surrendered or will surrender its state without a struggle, and would not in the last analysis do its utmost to decisively defeat the capitalist counter-revolution, to maintain the proletarian state, to reform it proletarian-democratically, whoever advocates such a view, does not hold the proletarian class position at all.

Must it come to a capitalist counter-revolution, to a victorious capitalist counter-revolution in Russia? As far as the Stalinist bureaucracy is concerned, it is objectively creating more and more favourable conditions for the capitalist counter-revolutionaries, for their victory. But the process of Stalinist reaction is taking place in the world arena. This process became possible because, due to the Social-Democratic and Labour betrayal, the world bourgeoisie succeeded in halting the world revolutionary wave and thus considerably weakening the position of the world proletariat, including the proletarian state; it became possible because the Stalinist bureaucracy betrayed the proletarian-revolutionary movement, not only in Russia, but also in all countries outside Russia, and thereby weakened the position of the world working class, including the position of the Soviet Union as a proletarian state, even more. Against the will, against all the counterefforts of the LP, the SP, the StP, etc., a new world revolutionary wave that will also revitalise the Russian workers, is ripening as a result of the convulsions brought about by the Second (imperialist) World War. It is a basic task of proletarian revolutionaries to do their utmost to ensure that the new revolutionary wave comes in time. It all depends on the tempo! If it does come in time, then it will also set the Russian worker masses in motion in a revolutionary manner, then it will prevent the victory of the capitalist counter-revolution and thereby also prevent the overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy from the extreme right. However, the Russian workers can only seal their victory over the capitalist counter-revolutionaries by overthrowing the treacherous Stalinist bureaucracy from the left. The Stalinist bureaucracy can turn whatever way it likes, its final overthrow is inevitable.

On the Question of the Russian Thermidor

A comparison of the Great Russian Revolution with the Great French Revolution with regard to the Thermidor question can only be drawn superficially. The French Revolution was the overthrow of the feudal exploiters by the capitalist exploiters, i.e. the overthrow of one exploiters' class by another – the Russian Revolution is the overthrow of the semi-feudal and capitalist exploiters by the non-exploiting, themselves exploited classes, under the leadership of the proletariat. In essence therefore, it is a question of two revolutionary processes of an entirely different character, the comparison with regard to the Thermidor question can therefore only yield superficial similarities. From this basic point of view, it is advisable that expressions such as Thermidor, Thermidorians, Thermidorian process, which in the French Revolution had their specific, unequivocal meaning, are not transferred to the Russian Revolution; but if they are applied then the differences between the two revolutions must be kept firmly in mind.

In relative terms the greatest similarity between the two revolutionary processes with regard to the Thermidor question arises if their courses are compared at ***party level***. In both revolutions the reactionary process in the most extreme party, in the real revolutionary party, exhibits three phases of development. In the first two phases both its wings are liquidated: in the French Revolution, first the right wing (Danton), then the left wing (Hébert, Chaumette); finally, the victorious centrists (Robespierre and comrades) are overthrown on 25 July 1794. This overthrow of the petty-bourgeois centrists – who prepared the way for capitalism – by the bourgeoisie, for whom they smoothed the way, this catastrophic endpoint of the third stage of the reactionary process in the revolutionary party is called ***Thermidor***. In Russia, first the left wing (Trotsky), then the right wing (Bukharin) was ousted; the centrist Stalinist bureaucracy emerged as the victor; it has to this day still not been overthrown and in this sense Thermidor in Russia has not yet taken place. Only the overthrow of Stalin, of the Stalinist regime by the capitalist counter-revolution, by the new Russian bourgeoisie (with the help of the world bourgeoisie), only if the liquidator of Russia's proletarian-revolutionary party were to be liquidated from the right, only this would be the Russian Thermidor. In this respect the comparison of Stalin with Robespierre is entirely correct – in particular with regard to the liquidation of the revolutionary party – and it is also still correct today, although in the meantime Stalin has taken the reaction much further than Robespierre did in his day. Stalin has the opportunity to do this because all processes take place much more slowly in the east and take longer than in those days in the west. The two main reasons have already been given above. In addition there is a third one: the French Revolution took place at the beginning of ascending capitalism when the bourgeoisie still saw the world open before it – the Russian Revolution on the other hand took place in declining capitalism; the first gigantic wave of the capitalist world crisis shook the world bourgeoisie to such a degree, that it needed twenty years in order to overcome the world proletariat, with the help of its agents in the workers' movement, and thereupon be able to set about liquidating the proletarian state as an immediate action in the form of the Second (imperialist) World War.

Robespierre was only overthrown after the invasion had been beaten off. Here too the comparison is likely to be borne out by the course of events. The Nazi invasion compels all the forces threatening the Stalinist bureaucracy to oppose the immediate danger – the Nazi invasion – and, although continuing to prepare their actions against the Stalinist bureaucracy, to subordinate the carrying out of these actions to the basic task in front of it. This applies to the

workers and the non-exploiting peasants/farmers, whose interests are being utterly betrayed by the Stalinist clique – but it also applies to the developing neo-capitalist elements, who are making use of Stalin as someone to prepare their way and as such already regard the time as ripe for hurling the Stalinist bureaucracy onto the dung heap and throwing themselves into the saddle, but are forced by their own principal interests to postpone the decisive counter-revolutionary action, because they would not dream of letting the property in the collectivised means of production, which they want to seize for themselves, fall into the hands of the German (or any other) bourgeoisie.

A comparison on the ***social plane*** is much less clear. The right wing of the French bourgeoisie sided with the feudal lords. The centre of the bourgeoisie worked for a constitutional-liberal compromise with the absolute monarchy. The left wing of the bourgeoisie (Danton) formed the right wing of the Jacobins. The petty bourgeoisie formed the great mass of the urban population at that time. Modern industry was not yet in existence, but here and there manufacturing of one kind or another had sprung up. The petty bourgeois had by no means yet recognised the hopelessness of their situation and were extremely confident. The proletariat mainly comprised journeymen and day labourers, the modern industrial workers were in the early stage of their development, still small in number, their proletarian consciousness was still completely undeveloped; the whole proletariat still moved entirely in the wake of the radical petty bourgeoisie. The Jacobin party was the party of the radical petty bourgeois, which had the undeveloped proletariat completely behind them, and genuinely believed that they could play an independent power role and mould the world according to their petty-bourgeois needs and ideals. This attitude with all its illusions found its strongest expression in Robespierre. The left wing of the Jacobins (Hébert, Chaumette) represented the first, confused, tentative, instinctive attempts in the direction of the proletarian revolution. The Jacobin dictatorship was, therefore objectively, in its effect ***a bourgeois dictatorship***, ***exercised directly, not by the bourgeoisie, but by the radical petty bourgeoisie***. The radical petty bourgeoisie tried to act, to behave as a politically independent power. It fought not only against feudal exploitation, but also against every kind of exploitation, including capitalist exploitation – but on the basis of petty-bourgeois private property! But to find a way out of the gigantic contradictions that were tearing French society apart in those days, to find a solution to them, was objectively impossible. Far inferior to capitalist commodity production, unable to increase productivity, indeed a hindrance to its development, simple, handicraft-based commodity production had to give way to capitalist commodity production. Despite its extremely radical actions, not only against the feudal exploiters, but also against the capitalist usurers, speculators, hoarders, those driving up food prices or supplying the army, etc., the Jacobin petty bourgeoisie could objectively play no other role than that of a trail-blazer (*Bahnbrecher*) for capital. This all the more so because the objective, never mind the subjective, conditions for a socialist solution did not exist at all and could not be discerned even in embryonic form. Only the terroristic dictatorship of the radical petty bourgeoisie was capable of successfully defending revolutionary France against the invasion of the feudal powers, Prussia and Austria, and internally against the feudal insurrection. As long as these dangers threatened the bourgeois revolution, the bourgeoisie tolerated the Jacobin dictatorship of the radical petty bourgeois. However, once this task had been completed, the feudal invasion beaten back, the feudal insurrection crushed and the victory of the bourgeois revolution secured, the bourgeoisie overthrew Robespierre's dictatorship and took the (bourgeois) state power into its own hands. Subjectively, therefore,

Thermidor was a change of regime from the radical petty bourgeoisie to the bourgeoisie, on the other hand objectively – and this is what matters – it was a change of regime within the bourgeois front as a whole, indeed within the same (bourgeois) class, because objectively, i.e. in terms of the actual effects of its actions, the radical petty bourgeoisie acted as the extreme left wing of the capitalist front as a whole, as the left arm of the ascending capitalist class – it was objectively a shift in power to the right on the basis of the bourgeois revolution, of bourgeois property, of the bourgeois state apparatus, it was objectively a change in the leadership of state power within the same class – the bourgeoisie.

What is the situation in Russia? The process of Stalinist reaction began in 1923/24 as a shift in state power within the working class. The workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy concentrated the proletarian state power in their own hands, did away with proletarian democracy step by step, turned the proletarian dictatorship more and more into a bureaucratic dictatorship, replacing the policy of world revolution by the policy of Russian social nationalism ('socialism in one country'), using it as a cloak, to conceal the fact that maintaining and augmenting their selfish interest in power and privilege (*Macht- und Pfründeninteressen*) of the Stalinist clique had become the real line of the violated, misused, degenerated proletarian state. The proletarian-revolutionary party has to solve tasks that are so far the mightiest humanity has ever confronted. On its march into the unknown, a march that is only illuminated by few experiences, the revolutionary party will again and again make mistakes of all kinds, sometimes even big mistakes that in their effect benefit the class enemy. However, if these mistakes mount up, persist and become ever bigger, if the line that is the inevitable consequence of these mistakes is continued stubbornly, despite great, very great defeats and catastrophes, from which the leaders must without fail realise that their line is leading the proletariat into the abyss, then quantity turns into new quality. Then in this case it is no longer merely a matter of fundamentally incorrect politics, of fundamentally erroneous consciousness, on the contrary, stubbornly adhering to and continuing the catastrophic line proves that a change must have taken place in the material interests, and in the social nature of the leading stratum.

The catastrophic outcome of the Chinese Revolution in 1927, for which Stalin and his associates were to blame, was an exceedingly grave setback for the world revolution, for the world proletariat, the Soviet Union included. All the same China was in many respects a completely new field. Then, however, after a further six years of Stalinist politics came the most dreadful catastrophe that the world proletariat had suffered so far, the 1933 catastrophe in Germany, the centre of the world front. Hand in hand with Social Democracy, the Stalinist General Line ('socialism in one country', social fascism, preventing the formation of the proletarian united front, etc.) was to blame for this catastrophe; despite this the Stalinist bureaucracy continued its line. It was precisely this which provided the irrefutable proof that it did not do this in error, but because its interests, its social position had changed, because its General Line, which was catastrophic for the proletariat, corresponded to its special interests, and its specific social position. It was precisely their actions after the catastrophe that proved politically that the Stalinist bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy had to a large extent already degenerated from being part of the working class to having petty-bourgeois interests, to a petty-bourgeois social position (considerable wealth; an income that towered above the average income of the workers; privileges of all kinds). This process of petty-bourgeoisification had already begun in 1923-24, but it was only the continuation of the catastrophic Stalinist line after the German catastrophe that brought complete clarity that this process had gone beyond the

point where quantity turns into quality. This stratum no longer held a proletarian class position, not because it had somehow erred with good intentions, but because it was no longer a proletarian stratum, because it had to a large extent become, and was becoming more and more, a ***petty-bourgeois*** stratum. The process had started as a shift in state power from the working class as a whole to a stratum of the working class, namely to the degenerating workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy; now, however, it was no longer a question of a change in the leadership of the proletarian state power within the proletariat, but of something else. Up until then one could have rightly hoped that, having learnt from the heaviest defeat of the working class, the degenerating stratum would seek its way back to the proletarian class basis. This hope was now finally dashed. The Left Opposition now rightly went over from the slogan of curing the CP and the CI, from the slogan of reforming the Soviet state to the slogans of forming the proletarian class party, of forming the Fourth International, of political revolution by the working class for the overthrow of the degenerated Stalinist bureaucracy in the proletarian state, a state that had been degenerated by the Stalinist bureaucracy, to the slogan of the proletariat saving the degenerated proletarian state.

Had state power perhaps already passed from the proletariat to another class? Perhaps to the Stalinist petty-bourgeois stratum? Not at all! Neither the petty bourgeoisie as a whole, nor any of its strata whatsoever, is objectively able to play an independent power role once capitalism begins to develop to some degree, let alone under somewhat developed modern class conditions. This also applies to the Stalinist petty-bourgeois stratum. Superficially it may appear this way, the Stalinist petty-bourgeois stratum may try and in actual fact does try to do so, but, objectively, it can only be a servant, someone who prepares the way (*Wegbereiter*) for one of the two main classes – either the proletariat or the bourgeoisie. In accordance with its petty-bourgeois nature, it fulfils this role with constant vacillation, zigzags, whereby the turns to the right that benefited the bourgeoisie become ever bigger, the turns to the left that benefited the proletariat, become ever smaller. Emanating from its petty-bourgeois interests, the Stalinist bureaucracy has liquidated some proletarian class positions completely (such as proletarian democracy), and undermined, hollowed out others to the utmost (such as the proletarian state apparatus), and in essence only maintains and defends the Soviet state's property in the means of production. In no way for the sake of the workers, but, firstly, in order to keep the cow that constantly supplies the milk, from which the Stalinist bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy constantly skims off the cream; secondly, in order to keep open for itself a last door to the working class for support against the capitalist counter-revolution, in the last analysis to retain its political basis, the working class, whose class strength it exploits, sponges on politically for itself.

From the start, the Stalinist reaction began to weaken the socialist tendencies in the Soviet state more and more, strengthen the capitalist tendencies more and more, began to bring forth new capitalist elements and help them again and again to thrive. However, in no way was or is it the case that the Stalinist bureaucracy is intentionally rearing capitalist elements or the capitalist counter-revolution; for it knows very well that deadly danger threatens it from this direction. But the actual overall effect of its Stalinist politics brings all this about and strengthens it more and more, despite the sharp blows that Stalin still sometimes dishes out to the right. Even the means and methods with which Stalin defends the property of the Soviet state in the means of production strengthens the capitalist counter-revolution. And it is precisely during the war that this has become particularly clear. His pact with Hitler in June 1939 made it possible for the

German monopoly bourgeoisie to crush France with lightning speed – in 1914 that only failed because of the Eastern front – in order then to hurl itself with its back free from attack, based on the entire economy of continental Europe and with hugely superior power against Soviet Russia. As a consequence of this Stalinist policy, as a consequence of Stalin's pact with Britain and the USA, a policy and pact that were based on social-patriotism, the Soviet state pulled the chestnuts out of the fire for Anglo-American imperialism. From the first moment of the war Stalin continued his politics against the proletarian world revolution, not only not lifting a finger for the proletarian revolution, but on the contrary working against it with all available means and methods. The Chinese catastrophe (1927), the German catastrophe (1933), the Spanish catastrophe (1938-39), the pact with Hitler, the murder of Trotsky, and despite the heroic struggle of the Red Army, despite the heroic sacrifices of the Russian workers, small peasants and petty bourgeois, culminating in the very heavy defeat for the Soviet state (50 per cent of the soviet-Russian productive apparatus destroyed!), due to the enormous political mistakes for which Stalin & Co. were to blame – these are the main signposts on Stalin's path. Thus, through his politics, through the effects of his politics, Stalin has strengthened and is strengthening the neo-capitalist elements within and around the Stalinist bureaucracy in Russia, and in any case is strengthening the world imperialists more and more. In this way he is increasing more and more the danger of the capitalist counter-revolution. Soviet Russia is approaching a point where quantity will turn into quality. Stalinist politics together with Social Democracy smoothed Hitler's path to power, opened the door to fascist dictatorship for the German monopoly bourgeoisie; after 1933, the more Stalinist politics were pursued, the more they weakened the world revolution, the world proletariat and the Soviet state as a proletarian state, the more they strengthened the world bourgeoisie, the new bourgeois elements in Russia, and it is only this – in combination with the politics of betrayal by the SP, the LP, the AFL, the CIO, the MWU, etc. – that made it possible for the world bourgeoisie to risk the Second (imperialist) World War. Today too the Stalinist clique continues with these politics.

The usurpation of power by the petty-bourgeois, Jacobin centre (Robespierre); its overthrow by the bourgeoisie; Napoleon's Consulate, backed by the bourgeoisie; finally, the emperorship of Napoleon, backed particularly by the bankers – those were the main stages of the reactionary process in the Great French Revolution till the overthrow of Napoleon by the united feudal counter-revolution in Europe. In the reactionary process in Russia, one and the same person, Stalin, plays the role of Robespierre, the role of the Consul Napoleon and is getting ready to play Napoleon's role as Tsar as well. How is this difference to be explained?

Robespierre and Napoleon were usurpers, but not parasites. They seized power in order to serve their class, not in order to maintain power at any price, that is to say even at the expense of their class, by surrendering the interests of their class, by betraying their class.

For the Jacobin centre, power was the necessary means for its politics in the interests of the petty-bourgeois class that it represented. Robespierre's politics were illusionary, because he represented a declining class that no longer had the prospect of bringing about progress in society, something of which at that time even the most advanced representatives of the petty bourgeoisie could not yet be conscious. The Jacobin centre, with Robespierre at its head was bound to fall, because its illusionary politics were unbearable for, and stood in the way, of the class that – against its will and without being conscious of it – it actually served, namely the ascending bourgeoisie. After the dictatorship of the Jacobin centre had saved France from the

feudal invasion, it, together with Robespierre, became superfluous for the bourgeoisie and was overthrown.

Napoleon and his conspirators always used the power, which they had usurped for themselves, in the service of the bourgeoisie, in order to protect the bourgeois revolution against the counter-revolution of the feudal lords within and outside France. Napoleon's politics shook feudalism in Germany, Austria, Britain[19] and Russia, spread the bourgeois revolution across Europe and thereby secured the bourgeois regime in France. The reason Napoleon was defeated by the feudal counter-revolution was because he wanted to go beyond this and establish the rule of the French bourgeoisie over the whole continent, but the forces of bourgeois France, in comparison to its feudal enemies, were insufficient for this purpose.

Robespierre and Napoleon represented classes with an independent role in production, with an independent economic role, Robespierre the petty-bourgeois class, Napoleon the bourgeois class. The degeneration of the Stalinist bureaucracy lies precisely in the fact that it no longer primarily represents the interests of the working class, but its own egotistical interests. Stalin does not represent the working class; on the contrary, he represents the workers' bureaucracy, which does not fulfil an independent role in production and has degenerated. Brought into being by the working class in order to take care of its class affairs, the demoralised workers' bureaucracy misused, misuses its position in order to carry on the affairs of the proletarian state primarily for its own benefit, even if it is at the expense of the working class. For the Stalinist bureaucracy, power is not a political means to be used essentially for the class interests of the workers, but instead as a means for its own selfish interests. The Stalinist bureaucracy seeks to maintain its usurped power, privileges and sinecures ***at any price***, using all means available, even if it is by means of continuously surrendering the proletarian class interests, by constantly betraying the proletarian revolution. Only a degenerated, ***parasitic*** stratum acts this way, a stratum that for the sake of its own advantage, abandons, betrays, makes use of, steals from and sponges on the class from which it grew and by whom it was elevated. At the head of this stratum, and as the finished expression of its parasitism, the demoralised workers' bureaucracy put Stalin, the political chief parasite. He himself does not grant the demoralised workers' bureaucracy power but is himself merely the expression of the power it has usurped: 'Let the king be absolute, so long as he does our will'. He can take action against individual bureaucrats, against this or that section of the bureaucracy, but is and remains the tool of the degenerated bureaucracy as a whole.

In the course of its politics, through their objective, unintentional, but actual effects, the Stalinist bureaucracy continually shifts the relationship of forces between the classes, internationally and nationally, to the disadvantage of the world revolution and the world proletariat, including the proletarian state. Much as these politics harm the working class, they again and again above all benefit the Stalinist bureaucracy, again and again prolong its position of power and privileges (*Macht- und Pfründenposition*) and for this reason the Stalinist

[19] The author has included Britain in this list because although feudalism, to all intents and purposes, no longer existed in Britain by this time, the British capitalist class clearly supported the German, Austrian and Russian (and French) feudal counter-revolutionary forces and were part of this international counter-revolutionary alliance against the French bourgeoisie; Ed.

bureaucracy again and again continues with its parasitic politics. It seeks to escape the danger of overthrow from the left essentially by completely depriving the proletariat of any rights, by holding it down and, when it needs to, giving way to the proletariat from time to time in subordinate questions; it seeks to evade the danger of overthrow from the right by more and more making concessions to the needs of forces hostile to the workers at the expense of the proletariat, of the proletarian revolution. Inadvertently, but in actual fact, it strengthens the class forces hostile to the proletariat, unintentionally, but in actual fact, it gradually rears within and around itself more and more neo-capitalist elements. In this way, the Stalinist bureaucracy, in the course of its continuing parasitic politics, changes its own structure, it gradually splits de facto into two sections: a ***reactionary***, ***parasitic, more or less petty-bourgeois wing*** and a ***counter-revolutionary, predatory, bourgeois wing*** (alongside them there is an ever shrinking, highly camouflaged ***proletarian-revolutionary remnant***). Unlike Robespierre, Stalin again and again 'overcomes' the danger of overthrow from the right. Not weighed down by proletarian class principles and only devoted to its own selfish power and privilege interests (*Macht- und Pfründeninterressen*), the Stalinist clique again and again sacrifices one bit of the proletarian class interests, of the proletarian-revolutionary interests after another, to the benefit of elements on the right, i.e. the class forces hostile to the workers, hostile to the revolution, class forces striving for the restoration of capitalism in Russia. After playing the role of Robespierre, Stalin – as a 'brilliant realist' – is capable of playing the role of Consul Napoleon, and finally even the role of Tsar Napoleon, because he is fundamentally different from them, because he has based his political existence on betraying, abandoning and sponging on the proletariat and the proletarian revolution. Robespierre and Napoleon championed their respective classes, the former the petty bourgeoisie, the latter the bourgeoisie – Stalin sponges on the working class, abandons it, betrays it to the bourgeoisie through the effects of his politics; Robespierre and Napoleon championed the bourgeois revolution, shook the feudal counter-revolution throughout Europe, spread the bourgeois revolution across the continent – Stalin, through the inevitable effects of his politics overall, is in actual fact fighting against the international proletarian revolution, he is strengthening the capitalist counter-revolution in the whole of Europe, throughout the world and is fighting against the proletarian world revolution on a world scale. (The Russian Stalinist bureaucracy differs from the Labour bureaucracy, the Social-Democratic bureaucracy, the American trade union bureaucracy and the Stalinist bureaucracy outside Russia in that the latter carry on their political sponging on the working class in capitalist countries, whereas the former does so in the proletarian state that the Stalinist bureaucracy has degenerated).

The process of Stalinist reaction cannot continue indefinitely. In the end it must come up against the last great proletarian class position that has remained after all the Stalinist betrayal, namely the still – at least according to outward appearances – collective property in the decisive means of production together with the foreign trade monopoly. Can the Stalinist bureaucracy ***voluntarily*** also hand over this last remaining position of the October Revolution to the bourgeoisie, in order to continue to hold onto its power and privileges? Individuals within the Stalinist bureaucracy can do this, want this, are striving for this, are fighting for it – their number, their influence is growing. They form the bourgeois wing. For the time being, however, these consciously capitalist counter-revolutionaries can only work if they are very highly camouflaged, they must disguise themselves very heavily, because the Stalinist bureaucracy as a whole, or more correctly its reactionary, parasitic more or less petty-bourgeoisified section wants to, and

must, continue the old Stalinist politics, the politics of sponging on the working class. Abandoning the collective property in the decisive means of production together with the foreign trade monopoly would mean finally breaking the last bond between the Stalinist bureaucracy and the working class and completely destroying the basis on which alone the Stalinist bureaucracy can continue to carry on its political sponging on the working class. Neither the Stalinist bureaucracy as a whole, nor its reactionary, parasitic, more or less petty-bourgeoisified wing can do this voluntarily, without finally giving up, politically, being a workers' bureaucracy. If the victorious proletarian revolution does not forestall this, then Stalinist politics will continue to shift the relationship of forces between the classes objectively more and more to the right. When it deems the time is right, the thus sufficiently strengthened bourgeois wing at the head of the class forces hostile to the workers will, with the world bourgeoisie at its back, finally risk launching the decisive counter-revolutionary attack.

Where will 'Stalin the Great' stand in the decisive hour? Today, Stalin himself still does not know the definite answer to this question. An opportunist through and through – he knows no other 'principle' than unprincipledness, opportunism – he will in any case, just as he has done till now, seek then as well to sail with the most favourable wind, in this case therefore with the capitalist counter-revolution if it offers the greater chances of him continuing to hold onto his personal power. However, in order to be completely reliable for the capitalist counter-revolutionaries, he would already now have to be going along with them consciously and consistently, he would already now have to be consciously and systematically, jointly preparing the victory of the counter-revolution with them. He is not doing this, not out of loyalty to the working class, but because as an out and out 'realistic opportunist' he wants to keep open the other possibility for himself as well, in case the chances of victory of the working class were to be greater than those of the capitalist counter-revolution. For this reason he is and remains in the final analysis unreliable for the capitalist counter-revolutionaries. They will make maximum use of him – and then throw him on the rubbish tip. Conversely, exactly the same is inevitably true – if, after 20 years of reactionary work de facto in the service of the international capitalist counter-revolution, he were, in the decisive hour, to 'realistically' hoist, to wave the flag of the international proletarian revolution. Never again can people of this ilk, who have the blood of hundreds of thousands, hundreds upon hundreds of thousands of proletarian-revolutionary fighters and the blood of innumerable proletarian-revolutionary leaders on their traitor's hands, win the trust of the revolutionary proletariat. They must and will be called to account. Stalin's overthrow is inevitable. The same fundamentally opportunist position that carried him up on the back of the declining waves of the world revolution, and kept him on top, is inevitably leading finally to his overthrow, either from the right – or from the left.

Against the will of the Stalinist bureaucracy, the Labour Party, the American trade union bureaucracy, Social Democracy, etc., the world revolutionary wave is beginning to rise again, the revolutionary awakening is beginning deep down in the world proletariat. For the time being this process is still taking place very slowly, but in the further course of events it will grow by leaps and bounds, finally surging upwards into a tidal wave, that will be much more gigantic, rage much more than in 1917-19. If the revolutionary flood comes in time, then the Stalinist bureaucracy will be finished off from the left by the proletariat, if it comes too late then it will be finished off from the right, by the neo-capitalist elements, for whom it is preparing the way, i.e. by the capitalist counter-revolution, for whom it is blazing the trail. The overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy from the right by the neo-capitalist elements that it itself had reared – this would be

the ***Russian Thermidor***. However, first of all, the bourgeois counter-revolution would have to defeat the masses in open, bloody struggle – only then would the state power really pass over to another class, the new Russian bourgeoisie, only then would it really seize the state power. Only this would really be the transfer of state power from one class to another class, from the working class to the capitalist class. By merely throwing away the Stalinist-bureaucratic lemon that it has squeezed dry, the bourgeoisie would still not have the state power; the liquidation of the Stalinist bureaucracy by the capitalists would only become the victory of the capitalist counter-revolution by means of the capitalist victory over the masses in open struggle, because only this would make the transfer of state power to the capitalist class a reality. The Russian Thermidor would not be a shift of power to the right on the basis of the proletarian revolution, but would – if the bourgeois counter-revolution were not defeated by the revolutionary mass struggle but were to defeat the masses in open struggle – result in a shift of power to the right from a proletarian basis to a capitalist one.

On the social plane, therefore, the comparison is correct, in so far as in both cases it is a question of the attempt – in one case of the radical petty bourgeoisie, in the other of the petty-bourgeoisified Stalinist bureaucracy – to play an independent power role, which, however, objectively, in both the latter case as in the former, actually works to the advantage of the bourgeoisie, in the former case to the advantage of the ascending French bourgeoisie, in the latter case to the advantage of the newly upcoming Russian bourgeoisie, which is longing to play the role of a Russian monopoly bourgeoisie. In this sense one can say that the Russian Thermidor has not yet taken place, because the centrist, usurpatory, parasitic, petty-bourgeoisified Stalinist bureaucracy is still on top.

Could the overthrow of the Stalinist clique from the left, by the proletariat, be described as Thermidor? No, because Thermidor is precisely the petty-bourgeois *Wegbereiter* (someone who prepares the way; trans.) being overthrown by the class, for which it itself is preparing the way. Stalin is the *Wegbereiter* for the bourgeoisie, he is the trailblazer for the capitalist counter-revolution. The Thermidorians are the bourgeois counter-revolutionary elements in and around the Stalinist bureaucracy; the Thermidorian process is the chain of their capitalist counter-revolutionary activity, which for the time being still takes place below the surface or is cunningly camouflaged.

On the ***economic*** plane, a serious comparison cannot be made at all. The French Revolution replaced the feudal with the capitalist form of property, production and exploitation. Robespierre and his friends fought not only against feudal, but also against capitalist exploitation, i.e. against not only feudal but also – in any case in effect – the capitalist form of property, and indeed from the standpoint of simple commodity production, from the standpoint of the non-exploiting petty-bourgeois, small-peasant private property, from the standpoint of the petty bourgeoisie. When the time was right for the bourgeoisie it got rid of this petty-bourgeois obstacle, which stood in the path of the development of the capitalist mode of production – this was the economic substance of the French Thermidor. Robespierre's Jacobinism secured the bourgeois revolution against the feudal counter-revolution; Thermidor secured the outcome of the revolution for the capitalists against the petty-bourgeois illusions of Robespierre and his people.

On the other hand, the Russian Revolution got rid of both the feudal and the capitalist form of property and replaced them, not by another form of property based on exploitation, but by common property in the decisive means of production. Stalin and his people are not fighting

against, but on the contrary are defending this common property against the capitalist counter-revolution. However, in consequence of their degeneration in terms of class, they are seizing the main benefits of common production for themselves; they are defending the common property in order to maintain it for parasitical purposes for themselves as a milch cow, they are defending it therefore, not from the proletarian class standpoint, not by means of proletarian class politics, but from the selfish, parasitic, petty-bourgeois standpoint, by means of petty-bourgeois politics, and in consequence of this they are objectively, in effect, actually playing into the hands of those who want to restore the capitalist form of property and production. They are not consolidating but undermining the common property, they are increasingly endangering it and are standing in the way of the unfolding of the real socialist mode of production. But they are also standing in the way of the revival of the capitalist mode of production in Russia and of its development into a fully-fledged (predominately monopoly capitalist) form. In order to re-establish, to fully develop property in the decisive means of production and the capitalist mode of production, the capitalist counter-revolution – that is to say the capitalist elements who are once again developing in and around the Stalinist bureaucracy, and the world bourgeoisie in general – must at the right time for it, get rid of the petty-bourgeois Stalinist bureaucrats opposing it and crush the masses in open struggle. Hence from the economic side there is only an extremely superficial similarity between the reactionary process in the French Revolution and the reactionary process in the Russian Revolution, a similarity that does not permit a serious comparison in its essentials. In economic terms the French Thermidor was inevitable, because the contradictions of French society at that time could not be resolved on the basis of petty-bourgeois (non-exploiting) private property – the basic line on which Robespierre and his people moved. It is entirely different in the case of the Russian Revolution. It is not the common property in the means of production that is causing and increasing the danger of Thermidor, but the parasitic misuse of the common property by the degenerated, petty-bourgeoisified Stalinist bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy, and the petty-bourgeois Stalinist politics that are inevitably brought about by this. The Russian Thermidor can therefore be avoided, if the Russian working class, revived by the rising revolutionary resurgence of the world proletariat, wrests the helm from the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy in time, or if, at the latest, roused up by a decisive thrust of the capitalist counter-revolution, it crushes the latter in open struggle – in both cases in order to steer the Russian state and economy back again onto the line of Marx and Lenin.

If one does not confine oneself to the reactionary process in the revolutionary party, but draws a comparison between the overall course of the two great revolutions, then one can state: until the overthrow of Robespierre, despite the reactionary process in the Jacobin party, this was all in all the ascending branch of the French Revolution; from the overthrow of Robespierre, from Thermidor onwards, the decline of the revolution begins – in Russia on the other hand, the decline of the proletarian revolution clearly begins with the crushing of the left wing that had already been set in motion in 1923-24; in this sense and only in this sense can one say that Thermidor in Russia is already over.

IV. The Structure of the State Apparatus

The capitalist states differ from one another in terms of their organisational details; however, the basic characteristics of their organisation are the same everywhere. In cross-section, every state machine is composed of the actual power apparatus, the administrative machine and the immunisation apparatus.

The ***power apparatus*** is the state-organised armed force; it consists of the armed forces (the army, navy and air force); the secret service (including among other things the intelligence services; the military, political and economic intelligence services – offensive and defensive; and, in certain circumstances, a *Vehme*[20] organisation too); the police and gendarmerie (together with an espionage apparatus) and judiciary (together with the prisons, etc.). The torture chambers of the slaveholder state and the feudal state were abolished by the liberal bourgeoisie; the monopoly capitalist state has introduced them again (the Stalinist gang also makes use of torture in its struggle against proletarian revolutionaries).

The ***administrative machinery***, in terms of its apparatus, covers all aspects of economic and social life that are important for the ruling class. First of all it encompasses all spheres that directly affects the interests of the bourgeoisie, such as administration of the banks (the monetary system, state debt, state credit), the administration of industry, agriculture, commerce, transport and communications (roads, bridges, railways, shipping, canals, the airlines, the postal service, together with the telegraph, the telephone, the bus service, the car industry, etc.), the administration of customs and taxation, state monopolies (in tobacco, salt and such like). Many parts, sides of the administrative machine – the same applies to the immunisation apparatus – have great significance in terms of power, like the railways, for example. At the same time, the administrative apparatus to a greater or lesser extent serves the capitalist state purpose of keeping as large sections of the middle masses as possible behind the bourgeoisie, and also to entice as large sections of the proletarian masses as possible. The administration of agriculture, in particular, has the purpose of roping in the non-exploiting, themselves exploited small and tiny peasants/farmers, small and tiny tenant peasants/farmers, half proletarians, allotment holders, etc. on a capitalist basis, while, for example, the administration of industry and commerce, among other things, also has the purpose of drawing the non-exploiting, themselves exploited handicraftsmen, small shopkeepers/traders, etc. along behind the bourgeoisie. Social administration (health insurance, accident insurance, pension schemes, widows' and orphans' insurance schemes, unemployment insurance) above all serves to entice and lull as big sections of the working class as possible. Where, for one reason or another any branch of the economy is statified, i.e. becomes part of the state administrative machinery, it is carried on by the state apparatus on a purely capitalist line in accordance with the interests of the capitalist class, something that the capitalist professors and the opportunists try to conceal or blur with humbug about state 'socialism', the 'planned economy' and such like. Local authorities, even autonomous ones, are *de facto* part of the state apparatus – the bourgeois state ensures that they do not harm the fundamental capitalist line, and that they move within the framework of the interests of the capitalist class.

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[20] Secret assassination organisation; trans.

The last line of defence for the bourgeois state is and remains the capitalist power machine. However, the exploiters' class does not merely rule by force and intimidation, but at the same time by continually influencing hearts and minds. The purpose of the ***immunisation apparatus*** is to keep the consciousness, thinking, sentiments and wants – and what they feel – of the non-capitalist masses, above all the proletarian masses, within limits that are bearable for the capitalist interests, i.e. to mislead, stunt and depress them, to hold them down, to work on them continuously in a bourgeois sense, to saturate them with capitalist notions.

This (purpose; trans.) is served in the first instance by ***schools***. Secondary schools and universities/colleges have the role of training the officials whom the bourgeoisie needs. Primary schools, together with the specialist schools (industrial schools, commercial schools, etc.) that exist alongside them have the role of delivering capable objects of exploitation and teaching the lower social strata the knowledge and skills that even the ordinary industrial soldier must have for the operating and functioning of the profit machinery. Anything that exceeds this – developing the mind for independent thinking and judging, for grasping greater, deeper connections – is not in the programme of capitalist schools. On the contrary, they have the conscious purpose of not allowing these very abilities to arise, indeed of suppressing them as much as possible. Likewise, this also applies to the agricultural colleges and such like. This applies even to the capitalist universities/colleges. In particular, capitalist education in political economy, economic history, the political and social sciences, history and philosophy is a systematic process of lying to and misleading the younger generation, with the ongoing main aim of embedding a picture of the world, a world view in their minds that keeps them mentally within the bounds of the capitalist profit interests as much as possible, and makes it as difficult as possible for them to fight their way through independently to a conception of the world and society that contradicts the interests of the capitalist exploiters' class, no matter how correct it may be. (In the field of natural sciences too, capitalist education seeks to mislead as much as possible in the basic questions, above all about the relationship of thinking to being, about dialectical materialism, etc.) All capitalist schools, at the various levels, work consciously, systematically in one and the same direction, namely in the direction of the capitalist class interests. Kindergarten already starts with systematically instilling capitalist patriotism, etc. As in the case of all spheres of local authority autonomy (*Gemeindeautonomie*), local authority schools (*Gemeindedschulen*) are controlled on an ongoing basis by the bourgeois state and kept on the capitalist class line.

The ***Church*** also serves this purpose. Outwardly independent, even internationally organised like the Catholic church is, it is in reality and under all circumstances an instrument of the ruling exploiters' class for influencing the hearts and minds of the exploited, oppressed masses in the interests of the exploiters and oppressors. It itself is organised strictly on the basis of class from the point of view of defending the exploiters' economy, exploiters' rule and exploiters' property in the means of production. Whenever it had the opportunity, it also made use of torture and the stake for this purpose, but its main method under all conditions is the conscious, systematic chloroforming of the minds of the exploited, oppressed strata, above all the wage workers, but also the small peasants/farmers, petty bourgeois and the backward colonial, semi-colonial masses. The picture of the world, the picture of society that humanity developed in its childhood era thousands of years ago is the picture that the Churches of all confessions systematically hammer into their minds, in order to keep the exploited and oppressed mentally at a childlike level, so that like little children they can be kept on reins, ruled, exploited by the exploiters as

easily as possible. Even when the church ruled the state, it ruled in the interests of the exploiters' class, it was an exploiters' instrument, it was in actual fact a part of the exploiters' state. In actual fact the churches of all confessions are without exception part of the capitalist state machine; their external independence or autonomy, even the international organisation of the Catholic Church does not alter this fact in any way. Keeping the exploited, oppressed in childlike ignorance as much as possible by means of a childlike picture of the world, of society, of the relationships in nature, in particular of social relationships; not letting them develop independent thinking, self-assurance and self-trust or diverting it on to paths that are not dangerous for the bourgeoisie; keeping them as weak-minded, as weak-willed as possible in relation to recognising, wanting and acting with regard to their own interests and deflecting, diverting and dissipating any such drive in them dissipate in a direction that is not dangerous for the capitalists; in any case, deeply rooting in them a spirit of submissiveness and servility that willingly and patiently endures the exploitation and oppression, without rising up against it, a spirit that has come to terms with the fate imposed by the exploiters' class on the exploited on Earth in return for the fantasy of a heaven – this is the actual main purpose of the capitalist immunisation apparatus in general and of the church immunisation machine in particular.

Capitalist ***radio, press, cinema, theatre***, etc., work systematically and consciously in the same direction. Only those news items that suit the exploiters are disseminated, always tailored and dressed up in accordance with the capitalist class interests. They seek to prevent the oppressed, exploited masses orientating themselves independently in any way, or in any case to make this as difficult as possible. They systematically direct the attention of the masses onto side issues, exaggerating them into major issues. But everything of decisive importance for the oppressed, exploited masses that makes it possible for them to recognise the correct way for them, for their own interests is systematically and consciously passed over in silence or twisted and distorted. Just like its monopoly in weapons, the bourgeoisie has in actual fact an ***information monopoly***. In the last analysis the radio, press, cinema, theatre, literature and art of the capitalist class serve the purpose of awakening, deepening and permanently maintaining the conviction in the oppressed and impoverished masses that the capitalist world is the best of all worlds, that there cannot be another one, that the economy based on capitalist rule and capitalist profit is an eternal social institution that is indispensably necessary for all human beings. In the hands of the capitalist class radio and cinema, in particular, constitute a huge stultification apparatus, a gigantic, sophisticated machine for dulling the minds that day in day out injects all kinds and gradations of mental hogwash in gigantic quantities into the hearts and minds of the masses. If truth be told, the Stalinist hogwash has caught up with the capitalist hogwash one hundred per cent in all these spheres. One must not let oneself be deceived by the fact that the newspapers, cinemas, theatres, etc. are independent undertakings. Not only are the owners capitalists, but they are supervised, controlled and kept on the capitalist line by the capitalist state. Poets, painters, musicians, writers, journalists are all dependent on the capitalist purse and on the whole have to dance and create according to the capitalist tune.

Where non-capitalist elements seek to run such institutions, the capitalist state machine knows to carefully differentiate. It fights systematically against everything that is in actual fact revolutionary, using all possible means that match the capitalist requirements at any given time. On the other hand, when it is a question of sham-revolutionary phrase-mongering on what is in actual fact fundamentally an opportunist, nationalist line, then in certain situations, during certain more or less lengthy periods of time, the bourgeoisie is 'generous', because the slight damage

caused by the sham-revolutionary bunkum is far outweighed by the usefulness of the basic attitude of the opportunists, nationalists for the bourgeoisie.

A state's organisation in the first instance covers the territory of the state. However, it also extends beyond this (diplomatic representative bodies, consulates, intelligence service, news service, *Vehme* service, secret reserve stockpiles of weapons, finance, etc. abroad, set up and maintained in the event of a victorious revolution, in order to be able to more rapidly organise and set in motion a counter-revolution, etc.). The state machine is like a gigantic, all-embracing, ubiquitous, extremely elastic, steel net that is spread over the whole of the state's territory. The meshes of this steel net, looser in some places, tighter in others (depending on the concentrations of the proletarian masses, of the exploited masses generally, depending on the state of communications, etc.) are carefully calculated and constructed in accordance with the needs of the bourgeoisie in terms of its rule. The net is designed to be exceedingly flexible and in such a way that if the need arises it can be quickly tightened, supplemented and strengthened where things have become critical. There is a greater or lesser degree of latitude for capitalist initiative and autonomous action for those in middle and lower positions in the apparatus; but in all cases the capitalist state apparatus as a whole is very strictly centralised, so that it can be steered and directed from one location, striking like lightning in one place, enticing with promises or smaller or bigger gifts in another, or lurking in yet another, so that it is compatible with the interests of the capitalist class, depending on the situation and the circumstances.

If need be, the bourgeoisie, in certain situations, for certain critical phases – especially if vacillation occurs in parts of the capitalist state machine – builds up an ***extra-state*** power apparatus (company police, industrial police, squads of strike-breakers, an organisation for the maintenance of supplies in emergencies, spies, saboteurs, informers, agent provocateurs, armed gangs, civil war troops, etc.). They systematically work together with the apparatus of the bourgeois state, and in actual fact form part of it. This division into two parts only arises from the fact that it is organisationally appropriate in particular circumstances. The opportunists like to call upon the official power apparatus of the capitalist state for help against the capitalist extra-state power apparatus – on the one hand in order to pretend to the masses they are waging a 'struggle', and on the other to divert the masses from the only way that helps, i.e. from the path of revolutionary mass struggle.

In terms of its vertical structure the state machine consists of a huge stable mechanism and a small replaceable apex. A central body of officials, divided into ministries on the basis of functions, directs the local authorities by means of the intermediate authorities (regional, district, area authorities and such like). The apparatus of the central administration, also called the political administration, directed by the minister of the interior, forms the axis of the whole internal civil administration and is at the same time the stable connecting link with the state's power apparatus; the police and the gendarmerie are as a rule under the ministry of the interior. The army is directed administratively by the war ministry and operationally by the general staff. The apparatus abroad – in as far as it is not under the general staff, the secret service, etc. – is directed by the ministry of foreign affairs.

The supreme leadership of the state machine as a whole lies in the hands of the ***government***. This is a central committee of the ruling class, formed by the latter according to its needs and according to the situation. Regardless of the composition of this committee, whether

it comprises only what is at the particular time the most influential stratum of the ruling class or a coalition of several or all of its strata, whether non-capitalist agents are included or whether the ruling committee is formed completely from nothing but non-capitalist accomplices – this does not alter the fact that it is always a committee that in actual fact rules in the interests of the ruling class, whatever designation it gives itself, whatever else it undertakes or pretends, whatever lies it tells, in whatever way it cheats in order to deceive those who are ruled and exploited about this basic fact. ***AS LONG AS THE STATE APPARATUS IS BUILT UP ON A CAPITALIST CLASS BASIS, ITS RULING COMMITTEE CANNOT IN ESSENCE ACT IN ANY OTHER WAY THAN ON THE CAPITALIST CLASS LINE. WHOEVER TAKES PART IN A CAPITALIST GOVERNMENT, EVEN IF THEY CALL THEMSELVES A 'SOCIALIST', A 'COMMUNIST' OR WHATEVER, IS AND MUST BE AN AGENT IN THE SERVICE OF THE BOURGEOISIE AGAINST THE WORKING CLASS. NOTHING IN THIS CHANGES IF THE GOVERNMENT DIRECTING THE CAPITALIST STATE APPARATUS IS COMPOSED OF NOTHING BUT 'SOCIALISTS', 'COMMUNISTS' AND SUCH LIKE; EVEN A GOVERNMENT SUCH AS THIS IS AND REMAINS A RULING COMMITTEE OF CAPITALIST AGENTS AGAINST THE PROLETARIAT, AGAINST THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION***.

Apart from this apex, which is replaceable at any time, the bourgeois state has a more or less stable head that, depending on circumstances, is a ***monarch*** or a ***president***. As a rule they have very great powers. Even whenever it has only been granted limited functions, this head of the bourgeois state has the specific organisational purpose of making it easier for the ruling class to transition from one form of its class dictatorship to another, especially if it is a matter of going over, in a more or less veiled manner, to the sharpest forms of the capitalist dictatorship.

In terms of the form of government the exploiters' dictatorship can be constructed as a ***monarchy*** or a ***republic***. As a monarchy it has, depending on circumstances, a hereditary or an elected monarch at the head of its organisation of rule, a monarch who is controlled by the ruling class via parliament (a parliamentary or constitutional monarchy) or who exercises the class dictatorship to a greater or lesser extent in the form of a monarchical personal dictatorship (as an absolute monarchy under the conditions of a certain degree of class equilibrium between the feudal lords and the bourgeoisie). The difference between a monarchy and a republic is by no means as great as it outwardly appears. The president of the republic of the United States of America, for example, has considerably greater powers than most monarchs. The throne hides the class front, more or less conceals the class that in reality is the ruling class from the eyes of those who are being ruled. To the oppressed, the monarch with his or her fawning courtiers appears to be the real opponent. Only after the overthrow of the monarchy do they recognise – mostly too late – that only the facade has changed, and that they are now facing the class enemy itself, which up till then had been concealed behind the throne. The organisation of the exploiters' dictatorship on a monarchical basis makes it more difficult for the oppressed to recognise their class position, hinders their clarification and revolutionary mobilisation, and is an impediment to the revolutionary class struggle. For this reason, the working class is for a republic. The LP and SP have long since come to terms with the monarchy and in actual fact accept it. Indeed the leadership of Sweden's SP is proposing to its party congress that the slogan of the republic be deleted from the Social-Democratic programme and that the monarchy be recognised in the programme! The Social Democratic parties of the other countries, including the Labour Party, do not object to this either...

A centralist unitary state, a tightly organised centralist military and bureaucratic apparatus – this is the organisation for which every capitalist state strives, must strive. Within this framework in the history of the development of the bourgeois state, other organisational principles have found a place as well. Some capitalist states arose as a result of several states or state-like structures coming together. Initiially, they organised themselves as a loose federation, as a ***confederation***, whereby the main emphasis lies with the sovereignty of the member states. In the course of time the tendency towards centralisation and concentration of the capitalist economy changes the loose structure into a ***federal state***, where the central state power already outweighs the sovereignty of the constituent states, but the latter still retain a more or less limited autonomy. Here too, the advance of economic centralisation leads to a ***unitary state***. However, even the unitary state is combined with a greater or lesser degree of ***autonomy, self-government*** for some areas, particularly for the local authorities.

No matter how loose or elastic the organisational relationships within the state may be, no matter how much leeway is granted to take account of the principle of federalism, or regional or some other kind of autonomy, of local government or some other kind of self-government, ***ALL FEDERALISM, ALL AUTONOMY, ALL SELF-GOVERNMENT IN A BOURGEOIS STATE TAKES PLACE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE CAPITALIST CLASS INTERESTS – THE STATE MACHINE THAT IS BUILT UP ON A CAPITALIST BASIS SEES TO THIS***.

Removing the restrictive, local barriers of the many small feudal sovereign entities with their countless borders, customs duties, fees and tolls, and forming an internal market and a ***national state*** – this was the guiding principle of the ascending bourgeoisie with regard to the state. For developed capitalism, with its trusts, aviation, etc., even these boundaries are too restrictive, it is crying out for national barriers to be overcome, for 'greater *Lebensraum*', for the formation of ***supranational, suprastate structures*** with a strong monopoly capitalism at their core, with the smaller peoples and state structures serving it, being subordinated to it and integrated into it. This is the monopoly bourgeoisie's concept of an 'state-idea'. Thus, for example, German monopoly capital is crying out for a 'New Europe' with the 'German master race', i.e. with the German monopoly bourgeoisie at its core. After the First World War, the 'League of Nations' was a tool of the British and French bourgeoisie, with which they sought to achieve the same goal in a more unobtrusive way. Now the American and British imperialists are planning to revive it again under a new name, but in a much more tightly knit form, as an instrument for monopolising, controlling, exploiting and squeezing dry the 'greater *Lebensraum*' for themselves. The general capitalist urge to overcome the boundaries of the bourgeois national states, which have become too restrictive as a result of the development of the economy, is expressed on a European scale in the bourgeois slogan: '***United States of Europe***'. In the context of the supranational conglobations and suprastate mergers by the monopoly bourgeoisie, the former tasks of state organisation (confederation – federal state – unitary state and federalism – autonomy – self-government) gain a new significance.

The state apparatus, the state is the gigantic organisational and political lever with which the ruling class, regardless of the changing conditions, secures its rule and continually achieves its class interests and accomplishes its state purpose. The proletarian state differs from the exploiters' state, not so much in the organisational structure of the state machine, but totally as a result of having the exact ***opposite purpose for its state*** in terms of class: the apparatus of the exploiters' state serves the purpose of securing the exploitation, oppression and holding

down of the exploited – the apparatus of the proletarian state serves the purpose of suppressing and holding down the exploiters, the liquidating of all exploitation and oppression, liquidating all classes altogether worldwide. It goes without saying that in consequence of having this opposite specific purpose the proletarian state machine must in some respects be organised and structured differently from the capitalist state machine.

V. The Forms of the Capitalist State

At any given time, the bourgeoisie exercises its class dictatorship in the particular form that is the most appropriate from the standpoint of its class interests, taking into consideration the specific epoch, period or phase of economic, social and political development through which it is currently passing, and in particular taking into consideration the configuration of class relationships. In any case, all ruling classes act in this way, the proletariat too, once it has established its class rule. The capitalists endeavour to give their class dictatorship a form that makes exercising their exploiters' rule as easy as possible and at the same time is combined with the least risk to their class. The very elastic framework, within which the bourgeoisie designs the form (the capitalist state takes; trans.), is determined by what is feasible within the constraints of the capitalist economic system at any given time. Two basic forms of the bourgeois dictatorship arise out of this: the veiled and the unveiled, or overt capitalist dictatorship.

A. The veiled capitalist dictatorship (**bourgeois democracy**)

Exercising the capitalist dictatorship in a manner that gives the deceptive appearance that it is not a dictatorship of the capitalist class, but self-government exercised by the people as a whole over themselves, and by means of which they themselves administer their common affairs; holding down the exploited with iron chains, but wrapping these chains subtly in cotton wool, so that there is the deceptive appearance of there being no slaves' chains and no oppression, but collectively agreed and freely determined desired duties and rights – this is the preferred form that the bourgeoisie wants and seeks for its class dictatorship and achieves depending on what is feasible for the capitalist class. This is the veiled form of the dictatorship of the capitalist class – ***bourgeois*** democracy. The main means by which the bourgeoisie and its lackeys create this deceptive appearance are parliament, (bourgeois) democratic rights and (bourgeois) reforms.

The universal, equal and direct right to vote, in particular, gives the misleading impression that the will of the state arises out of the will of the people; that the state is directed by the will of the people consolidated in law – for the benefit of the general public; and that the people as a whole decide the affairs of state via elections. Standing in the foreground of public life, focusing all attention on itself, parliament appears to the masses to embody the centre of state power, to be the state power itself, and thus, for the masses, the elections, the struggle via the ballot paper appears to be the way to win a majority in parliament and thereby conquer state power, without having to risk a life and death revolutionary struggle and having to prepare for it. Freedom of the press, freedom of assembly and other freedoms too, equality before the law, equal rights for all, self-government in local authorities, regions, districts, etc. – neatly put together, solemnly proclaimed and splendidly printed in the basic laws of state, in constitutional law – all this conjures up a realm of 'freedom, equality, fraternity'. Finally, reforms – improvements in various spheres of the life of the masses, or more correctly of a section of the masses, within the bounds of capitalism, like health insurance, accident insurance, widows and orphans insurance, retirement and old age pensions, unemployment insurance, etc. – cultivate, nourish the captivating illusion that these improvements will gradually benefit the masses as a whole and more and more cover all spheres of their life, so that, for the purpose of

progressively, seriously improving conditions for the masses, it is unnecessary to take on the risk of difficult, revolutionary struggles requiring a lot of sacrifice.

Parliament is in any event a part of the capitalist state machine, even where it results from the universal, equal and direct right to vote, and is indeed in essence a part of the bourgeois 'immunisation' apparatus. To deflect the exploited and oppressed from the revolutionary path, to fill them with the illusion, that they, the toiling masses, have a certain share in forming the will of the state and that gradually in the course of time it will be possible for them to win more and more of the power within the state, and finally state power itself – this is the main political purpose of the parliamentary machinery. However, ***NO MATTER WHAT IS DISCUSSED, PROPOSED, DECIDED IN PARLIAMENT, IT CHANGES ABSOLUTELY NOTHING IN TERMS OF THE CAPITALIST COMPOSITION OF THE STATE MACHINE, IN TERMS OF THE CAPITALIST CHARACTER OF THE STATE, OR IN THE FACT THAT STATE POWER IS IN THE HANDS OF THE BOURGEOISIE***.

Once every few years the masses are called upon to decide who should represent them in parliament. The important means of shaping 'public opinion' are in the hands of the bourgeoisie; it has control over the radio, the big newspapers, etc.[21]; it has money in abundance; it can distribute flyers and election leaflets, hire speakers, agitators, touts, as much as it wants; it can bribe and buy votes; it has the (capitalist) police, indeed the whole (capitalist) power apparatus behind it (what a difference this can make in an election or a referendum was proved by the election of Napoleon III as president of the French Republic in December 1848 and, very recently, the vote on the *Anschluss* of Austria with Nazi Germany in 1938, after German imperialist troops marched in) – in short, all means of cunning, deception and temptation, but also of pressure and force are in its hands. The elections are carried out under tremendous pressure from the bourgeoisie, under pressure from the basic fact of wage slavery in all its manifestations. There can be no conquest of power, more correctly no establishment of power for the working class on a path permitted by the capitalist class enemy. Elections under bourgeois rule (i.e. where there is capitalist ownership of the decisive means of production and a state apparatus built up on a capitalist basis) can never ever give expression to the class will of the workers, poor peasants/farmers and petty bourgeois, despite the fact that they form the overwhelming majority of the population; never ever can the workers, poor peasants/farmers and petty bourgeois, who are fighting for their class interests, win a majority in the parliament of the capitalist state (when the LP, the SP or the StP and such like form a majority, this is never ever a majority for the working class and the poor peasants/farmers and petty bourgeois allied with them: see, for example, Sweden, where the SP has gained the majority in the elections, the majority in the bourgeois parliament and nevertheless pursues ***bourgeois*** politics, that is to say politics on the basic line of the ***capitalist*** class interests, politics that maintains and secures capitalist property and capitalist profit; this is likewise the case with the LP in New Zealand and Australia). If the bourgeoisie has to seriously reckon with this kind of class danger, then it changes the right to vote, restricts parliamentary powers, arms gangs that, under the protection of the capitalist armed forces and police, break up the meetings of the workers, ill-treat their leaders, speakers and agitators daily, indeed murder them, and finally, if necessary, abolishes parliament altogether. If, in an exceptional situation, the bourgeoisie is taken unawares by a

[21] Nowadays this list would obviously also include television and the internet; Ed.

tidal surge of the masses, a surge that threatens to create the actual prerequisites for a situation where the class will of the exploited, oppressed majority would in actual fact become the will of the state, then it makes use of parties of betrayal such as the Mensheviks, the Social Revolutionaries, the LP, the SP, the StP, and those of the anarchists, centrists, etc. in order to disintegrate the masses and finally, by means of open, bloody counter-revolutionary action, to more or less stabilise the capitalist dictatorship once again for a certain period of time. Even if the proletariat gained a parliamentary majority it would not be in a position to smash the capitalist state machine by means of a resolution in parliament. The bourgeoisie would never voluntarily bow to such a resolution or law. Only revolutionary mass action, only the proletarian revolution is able to gain this by force, to carry this out – never ever a parliamentary resolution passed in the event of a proletarian majority in parliament. The proletarian-revolutionary party imperatively needs the sympathy and support of the majority of the masses for revolutionary victory over the bourgeoisie and to establish proletarian-democratic state power. However, whether this majority actually exists can never be decided by means of a vote in parliament, instead there are indicators such as strikes, works council elections, elections to workers' councils or uprisings of the exploited, oppressed masses in the countryside against the big landowners, the capitalists, etc.

This in no way signifies that parliament is somehow meaningless for the proletarian-revolutionary struggle. Anti-parliamentarianism on principle, which in many instances arises from the justified indignation at parliamentary corruption and from the horse-trading, the mock struggle, the betrayal that the LP, the SP, the StP, the centrists, etc. engage in there, is anarchist, syndicalist, ultra'radical' nonsense. Elections and parliament offer an excellent opportunity to familiarise the workers, small peasants/farmers and petty bourgeois with revolutionary criticism, with the practical proposals of the revolutionaries, with revolutionary propaganda, and show them the true face of the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties of all shades; and indeed to do all of this continuously in the light of the most topical vital issues – in a word, an excellent opportunity for mobilising the masses in the direction of the proletarian revolution, and, at the same time, a good opportunity to inform oneself about the support for the revolutionary party and the support for the other parties.

> As long as the oppressed class – in our case, therefore, the proletariat – is not yet ripe for its self-emancipation, its majority will recognise the existing social order as the only one possible and politically will remain the tail of the capitalist class, its extreme left wing. But in the measure that it matures towards its self-emancipation, in the same measure it constitutes itself as a party on its own, elects its own representatives, not those of the capitalists. Universal suffrage is thus the gauge of the maturity of the working class. It cannot and never will be anything more in a modern state; but that suffices (Engels, [1884] 1922, pp.181-182).
>
> As long as we are not yet strong enough to disband the bourgeois parliament, we must work against it both from without and within. As long as a more or less significant number of toiling people – not only proletarians, but also semi-proletarians and small peasants/farmers – still have confidence in the bourgeois-democratic instruments employed by the bourgeoisie to deceive the workers, we must expose this deception ***from the very platform*** that the backward sections

of the workers, and in particular of the non-proletarian toiling masses, consider the most important and authoritative.

As long as we communists are not yet strong enough to seize the state power and hold elections with the toiling people alone electing ***their*** soviets against the (will of the; trans.) bourgeoisie; as long as the bourgeoisie still exercises state power and calls upon the different classes of the population to take part in the elections, it is our duty to take part in the elections, in order to carry on agitation among all the toilers, not only among proletarians. As long as the bourgeois parliament is a means of deceiving the workers, and phrases about 'democracy' are used to cover up financial swindles and all kinds of bribery and corruption (nowhere is the cunning bribery and corruption of writers, members of parliament, lawyers, etc. practised by the bourgeoisie on so large a scale as in the bourgeois parliament), it is the duty of us communists in this very institution, which ***supposedly*** *gives expression to the people's will*, but in reality covers up the ***deception of the people by the rich***, to unceasingly expose this deception and expose each and every case where the Renners & Co. (read: the Labour, Social-Democratic, Stalinist, centrist, anarchist, etc. members of parliament; auth.) go over to the side of the capitalists and act against the workers. It is precisely in parliament that the relationships between the bourgeois parties and factions manifest themselves most frequently and reflect the relationships between all the classes of bourgeois society. That is why it is precisely in parliament – from within it – that we communists must tell the people the ***truth*** about the relationship between the classes and the parties, about the relationship between the landowners and the workers in the countryside, between the rich peasants/farmers and the poor peasants/farmers, between big capital and the white-collar workers and small proprietors, etc.

The proletariat ***must*** know all this, so that it learns to see through all the dirty tricks and cunning machinations of the capitalists and learns to influence the petty-bourgeois, non-proletarian toiling masses. Without this 'science' the proletariat will not be able to successfully solve the tasks of the *proletarian dictatorship* (Lenin, [1920] 1930a, pp.461-462).

It has been proved that, even several weeks before the victory of the Soviet-republic, and even ***after*** such a victory, participation in a bourgeois-democratic parliament not only does not harm the revolutionary proletariat, but makes it easier for it to prove to the backward masses, why such parliaments have to be disbanded, why it ***facilitates*** their dissolution and makes it easier to 'politically overcome' bourgeois parliamentarianism (Lenin, 1920b, p.40)

We were obliged to convene the Constituent Assembly, even after the victory of the proletariat, in order to prove to the backward proletarian that they could achieve nothing by means of this Assembly. So that the proletariat could compare the one with the other, we had to counterpose the Soviets to the Constituent Assembly and had to make clear to the proletariat that the Soviets were the only way out… But you (to a revolutionary syndicalist; auth.) have disregarded the fact... that in most countries it is not yet possible to destroy

> parliament at one stroke. We must also wage the struggle for the destruction of parliament within parliament itself… We have gone through the period of the dictatorship of bourgeois democracy. We have gone through this period rapidly at a time when we had to agitate for elections to the Constituent Assembly. And later on, when the working class was able to seize power, the peasantry still believed that a bourgeois parliament was necessary.
>
> With regard to these backward elements we had to set a date for the elections and show the masses by example and by facts, that this Constituent Assembly, which had been elected when the general emergency was greatest, did not give expression to the hopes and demands of the exploited classes. In this way the conflict between the state power of the Soviets and the state power of the bourgeoisie became completely clear, not only to us, the vanguard of the working class, but also to the vast majority of the peasantry, to the petty white-collar workers, the petty bourgeoisie, etc.… The history of the Russian Revolution has proved, that the broad masses of the working class, the peasantry and the petty white-collar workers cannot be convinced by any arguments, unless they are taught by their own experience (Lenin, [1920] 1937, pp.240-242).
>
> ***A boycott of elections or parliaments*** is permissible mainly when the pre-conditions for the immediate transition to armed struggle and the seizure of power are already present (Kommunistische Internationale, 1920, pp.45-46).
>
> A revolutionary party can turn its back on parliament only if it has set itself the immediate task of overthrowing the existing regime (Trotzki, 1933a, p.314).

And one must add: if there is a serious danger that pursuing or continuing along the parliamentary path in this particular situation, in consequence of the illusions that come with it, makes the mobilisation of the masses for the revolutionary onslaught more difficult. Conversely, during a declining revolutionary wave, when the counter-revolution is striving to isolate the proletarian revolutionaries from the masses, such a boycott would be a serious ultra-'left' mistake, which would be of use to the counter-revolution and not the proletariat.

> As long as the struggle of the working class for full power is not on the agenda, it is our duty to make use of all forms of bourgeois democracy (Lenin, [1919] 1927b, p.297[22])

The party of the working class must unconditionally subordinate its parliamentary activity to the preparation and carrying out of the proletarian revolution and precisely for this reason subordinate it to the ***extra-parliamentary*** struggle of the party, to extra-parliamentary mass action.

> Limiting the class struggle to the parliamentary struggle or regarding this struggle as the highest and decisive form, to which all the other forms of struggle must be

[22] Translated by the Melt from the Russian edition of Lenin's collected works (Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii); trans.

> subordinated, means in fact going over to the side of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat (Lenin, [1919] 1920d, p.23).
>
> The centre of gravity of political life has at present completely and finally shifted beyond the bounds of parliament. […]
>
> This activity (of the revolutionary party in parliament; auth.) must be wholly subordinated to the aims […] of the mass struggle outside parliament. […]
>
> Election campaigns should not be carried out in the spirit of a hunt for the maximum number of parliamentary seats, but in the spirit of the revolutionary mobilisation of the masses for the slogans of the proletarian revolution (Kommunistische Internationale, 1920, pp.41,44).

What Marx said in March 1850 (in his address of the Central Committee of the Communist League) continues to be entirely valid as general guidance:

> Even where there is no prospect at all of achieving their election, the workers must put up their ***own candidates***, in order to preserve their ***independence***, to gauge their own strength and to bring their revolutionary position and party standpoints to public attention. They must not let themselves be deceived by the phrases of the democrats, who, for example, will maintain that workers' candidates would split the democratic party (today: the SP, LP, StP and such like; auth.) and offer the forces of reaction the chance of victory. All such talk means, in the final analysis, that the proletariat is to be duped. The progress that the proletarian party will make by ***acting independently*** in this way, is infinitely more important than the disadvantages resulting from the presence of a few reactionaries in the representative body (Marx, [1853] 1885, p.81).

Only in quite exceptional situations and with an appropriate tactic can an exception be made to this rule, namely if and when – precisely by means of such a tactic in this kind of situation – revolutionary clarification, ***detaching the worker masses from the parasitic parties*** and leading them over onto the line of the proletarian revolution is furthered and accelerated; see, for example, Lenin's guidance on the tactics of the CPGB in the 1920 elections (Lenin, 1920b, pp.64-65).

What is valid for a central parliament is also valid for local authorities. It is valid even when the proletarian revolutionaries have a majority in any local representative bodies of the bourgeois state.

> Should the communists have the majority in local government institutions, they should a) carry on revolutionary opposition to the bourgeois central power; b) do everything to be of service to the poorer population (economic measures, establishing or attempting to establish an armed workers' militia, etc.); c) at every opportunity show the limitations bourgeois state power places on really big changes; d) on this basis develop the sharpest revolutionary propaganda without fearing conflict with the state power; e) under certain circumstances replace the local administration, etc., by local workers' councils. – The whole activity of the communists in the local administration must be part of the general work of

> bringing about the disintegration of the capitalist system (*Kommunistische Internationale*, 1920, p.44).

Let us now examine some of the most important (***bourgeois***) ***democratic rights*** in the narrower sense (in the broader sense these also include the right to vote and bourgeois reforms).

Freedom of the press: the big news organisations (Associated Press, United Press, Reuters, *Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro*, *Agence Havas*, *Agenzia Stefani*, etc.) are in the hands of the bourgeoisie; they are gigantic lie-factories that withhold or falsify the news items that are most important for the masses; they always inform the workers' press later than the bourgeoisie. The big printing works, paper mills, etc. are the property of the capitalists. The tiny layer of capitalists has a press that is many hundreds of times bigger than that of the workers, who are numerically many hundreds of times bigger than the bourgeoisie.

Freedom of assembly: the meeting halls are almost without exception the property of the bourgeoisie; if the capitalists want, the workers – with complete 'freedom of assembly' – get almost no halls for their meetings. The bourgeois state apparatus is in charge of the policing of meetings. The capitalist police can forbid the holding of meetings because of the 'danger of disturbing the peace' (peace namely for capitalist exploitation and oppression), it can close a meeting that is underway for 'disturbing the peace' (namely disturbance of the capitalist exploiters' order).

Equal rights for all: the capitalist can hire the best lawyers for themselves, can take (legal) proceedings to the highest court, and have the money to do so – the worker cannot do this. Everywhere the worker is confronted by capitalist judges, who twist the provisions of (capitalist) laws as it suits them, and always in accordance with the capitalist class interests. 'Equality before the law', like bourgeois equality in general, is equality between someone who is well-fed and someone who is hungry, between the tiger and the tiny lamb.

Self-government in local authority areas, including regional and district councils: it is bound by the laws of the bourgeois state to the limits set by the capitalist class interests, the capitalist state machine ensures adherence to these limits.

Incidentally, even with regard to the right to vote in different bourgeois-democratic states there is a whole gradation of tricks and dodges (by means of regulations about residency, etc.) to restrict democracy based on the right-to-vote as much as possible.

All talk of freedom, equality and equal rights in bourgeois democracy only serves to deceive the masses. Because where ownership of the decisive means of production is in the hands of the bourgeoisie, and the state machine is built up on a capitalist class basis, there can be nothing like this for the workers, poor peasants/farmers and petty bourgeois: 'In reality democracy excludes freedom' (Engels, [1875] 1934, p.57).

> Until classes are abolished, all talk about freedom and equality in general is self-deception, or else deception of the workers and of all who toil and are exploited by capital; in any case, it is a defence of the interests of the bourgeoisie. Until classes are abolished, all arguments about freedom and equality must be accompanied by the following questions: ***FREEDOM FOR WHICH CLASS, AND***

> ***FOR WHAT PURPOSE? EQUALITY BETWEEN WHICH CLASSES, AND IN WHAT RESPECT?*** Any direct or indirect, witting or unwitting evasion of these questions inevitably constitutes a defence of the interests of the bourgeoisie, the interests of capital, the interests of the exploiters. If these questions are passed over in silence, and nothing is said about private property in the means of production (or on the question of the capitalist class composition of the state apparatus; auth.), then the slogan of freedom and equality is merely a lie and hypocrisy on the part of bourgeois society, whose formal recognition of freedom and equality conceals the actual economic servitude and inequality for the workers, for all who toil and are exploited by capital, i.e. for the overwhelming majority of the population in all capitalist countries (Lenin, [1920] 1937, p.261).

Nevertheless, bourgeois-democratic ('freedom')-rights are very important for the working class. Firstly, they make it possible for the proletariat to organise and wage a broad-based struggle against the capitalist immiseration tendencies – in as far as this is at all possible within the confines of capitalism (capitalist ownership of the decisive means of production and the capitalist state apparatus)! Secondly, however – and always combined with proletarian-revolutionary criticism and propaganda! – they make the clarification and mobilisation of the masses for the proletarian revolution possible: because it is only in the practice of their struggle, through their own experience, that the masses finally convince themselves that their struggle, which is confined within the bounds of these bourgeois-democratic 'freedoms' and rights, can never ever lead, never ever does lead to the emancipation of the working class from capitalist exploitation, to the overthrow of capitalist power, to the establishment of proletarian power.

In contrast, the degenerating, degenerated workers' bureaucracy, workers' aristocracy – whether of Social Democratic, Labour, Stalinist or other hue, regardless of whether they are active in the party or trade union or the like – cultivate ***bourgeois-democratic illusions*** in the workers, consciously (but in all cases objectively) through the effects of their politics. On the one hand they cultivate the illusion that the situation of the workers will progressively improve within the framework of capitalist conditions, and, on the other hand, once that no longer has the desired effect, the illusion that the working class can 'conquer power' via the path of (bourgeois!) democracy, via the advance towards Socialism by means of (bourgeois!) democratic rights.

All the laws on basic democratic rights, freedoms, equality are paper laws, even if they are called fundamental state laws or constitutional laws. The written, printed constitution is a ***paper constitution*** – the state machine built up in accordance with the interests of the capitalist class is the ***actual constitution***. What counts is the application of the laws – daily, hourly, every single minute of the day; this lies in the hands of the capitalist state apparatus, it is the capitalist state apparatus that, through its practical actions, determines the ***actual*** content of the laws.

Reforms are – temporary by the way – concessions made by the bourgeoisie in some more or less significant issues, in what are in comparison to the question of power, however, unimportant, in order, in certain historical situations, to 'pacify' the 'aroused' masses and lull them, to deflect them from the revolutionary struggle for power, to gain time, to divide, disintegrate and hold down the masses and finally, if necessary, to crush them. The very same reforms, which the bourgeoisie out of fear of the revolutionary workers' movement and the revolutionary ferment of the masses, concedes in order to pacify and lull the masses and keep

them in check, the SP, the LP and the StP, indeed all the parasitic parties and the trade union bureaucracy and the bureaucracy of the co-operatives, give out as successes of the struggle waged on the basis of their (reformist) 'workers'' politics. 'A reformist change is one that does not destroy the foundations of the power of the ruling classes, but is merely one of their concessions that leaves their rule completely intact' (Lenin [1916] 1921d, p.402). For the reformists, reforms are everything. This is the sum total of their famous 'class struggle' that they stage on their 'main battlefield', parliament. By means of their reforms they work at reforming, improving, ***STRENGTHENING THE ECONOMY AND RULE OF THE CAPITALIST EXPLOITERS***. For the sake of reforms, they betray the proletarian revolution, they betray Socialism. Their whole reformist activity comprises making the capitalist stable more bearable, more habitable for the human work beasts, but capitalist work beasts for grinding out profit they are to remain, i.e. wage workers, half-proletarians, small peasants/farmers and petty bourgeois. The ***reformists*** are people 'who, as a general rule, are ***paid*** in one form or another to strengthen the rule of capital by patching it up, and to lull the masses and divert them from the revolutionary struggle' (Lenin, [1917] 1921i, p.381). Proletarian revolutionaries by no means reject the struggle for reforms, but they subordinate it totally to the struggle for the proletarian revolution. For them reforms are ***BY-PRODUCTS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY CLASS STRUGGLE*** (Lenin).

It is precisely the revolutionary struggle for power, led consistently by the proletarian revolutionaries, which compels the bourgeoisie, in the case of an ascending mass movement, to again and again make the attempt – by means of concessions and reforms – to rope in, lure and lull to sleep as large sections of the masses as possible, and to deter them, to keep them away from the revolutionary struggle. However, the revolutionaries do not fall for this capitalist trick: without forgoing the reforms brought about, and extracted from the bourgeoisie by the revolutionary struggle, they consistently continue to mobilise the masses for the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisie, for the establishment of a proletarian-democratic dictatorship against the bourgeoisie.

> It would be absolutely wrong to assume, that in order to wage the immediate struggle for the socialist revolution, we must or should abandon the struggle for reforms. Not at all. We cannot know how soon this revolution will succeed, how soon the objective conditions will allow *this* revolution to break out. We must support every improvement, every real improvement in the position of the masses, be it an economic or a political one. The difference between us and the reformists [...] is not that we oppose reforms and they are for them. Nothing of the kind. They confine themselves to reforms and as a result stoop... to the role of mere 'hospital orderly for capitalism'. We say to the workers: Vote for proportional representation, etc., but do not limit your activity to this, make it your prime duty to systematically spread the idea of immediate socialist revolution, prepare yourselves for this revolution [...] (Lenin, [1916] 1932, pp.26-27).

Who pays the ***costs of the reforms***? The workers pay part of the costs directly out of their wages. Formally, the capitalists pay the remaining part, and what is more, above all out of the super profits that they make one way or another mainly from exploiting the peoples of the economically backward countries, from exploiting the colonial and semi-colonial masses; to a significant degree these super profits come from the starvation wages of the workers who

belong to peoples in the economically backward countries, in the colonies and semi-colonies. In as far as the (bourgeois) state partly pays for the reforms, it pays for them out of the taxes, which, for the most part, it, in the final analysis, extracts from the workers from their wages. Looked at on a world scale, it is absolutely clear that it is mainly the world proletariat itself that bears the costs of the reforms – costs that are, in the main, part of the real wage. The bourgeoisie, on the other hand, bears none of the costs of the reforms: it retains its undiminished profits, it only 'sacrifices' a small part of its super profits – and even this is only temporarily – in order to secure for itself, as far as possible, undisturbed peace and order for its capitalist exploitation and rule. Although the reforms strengthen the capitalist system, and in the last analysis do not cost the capitalist class anything, they still as a rule put up the most stubborn resistance to their introduction. Why? Firstly, because they cannot immediately shift the costs of them onto the wages – this requires a more or less lengthy process, a more or less lengthy struggle: by combining methods such as downward pressure on wages, intensification of labour, overtime, increasing prices and taxes, technical improvements, job cuts, unemployment, short-time working, etc., they ultimately again and again extract the costs of the reforms from the workers by means of increased exploitation. Secondly, because something that applies to the world bourgeoisie as a whole, by no means applies to every capitalist or every capitalist group. Shifting the costs of the reforms takes place not only by means of the struggle of the bourgeoisie as a whole against the proletariat as a whole, but at the same time by means of the competitive struggle between the capitalists themselves, on a national and international scale, whereby the weaker capitalists, capitalist groups find shifting the costs much more difficult than their stronger competitors.

The word democracy, which comes from the Greek, means rule of the people. Outwardly, bourgeois democracy appears to be self-rule by the people. It was shown above that this is actually not the case. ***EVERY DEMOCRACY IS <u>CLASS DEMOCRACY</u>***, because every democracy is only a specific form of rule, a specific form of one class state or another. As long as society is split into classes, every democracy is and remains only a form of oppression of one class by another – however, once the classes are completely liquidated, then the state has withered away, then there is also no democratic form of the state, no democracy, because there is no oppression, no rule. There is no democracy per se, no democracy that floats above the classes, only class democracy. Bourgeois democracy is capitalist class democracy, it is in reality democracy for a tiny minority, it is a democracy for the rich, masked by the deception that the exploited, oppressed masses have a share in the power and in ruling.

In order to deceive the masses about the class character of bourgeois democracy it is described – especially by the SP, the LP and by Stalinist, centrist and anarchist 'people's'-fronters, the trade union bureaucrats and the bureaucrats in the co-operatives and such like – as 'democracy' or as a 'people's state', or 'people's republic'. Just as they pass off the capitalist state as simply 'the state', they pass off capitalist democracy simply as 'democracy', in order to fool the masses about its capitalist class character. One must keep a close eye on anybody who speaks only of 'democracy' and keeps silent about its class character. Democracy, 'pure' democracy can

> when the moment of revolution comes […] temporarily acquire significance as the final sheet-anchor of the whole bourgeois, and even the feudal economic system [...]. Thus, between March and September 1848 the whole feudal-

> bureaucratic mass strengthened the Liberals in order to hold down the revolutionary masses […]
>
> In any case our only adversary on the day of the crisis and on the day after the crisis will be ***THE WHOLE COLLECTIVE REACTION, WHICH WILL GROUP ITSELF AROUND PURE DEMOCRACY*** and this, I think, we must not lose sight of', wrote Friedrich Engels in his letter to Bebel, 11.12.1884 (Engels, 1920, pp.18-19).

The slogan, the 'people's' state is opportunist through and through. It conceals the class character of the (bourgeois) democratic state, 'it amounted to not only a prettifying (*Beschönigung*) of bourgeois democracy, but also a failure to understand the socialist criticism of the state in general' (Lenin, [1918] 1933a, p.12). Only during a phase when legal agitation would have been impossible in another form did Engels, for agitational reasons, and only temporarily, accept the slogan of a 'free people's state', in so far as the democratic republic was indicated in it in a legal way, while at the same he expressly underlined the opportunist character of the slogan.

It is not at all immaterial to the working class, in what ***form*** the oppression is carried out. In comparison to the Middle Ages, in comparison to ***the feudal-absolutist state***, capitalist democracy is a considerable step forwards, because it provides the working class, indeed all the oppressed, the exploited, significantly more favourable conditions for their struggle – although this advantage is combined with the disadvantage that the bourgeois-democratic state 'skillfully accumulates and strengthens opportunist habits and law-abiding prejudices in the upper strata of the proletariat' (Trotzki, 1920, pp.17-18). Bourgeois democracy is the 'best form for the class struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie' (Lenin, [1905] 1925b, p.131).

> Social Democracy does not turn its back on the struggle for political freedom because it is a bourgeois-political freedom. Social Democracy regards the 'acceptance' of the bourgeois regime from the historical standpoint... It never is, and never will be, afraid of saying that it sanctions the republican-democratic bourgeois regime in comparison to the absolutist feudal bourgeois regime. But it 'sanctions' the bourgeois republic only because it is the last form of class rule, because it offers a most suitable arena for the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie; it sanctions it not for its prisons and police, its private property and prostitution, but for the scope and freedom it allows to combat these charming institutions (Lenin, [1905] 1925b, p.148).
>
> Bourgeois democracy is 'the best form of the state for the proletariat under capitalism [...]. It provides the nearest access to the dictatorship of the proletariat (Lenin, [1918] 1933a, pp.12, 45).
>
> The democratic republic and universal suffrage were a tremendous step forward compared to the feudal system: they have enabled the proletariat to achieve its present degree of unity and solidarity and form those well-organised, disciplined ranks that are waging a systematic struggle against capital. There was nothing even approximately resembling this among the peasant serfs, not to mention the slaves (Lenin, [1919] 1938, p.392).

However, the best democracy of the bourgeoisie is democracy on the basis of wage slavery, is merely a veiled dictatorship of the bourgeoisie in which the freedom of movement of the masses remains constrained within the limits set by the capitalist profit interests. The very best bourgeois-democratic parliamentary republic is far surpassed by ***proletarian democracy,*** by the proletarian-democratic state, by the proletarian-democratic dictatorship. 'The parliamentary bourgeois republic hampers and stifles the independent political life of the *masses* and their direct participation in the *democratic* building up of the whole life of the state from top to bottom' (Lenin, [1917] 1925b, p.390.

> The most democratic bourgeois republic was never anything but a machine for the oppression of working people by capital – an instrument of the political power of capital, of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie – and also couldn't be anything else. The democratic bourgeois republic promised power of the majority and proclaimed it, but could never put this into effect, as long as private ownership of the land and other means of production existed (Lenin [1919] 1925b, p.548).

Only in a proletarian state, i.e. in a proletarian-democratic state, does the will of the masses actually prevail as the will of the state in action. By having undermined, abolished proletarian democracy, the Stalinist degeneration is smoothing the way in Russia for a capitalist exploiters' dictatorship, which even with a democratic mask would remain counter-revolutionary, anti-proletarian.

For this reason the revolutionary working class party fights against feudalism and absolutism – for bourgeois democracy, and against a victorious feudal, absolutist counter-revolution – for the restoration of bourgeois democracy, preparing at the same time the establishment of the proletarian-democratic state with revolutionary criticism and propaganda. It supports the democratic petty bourgeoisie, the petty-bourgeoisified workers' bureaucracy, workers' aristocracy included, indeed even the bourgeoisie, as long as they wage the struggle consistently against the feudal state – for bourgeois democracy.

As long as the conditions for the proletarian revolution are not yet ripe, and especially when the consciousness of the masses is not yet sufficiently developed for it, the proletarian-revolutionary party defends bourgeois democracy, or fights for its restoration ***against a bourgeoisie*** that is turning from the democratically veiled to the unveiled, overt form of the capitalist dictatorship; at the same time it prepares the establishment of the proletarian-democratic state by means of persistent revolutionary criticism and propaganda. In this struggle for the defence of, or for the restoration of, bourgeois democracy against fascism, against the overt capitalist dictatorship altogether, the revolutionary party is prepared to form an alliance with the petty-bourgeois SP, LP, StP, etc., but at the same time it keeps their untrustworthiness sharply in mind and points it out to the masses, because even in such a situation, these parties that are based on political sponging on the fighting strength of the proletariat do not stop longingly casting glances at, and striving for, an alliance, a coalition, a 'people's' front with the bourgeoisie or sections of it.

> It would be a big mistake to suppose that the struggle for democracy could deflect the proletariat from the socialist revolution or even to push this revolution into the background, conceal it, etc. On the contrary, just as Socialism cannot be victorious unless it introduces complete democracy, so the proletariat will be

> unable to prepare for victory over the bourgeoisie unless it wages the revolutionary struggle for democracy consistently in every respect (Lenin, [1916] 1931a, p.6).

Rejecting this tactic means in actual fact turning one's back on the struggle for proletarian democracy. In reality, this is how those who are doctrinaire act and declaim very 'radically' that the rejection of bourgeois democracy on principle does not permit the tactical struggle for the defence or restoration of bourgeois democracy. Some honest revolutionaries give way to this entirely incorrect sham-radical argument, by rejecting the struggle for the defence, or for the restoration, of bourgeois democracy against the bourgeoisie, against fascism and declare that they are 'only' fighting for the defence or restoration of the democratic rights of the workers, of the exploited, oppressed small peasants/farmers and petty bourgeois. But the sum total of the bourgeois-democratic rights of the workers, indeed of all the exploited, oppressed masses – this is after all bourgeois democracy. Left opportunists cannot be convinced by means of this kind of 'yielding', and if at all, can only be convinced by being very firm; on the contrary, by 'yielding' in this way one opens chinks through which ultra-left confusion finds its way into the ranks of the proletarian revolutionaries.

B. The overt capitalist dictatorship

Once the stirrings and the consciousness of the masses threaten to reach a level that could be seriously dangerous for capitalist rule, the bourgeoisie resorts to the unconcealed capitalist dictatorship. In the epoch of capitalist ascent, it has at its disposal a more or less regular supply of abundant super profits; it is therefore in a position, by means of a policy of bourgeois-democratic reforms and systematic corruption of the upper layer of the proletariat – the workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy – to dominate and exploit the proletariat by means of bourgeois-democracy. With the decline of capitalism, with the advance of the crisis of the entire capitalist system, the super profits become sparser, more uncertain, ever lower and disappear completely, indeed realising profit encounters bigger and bigger obstacles.

> Parliamentary democracy is inextricably bound up with the epoch of free competition and international free trade. The bourgeoisie was able to tolerate the freedom to strike, the freedom of assembly and of the press as long as the productive forces were moving on an upward trajectory, markets were expanding and the material welfare of the masses was – at least partially – rising and the capitalist nations were able to live and let live. This is no longer the case. With the exception of the Soviet Union, the imperialist epoch is characterised by stagnation or decline of the national income, a chronic agrarian crisis and structural unemployment. These phenomena are as inherent in the present phase of capitalism as gout and arteriosclerosis are at a certain age in human beings (Trotzki, 1936c, pp.75-76).

This is the

> epoch of decaying capitalism, when there can be no question at all of systematic social reforms and raising the living standard of the masses; when the bourgeoisie each time with the right hand takes back double what it granted with the left hand (taxes, customs duties, inflation, 'deflation', high prices, unemployment, police regimentation of strikes, etc.); when every serious demand of the proletariat, and even every progressive demand of the petty bourgeoisie, inevitably goes beyond the bounds of capitalist property relations and the bourgeois state (Trotzki, 1938, p.4).

The transition from the concealed to the unconcealed bourgeois dictatorship takes place by no means uniformly. Part of the world bourgeoisie is in possession of the majority of the colonies and semi-colonies, it still has enormous reserves and continues to draw gigantic super profits – like the USA and Britain: here the bourgeoisie continues to have at its disposal the necessary means to carry on the exploiters' dictatorship in democratic forms. However, in countries with few or no colonies, with few or no reserves, like Germany and Italy, the bourgeoisie no longer disposes over these means – in these countries the bourgeoisie begins its transition from the concealed to the unconcealed capitalist dictatorship first. It carefully prepares the process of transition, carries it out cunningly and energetically phase by phase, until the point is reached where it casts off the democratic mantle, which it has gradually perforated more and more and openly establishes its class dictatorship. The SP, the LP and the StP, the degenerated bureaucrats of the trade unions, co-operatives and such like create the class prerequisites for this, for the bourgeoisie. It is they who provide the decisive dual service for the bourgeoisie, by

disintegrating the proletariat, by deeply disappointing the small-peasant/small-farmer and petty bourgeois masses, pushing them away from the proletariat and into the arms of the bourgeoisie.

When the bourgeoisie changes from the concealed to the unconcealed form of its dictatorship, or from one form of its overt dictatorship to another, it does not need to smash the state apparatus, which after all is capitalist, it can make do with 'cleansing' it and adapting it to its specific purposes at any given time by means of appropriate changes in personnel, and organisational changes and additions.

Why could the German bourgeoisie establish its fascist dictatorship by 'legal' means? Because the state apparatus had remained capitalist and did not stand in its way, but, on the contrary, supported it; the German bourgeoisie did not have to destroy it – on the contrary, it could make use of it against the working class before and after the change in the 'democratic' facade of the bourgeois dictatorship. It only needed to cleanse it of the Social Democratic elements that it had admitted during the bourgeois-democratic phase of the capitalist dictatorship. (As a true lackey, Social Democracy did not even fight against this. Only in Austria was there resistance – although certainly not from the SP and the Social Democratic led trade unions, co-operatives, etc., but, on the contrary, without and despite the Social Democratic Party, without and despite the Social Democratic trade union leaders etc. – only by the *Schutzbund.*)

There are three main forms of the overt dictatorship of the bourgeoisie to which the bourgeoisie resorts, depending on the level of development of class relationships and class antagonisms, and, in particular, depending on the degree of development, the significance and the consciousness of the workers, and depending on the size of the danger that the workers pose to the capitalist system: the military-police dictatorship, the Bonapartist dictatorship and the fascist dictatorship.

1. The military-police dictatorship

This is based on the capitalist military-police-bureaucratic apparatus. The regime of the French bourgeoisie after the proletariat was crushed during the June Days of 1848, until Napoleon III's coup d'état (in December 1851), was one such dictatorship. The counter-revolutionary dictatorships in Germany and Austria after the Revolutions of 1848 were crushed were of the same type, although they had a semi-feudal character. Chiang Kai-shek's regime in China after the bloodbath in Canton (in December 1927) – after Stalin, the strategist of defeat, had actively prepared the ground – was established as a military-police dictatorship; so too the regime of the Republican bourgeoisie in Spain after the proletarian uprising in Barcelona (4 and 5 May 1937) was bloodily crushed – a regime established and maintained with the help of the Stalinist party, Social Democracy and the anarchist trade unions. Only under relatively less developed class relationships does the bourgeoisie content itself with this form of its overt class dictatorship, because under these conditions it makes do with its military-police-bureaucratic power apparatus as the support for and the tool of its unconcealed class rule.

2. The Bonapartist dictatorship

Once the proletariat gains in strength, and especially in terms of consciousness, the bourgeoisie needs and makes use of additional supports for its overt dictatorship. In some cases it strengthens its state apparatus by means of an extra-state power apparatus, for example, by also arming lumpenproletarian gangs. Above all, however, it seeks to play off two opposing classes against one another, seeks to get them to keep them each other in check and thus neutralise both of them. This can only be carried out with real success under social conditions when there are two large opposing classes that to a certain extent balance each other out. Only in such historical phases does this form of class dictatorship appear and then hover, apparently independent, above the classes. The great, apparently independent, power of the feudal-absolutist monarchy (for example, under Louis XIV in France) was based on this kind of equilibrium between the already declining class of feudal landlords and the ascending young bourgeoisie. The regime of Napoleon III (from December 1851 to the catastrophe of Sedan in 1870) was based on the antagonistic equilibrium between the democratic wing of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, as well as on the apparatus of the military, police and bureaucracy reinforced by the lumpenproletarian *garde mobile*. It was an overt capitalist dictatorship, the main beneficiary of which was the bourgeoisie's conservative wing, into which the feudal lords were increasingly becoming absorbed. The monstrous bankrupt-politics of petty-bourgeois democracy (Social Democracy) paved the way for Napoleon III; it led the French workers from one catastrophe to another, it thoroughly disappointed the peasants, whom Napoleon then made use of as a springboard, only then, after they had done their work, to dupe them.

More details about the role of Social Democracy in those days can be read in Marx's excellent works: *The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850* and *The Eighteenth Brumaire*. This form of the open bourgeois dictatorship is called a Bonapartist dictatorship after Napoleon III. In the sixties (1860s; trans.), Bismarck made use of the antagonistic equilibrium prevailing at that time in Germany between the liberal bourgeoisie and the proletariat for a dictatorship that mainly benefited the *Junkers* and right-bourgeoisie: it was a Bonapartist dictatorship with semi-feudal characteristics. 'Exceptionally, however, periods occur where the warring classes are in such close equilibrium with one another, that the state power, as apparent mediator, acquires for the moment a certain independence in relation to both' (Engels [1884] 1922, p.180).

> Such were the absolute monarchies of the 17th and 18th centuries, the Bonapartism of the First and Second Empires in France, and the Bismarck regime in Germany. And such – we may add – is the Kerensky government in republican Russia, following the transition to its persecution of the revolutionary proletariat, at a moment when the Soviets, thanks to the leadership of petty-bourgeois democrats, have ***already*** become powerless and the bourgeoisie is ***still*** not sufficiently strong to simply disperse them (Lenin, [1918] 1933, p.8).

After the defeat of the Central Powers in the First (imperialist) World War, Social Democracy and Stalinism created the conditions for a Bonapartist dictatorship in Germany (Brüning, then Schleicher, then Papen) and Austria (Dollfuss, then Schuschnigg – who both based themselves on the lumpenproletarian *Heimwehr*). Social Democracy, raised up in 1918 by the revolutionary masses, did not touch the property of the capitalists, indeed not even that of the big landowners. It left the state apparatus (the armed forces, police, gendarmerie, judiciary and the

administrative apparatus) intact in terms of its capitalist composition. Instead of establishing the dictatorship of proletarian democracy, for which the revolutionary masses were pushing, and forming an alliance with Soviet power, it crushed the revolutionary masses bloodily, with the help of the capitalist generals and the capitalist police. Under it, Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg were murdered by capitalist henchmen; under it, the courts, whose capitalist judges it left in office, acquitted the murderers. Under the veil of (capitalist) democracy it formed a coalition with the bourgeoisie against the proletarian revolution, against the working class. Thus began the Social Democracy's disintegration of the fighting strength of the proletariat. Because the alliance with the capitalist class were all important to it, it could not and did not want to touch capitalist ownership of the banks, factories, mines and large estates and the capitalist state apparatus; for this reason it was not able, economically and politically, to help the poor-peasant/poor-farming masses in the countryside and the poor petty-bourgeois masses in the towns, effectively in any way. Instead of this it gave them 'socialist' phrases. The exploited, oppressed middle masses, who had expected the revolution to bring about a decisive change in their situation, saw their hopes very severely dashed in a very short period of time. At this point the monopoly bourgeoisie intervened, in order to fascisise' the middle masses (gravely disappointed by Social Democracy), i.e. turn them ever more sharply against the proletariat. If the Communist Party had fulfilled its historical task, then – despite the Social-Democratic betrayal – the helm of working class politics would still have been turned in time. But hardly had the CP started to work its way out of what were – to a certain extent – unavoidable mistakes of its childhood, when it landed in the hands of the treacherous Stalinist bureaucracy. United front only from below – the Chinese catastrophe – the splitting of the trade unions – outtrumping the Nazis in nationalism ('national and social liberation programme') – social-fascism, Social Democracy is objectively a moderate wing of fascism and does not constitute any opposition to it, Social Democracy is the main enemy, with whom on principle there can be no united front – there is no difference between Brüning and Hitler, Brüning already is the fascist dictatorship – those were the main stages of Stalin's General Line; its main concern was and is to not under any circumstances let 'socialism in one country' and the Stalinist bureaucracy's position of power and privileges be disturbed by a revolution, even if this means ruining both the German and the international working class. It was Stalin's 'General Line' that made it possible for Social Democracy to continue its politics of betrayal and with its Severing, Zörrgiebel and Graczynski it bloodily crushed every revolutionary stirring of the worker masses but did not touch a hair on the head of the fascists.

It was Stalin's 'General Line' that more and more reinforced Social Democracy's neglect of the working class and Social Democracy's disappointing of the petty-bourgeois and small-peasant/small-farmer masses. In actual fact both parties pursued capitalist politics in relation to the bourgeoisie, in relation to fascism. Driven into a more and more desperate situation by the advancing crisis of the entire capitalist system, the middle masses saw no class strength any more in the working class, who had been worn down more and more by Social Democracy and Stalinism, the class that they had hoped would change their fortunes. They succumbed more and more to the fascist demagogy of the monopoly bourgeoisie. Thus, an unstable equilibrium began to develop between the proletariat, whose strength was disintegrating more and more, and the desperate middle class that was becoming more and more frenzied, more and more fascisised. In this way the social basis for the Bonapartist dictatorship arose in Germany and Austria.

3. The fascist dictatorship

In the epoch of capitalist decline the cyclical crises drive the capitalist system crisis to catastrophic proportions, a crisis that with advancing capitalist decay, is bound to become more and more catastrophic, in breadth and depth. The times of periodic crises become far more critical than during the age of capitalist ascent and indeed exponentially. More and more firms cut production or close down during these critical phases. The number of unemployed swells to millions, to millions upon millions and short time working increases as well. The middle masses become more and more desperate, more and more frantic, more and more angry about their hopeless position. In a spasm lasting years, society's whole body writhes, its convulsions become more and more violent. Capitalism teeters on its foundations. As the actual head of the capitalist class, the monopoly bourgeoisie in the countries most shaken by this senses and recognises that it must risk everything, in order to rescue the capitalist system: crushing the working class completely, in such a manner that it remains incapable of rising up, of revolting for a long time; seizing – to the maximum extent – the internal market, i.e. liquidating a considerable number of the petty bourgeoisie and even the weaker capitalists – this forms its immediate domestic political programme. However, from the outset it is looking much further ahead. Rationalisation, cartelisation, syndication, trustification, and monopolisation have all increased the productive forces to the utmost, and at the same time drastically lowered the domestic purchasing power of the masses. The monopoly bourgeoisie recognises very clearly that, at best, sponging on the workers, petty bourgeois and weaker capitalists at home, sucking them dry and plundering them very thoroughly, is only able to bridge this gigantic contradiction on a capitalist basis – i.e. with continuously flowing profits – for a couple of years at most. In actual fact, a longer term solution is only possible on the world market, in the world arena by seizing large foreign commodity markets, capital investment markets and sources of raw materials; only a victorious gigantic imperialist war is able to create this kind of breathing space for a longer period of time for the victorious capitalists, and for this an unveiled, unbridled predatory dictatorship, a ruthless and extremely thorough plundering of the domestic market is at the same time prerequisite and means. Thus the German and Italian bourgeoisie, who were most seriously affected by the capitalist contradictions, had to proceed to the fascist form of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

The bourgeoisie does not carry out a transition like this in a unified way and in one push, but in a more or less violent struggle between the monopoly capitalists and the non-monopoly capitalists. The latter are afraid that they will be devoured by the former; for their own defence they need the support of the middle and lower strata of the population. However, the force of the capitalist system crisis threatens to finally hurl the worker masses and middle masses like a gigantic wave against the basic pillars of capitalism, hence flushing away the non-monopoly bourgeoisie too. Thus, under pressure from the general crisis of capitalism and the more or less gently assisting massage of the monopoly bourgeoisie that consolidates in its hands all the commanding heights of the economy, the non-monopoly capitalists fall into line more and more, increasingly joining the fascist front organised by the monopoly bourgeoisie in order to establish a fascist dictatorship. Even among the monopoly capitalists the road to the fascist dictatorship, with the huge risks attached to it, passes through vacillations.

> The *big bourgeoisie* in Germany is vacillating at present and is fragmented. It is split over the question of which of the two cures they should use for the present

> social crisis. The Social Democratic therapy repels one section of the big bourgeoisie by the uncertainty of its results, and by the danger of the too large oncosts (taxes, social legislation, wages, etc.). The surgical intervention of the fascists appears to the other section to be inappropriate for the situation and all too risky (Trotzki, 1930c, p.3).
>
> The thought of giving up all power to Hitler, who supports himself on the greedy and unbridled bands of the petty bourgeoisie, is not a pleasant one for them. They do not, of course, doubt that in the long run Hitler would be a compliant instrument of their rule. However, this is bound up with convulsions, with the risk of a protracted civil war and big oncosts (Trotzki, 1932a, p.9).
>
> Capitalism does not resort to fascism on a whim, but because it is driven into an impasse (Trotzki, 1933b, p.7).
>
> The capitalists arrive at fascism not because they like it, but through necessity: they can only preserve their private ownership of the means of production by means of an offensive against the workers, by intensifying the oppression, by spreading misery and despair [...]
>
> However, the transition from democracy to fascism carries with it the danger of social upheavals. Hence the tactical vacillations and differences of opinion among the leading figures of the bourgeoisie (Trotzki, 1936c, pp.47, 76).

Smashing all the organisations of whatever kind on which the workers in any way base themselves, not merely the proletarian-revolutionary ones, but even the petty-bourgeois-democratic reformist ones; physically exterminating all elements who could somehow be leaders of the workers, above all the proletarian revolutionaries, indeed even the reformists; atomising the workers into a completely unorganised, disconnected, disorientated mass; thoroughly poisoning their consciousness, which has been paralysed as result of the Social-Democratic and Stalinist betrayal, so that they are totally incapable of knowing what's what, of orientating themselves – achieving this for as long a period of time as possible, is the primary, main, basic objective of the fascist dictatorship.

> Fascism is not simply a system of repression, acts of violence, police terror. Fascism is a particular state system, founded on the extermination of all elements of proletarian democracy in bourgeois society. The task of fascism does not only consist in the smashing of the proletarian vanguard, but also in maintaining the entire class in a state of forced fragmentation. To this end the physical annihilation of the most revolutionary stratum of workers is insufficient. It means smashing all independent and voluntary organisations, annihilating all the proletariat's bases of support and extirpating the results of three-quarters of a century of work of Social Democracy and the trade unions. For, in the last analysis, the Communist Party also bases itself on this work [...]
>
> The bourgeoisie demands a thorough job from fascism: once it has resorted to the methods of civil war, it wants peace for a long period of time […] The victory of fascism results in finance capital, directly and immediately, squeezing all the organs and institutions of rule, administration and education into a steel vice: the

> state apparatus together with the army, the municipalities, the universities, the schools, the press, the trade unions and the co-operatives. The fascisisation of the state does not only mean the Mussolinisation of the forms and methods of administration – in this sphere the changes are in the last analysis of secondary character – but above all and primarily that the workers' organisations are smashed, that the proletariat is thrown back to an amorphous state, and that a system of administration is created that penetrates deeply into the masses, and which is designed to prevent the independent crystallisation of the proletariat. Therein precisely is the essence of the fascist regime [...]
>
> The essence of fascism and its purpose consist in a complete suppression of the workers' organisations and in the prevention of their revival (Trotzki, 1932c, pp.5, 16-17, 18).

The bourgeoisie makes use of the petty bourgeoisie as a battering ram in order to establish the fascist dictatorship. It can do this thanks to the Social Democratic and Stalinist parties, to the degenerated bureaucracy of the trade unions, co-operatives and such like.

It incites the petty-bourgeois masses, who have been thoroughly disappointed by Social Democracy and Stalinism, more and more against the workers, drives them into a rage and, finally, hurls them frenzied in a bloody attack against a proletariat that has been disintegrated and paralysed by reformism, centrism, ultra-leftism and Stalinism, whereby the capitalist armed forces, police and bureaucracy cover the backs of the fascists and the fascisised middle masses. After the petty-bourgeois 'Moor'[23] has completed the fascist work of destruction sufficiently, it itself becomes a victim of fascism: the monopoly bourgeoisie liquidates the petty-bourgeois fascist leaders, who have put up resistance (the murder of Röhm and associates in June 1934[24]), then it begins to liquidate the petty bourgeoisie itself *en masse*, forcibly sending the petty-bourgeois masses as wage workers into the munition factories, etc.

Once the 'normal' military-police measures of the bourgeois dictatorship, together with its parliamentary cloak no longer suffice to keep (capitalist; auth.) society in a state of equilibrium – the turn of the fascist regime arrives. Through the fascist agency, capital sets in motion the masses of the brainwashed petty bourgeoisie, the bands of declassed and demoralised lumpenproletarians and all of the countless human beings, whom the same finance capital has hurled into despair and misery (Trotzki, 1932c, p.16).

The petty bourgeoisie would be prepared to temporarily reconcile itself with the growing privations, if it came to the conviction through experience that the proletariat is able to lead it onto a new road. But if the revolutionary party, in spite of the class struggle continually becoming more accentuated, proves time and again to be incapable of uniting the working class behind it, if it vacillates, becomes confused, contradicts itself, then the petty bourgeoisie loses patience and begins to look upon the revolutionary workers as responsible for its own misery.

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[23] A reference to a quote from Schiller's tragedy *Die Verschwörung des Fiesco zu Genoa* (*Fiesco's Conspiracy at Genoa*): 'The Moor has done his duty, the Moor can go'; Ed.

[24] Commonly referred to as the 'Night of the Long Knives'; Ed.

All the bourgeois parties, including Social Democracy too, turns the thoughts of the petty bourgeoisie in this very direction. If the social crisis then begins to take on an intolerable acuteness, a certain party appears with the direct aim of bringing the petty bourgeoisie to a white heat and of directing its hatred and despair against the proletariat. In Germany, this historical role is fulfilled by National Socialism, a broad current, whose ideology is composed of all the putrid vapours of decomposing bourgeois society (Trotzki, 1932a, p.16).

Incapable of defending the working class against the capitalist offensive, the SP and StP were also not capable of defending bourgeois democracy against a bourgeoisie striving for a fascist dictatorship. They played off employed workers against unemployed workers, unemployed workers against employed workers, skilled against unskilled, unskilled against skilled workers; in every possible way and using all available means, they prevented the formation of the proletarian united fighting front against the bourgeoisie. Nationally orientated – the SP German nationally orientated, the StP Russian nationally orientated – they both, even though coming from different directions, ended up collaborating with the bourgeoisie, the SP openly, the StP objectively – the inevitable result of its 'socialism in one country'. Under developed capitalist conditions, parties, trade unions, co-operatives that collaborate with the bourgeoisie, or even with only a section of it, are incapable of fighting against the bourgeoisie, are incapable of protecting the proletariat against capitalist attacks, are incapable even of defending bourgeoisie democracy against the bourgeoisie. When the bourgeoisie had established its fascist dictatorship, the SPD and trade union bureaucracy offered it their collaboration. 'Hitler will soon be finished – then Communism will come!' shouted the Stalinist bureaucracy, handing over the tasks of the communist party to fascism, to monopoly capital, to the bourgeoisie…

Under the Bonapartist dictatorship too, the SP and Stalinist CP both continued to pursue the same politics with which they created the conditions for Bonapartism. The SP, which had suppressed the revolutionary proletariat with blood and iron in the defence of (capitalist) democracy – always well protected by the capitalist army, police and bureaucracy – avoided any serious struggle for the defence of (bourgeois) democracy, for which it had so often proclaimed it would live or die, because this struggle would have had to be carried on ***against the bourgeoisie***.

Under the given conditions, the only sure means of smashing fascism and defending (bourgeois) democracy effectively was still the ***united front of the workers against the bourgeoisie***. However, the Social Democratic Party was afraid that the unified struggle of the workers for the defence of (bourgeois) democracy against the fascists would turn into a proletarian-***revolutionary*** struggle; the SPD, however, wanted, and was seeking, an alliance with the non-monopoly bourgeoisie against fascism ***and*** – against the proletarian revolution, and for this reason it sabotaged the proletarian united front using all available means. The non-monopoly capitalists, however, went over more and more to the side of the monopoly capitalists... The Stalinist party simultaneously sabotaged the proletarian united front from an ultra-'leftist' direction, looking for opportunities to carry out manoeuvres, in order to create excuses and alibis for their despicable actions, because it did not want the building up of the Russian economy to be disturbed by the proletarian revolution in Germany, in Europe. ***EFFECTIVELY WORKING TOGETHER, THE TWO PARTIES THAT SPONGED POLITICALLY ON THE WORKING CLASS IN ACTUAL FACT PLAYED INTO THE HANDS***

OF THE BOURGEOISIE. In a cast iron united front of passivity, outtrumping each other in terms of bellowing the most 'radical' phrases, the two parties stumbled from one capitulation to another, leaving the workers to their fate – they made the bloody horrific game so easy for the fascists. ***IT WAS NOT BY VIRTUE OF ITS POWER THAT FASCISM WON, BUT BY VIRTUE OF THE POWERLESSNESS OF THE MASSES – FOR WHICH SOCIAL DEMOCRACY AND STALINISM WERE TO BLAME***: they disappointed the masses, disintegrated them, depriving them of any prospect, confidence or hope, and, instead of opening the only way out for them – the proletarian united front against the bourgeoisie – they blocked it. In this way, Social Democracy and the Stalinist parties were to blame for the catastrophe that came about.

The Social Democratic and Stalinist parties of betrayal, their centrist and other helpers portray the fascist dictatorship as a dictatorship of fascist adventurers, who have risen up out of the petty bourgeoisie – a dictatorship that is ***also directed against the bourgeoisie***, who helped them upwards – or as a dictatorship of the monopoly bourgeoisie, ***also directed against the non-monopoly bourgeoisie***. This fundamentally incorrect class characterisation is a deliberate deception that is the inevitable result of the fundamentally treacherous position of all these parties, that is to say they want to carry on their anti-fascist struggle, their anti-fascist government or 'anti-fascist dictatorship' together with the bourgeoisie or at least together with the non-monopoly bourgeoisie. The same basic line with which the parties of betrayal brought the fascist catastrophe upon the workers, upon humanity – the fascist catastrophe led to the catastrophe of the Second (imperialist) World War – this same basic line they continue to pursue today and want to continue pursuing it after the overthrow of the fascist dictatorship, i.e. coalition, 'people's' front, partnership (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft*), collaboration, alliance with the bourgeoisie or a section of it, ***against the proletariat, against the proletarian revolution***. They fight against the fascist dictatorship, but not from the standpoint of the working class, but – from the standpoint of the bourgeoisie!... They describe fascism as ***the*** counter-revolution, in order to conceal that they are fighting against the fascist dictatorship, not from the standpoint of ***proletarian*** democracy, but from the standpoint of ***bourgeois*** democracy, which in reality is only another, namely veiled form of the dictatorship of the capitalist class, against the proletariat, against the proletarian revolution. Their 'struggle' against fascism is one that in truth supports the bourgeoisie, in order to transform the overt, fascist dictatorship, which has eventually worn out and has become unsuitable for the specific situation for the capitalist class, into the democratically concealed form of the capitalist dictatorship. Their 'struggle' against the fascist dictatorship is in truth a struggle in a united front with the bourgeoisie for maintaining and conserving the capitalist dictatorship after the bankruptcy of its fascist form, is in truth a struggle in a ***united front with the capitalist class against the proletariat, against the proletarian revolution***. The same skullduggery is hidden behind the Social Democratic and Stalinist formula: first defeat fascism… then capitalism. The fascist dictatorship, however, is precisely that form of the capitalist state, with which the bourgeoisie defends capitalism by the sharpest means.

In reality this formula is designed to cloud the Social Democratic, Stalinist and Labour bureaucracies' stance that they are for capitalism, for the capitalist class and are only striving for another form of rule by the bourgeoisie, namely the form in which they have a share in the oh-so-lucrative business of capitalist exploitation and domination of the masses.

FASCIST DICTATORSHIP IS AN OVERT DICTATORSHIP OF THE ENTIRE CAPITALIST CLASS UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE MONOPOLY BOURGEOISIE. In this sense one can describe fascist dictatorship as a ***dictatorship of the monopoly bourgeoisie***, as a monopoly capitalist dictatorship, but only in this sense. The SA, the SS, the fascist bureaucracy together with Hitler and Co. are not the masters, but the servants, the instruments, they are only the torturers, the hangmen, the executive organs of the monopoly capitalists, and in the last analysis of the entire bourgeoisie. Nothing in this is changed by a number of the fascist leaders becoming interwoven, interrelated with the bourgeoisie, or even becoming capitalists themselves; this does not remove, but on the contrary strengthens, the capitalist class character of the fascist dictatorship. Nothing in this is changed, even when Hitler now and then treads on the toes of some capitalist or other. When they no longer need him, when they change the facade of their dictatorship, they will throw Hitler & Co. onto the scrap heap, if necessary sacrificing them without further ado. When the Italian bourgeoisie no longer had any use of its torturer Mussolini for its politics, it pushed him aside without hesitation in July 1943, in order to harness its Social-Democratic and Stalinist lackeys on the 'left' to the capitalist carriage. After the failure of the first attempt of the German monopoly bourgeoisie to find a way out of the capitalist contradictions for a while by means of the First World War (1914-18), the second attempt, after the bankruptcy of the anointed Kaiser, could only be risked with a substitute Kaiser, who, because he was not anointed by the grace of God, had to be a 'man of the people', in order to deceive, to lure the masses. All the spotlights at the disposal of the bourgeoisie were, and are, focused unceasingly on him, this hollow puppet was, and continues to be, puffed up into a radiant superman, illuminated with spotlights (*bengalisch beleuchtet*), whereby all criticism is suppressed, in order to be able to mislead, beguile and deceive the masses about the ***capitalist*** class character of the fascist dictatorship more easily. The same purpose is served by the deliberate deception of portraying the fascist party, this instrument of the monopoly bourgeoisie, as a national 'socialist' party. The economic and political power is one hundred per cent, completely undivided in the hands of the bourgeoisie, it alone is the master, the real dictator: the ownership of the decisive means of production is in the hands of the capitalist class; the entire state apparatus in all leading positions, key points, focal points is without exception occupied by capitalists or elements who are utterly devoted to the capitalist class. Regardless of whether the monopoly bourgeoisie pushes this or that marionette into the foreground of the political stage to catch people's eye, this changes nothing at all about the capitalist class character of the fascist dictatorship. Quite apart from the fact that Hitler, Mussolini & Co. were carefully chosen from the dregs of society by the monopoly bourgeoisie precisely for the reason that they are absolutely devoted to the capitalist class as a whole and its leading layer, the monopoly bourgeoisie. Deceiving the outside world, especially the masses, by means of all kinds of manoeuvres and tricks that pretend the opposite, is part of the effective playing of this role. The puppet-servant, behind whom the bourgeoisie and its leading stratum, the monopoly bourgeoisie, are well hidden, is made out to be a dictator, who is also violating the poor bourgeoisie itself, indeed even the monopoly bourgeoisie, whom he has supposedly duped. These capitalist gentlemen are prepared for all eventualities: if the gamble fails, they want to wash their hands in innocence, sacrificing the fascist 'dictator', who has been selected in advance as a scapegoat for this eventuality, and continue their exploiters' and rulers' role in some other form, possibly a 'democratic' one…

The ***'steamrolling' of the Jews*** (*Judenwalze*) serves the purpose of pretending that the fascist dictatorship is an ***anti-capitalist*** dictatorship, so that the masses, especially the middle masses do not recognise it as a dictatorship of the capitalist class for as long as possible.

The thin stratum of Jewish capitalists – thin in comparison to the bourgeoisie as a whole – is sacrificed all the more easily, because its expropriation not only makes this deception easier, but at the same time provides the means to be able to tempt and corrupt elements from a whole range of classes and parties, to be able to chain them to fascism, to mobilise them and harness them for it. Just like with the Jews, this is what will happen to you too if you complain; this is what the fascists are saying – by means of the 'steamrolling' of the Jews – are saying to its own masses, to the small, weaker peoples and to all those the fascists have subjugated. The German bourgeoisie did not resort to its fascist Jewish policy out of hatred for Jews, but because it was absolutely essential for it to have a suitable means of pretending to the masses that its predatory murderous dictatorship was a seriously anti-capitalist system. It reckoned cold-bloodedly that as a result of almost 2,000 years of thorough preparatory work by the Church, 'steamrolling' the Jews was the best, most suitable means of getting the fascist terror under way against all those it subjugated on the line of least resistance. Those who convince themselves and others that the American bourgeoisie, for example, would not at all be capable of such actions – after all they are much too democratic, much too humane, etc. – are in for a shock. When American capitalism, like German capitalism, begins to teeter, Morgan, Rockefeller, Ford & Co. will show that Krupp & Co., together with their Hitler, are like little children, then the 'steam-rolling' of the Jews, the 'steam-rolling' of black people and much more will sweep across America, far worse still than the Nazi-dictatorship in Germany and other parts of Europe. When an exploiters' class gets into a critical situation, or sees a critical situation for itself developing, it especially likes to 'steam-roller' the Jews, in order to deflect the masses – who are becoming or are already impoverished, desperate and enraged because of the economic system of the exploiters' class and its system of oppression – away from the exploiters' class and direct their attention to the Jews, thus confusing and dividing the masses and getting over the critical situation more easily.

> The dictatorship of a class does not by a long shot mean that its entire mass always participates ***directly*** in the administration of the state [...]
>
> [The fascist bureaucracy is not an] independent ruling class. It is a ***hireling*** (*Kommis*) of the bourgeoisie. Admittedly this lackey sits on his master's shoulder, now and again snatches tasty morsels from his mouth and to boot spits on his bald spot (Trotzki [1933] 1934, pp.5,14).
>
> The 200 families do not float around in mid-air but are the organic crown of the system of finance capital. To deal with the 200 families, it is necessary to overthrow the economic and political regime, in the maintenance of which Herriot and Daladier are no less interested than Flandin and de La Rocque. The issue here is not a struggle of the 'nation' against a few magnates, as (the Stalinist; auth.) l'Humanité depicts it, but the struggle of the proletariat against the ***bourgeoisie***. It is a question of the class struggle, which can be decided only by revolution [...]

> But because the order in France is synonymous with the ***RULE OF FINANCE CAPITAL OVER THE MIDDLE AND SMALL[25] BOURGEOISIE, AND THE RULE OF THE BOURGEOISIE AS A WHOLE OVER THE PROLETARIAT AND THE SOCIAL STRATA CLOSEST TO IT***, the detachments of de La Rocque are nothing more than armed shock troops of finance capital (Trotzki, 1936c, pp.82, 75).

After the German catastrophe of 1933, the SP and the StP washed their hands in innocence, shoving the blame onto each other. The Stalinist party even tried to deceive the masses, by lying away the catastrophe. In reality, even then they continued to pursue exactly the same politics of betrayal. However, with one difference: until then only the SP had worked together openly with the bourgeoisie, whereas the StP had 'fought against' it in an ultra'radical' way; in reality, however, it had done the same thing through the effects of its actions, wearing an ultra'left' mask. But now Stalinism began to openly pull on the same rope with democratic socialism: it now suddenly, in the blink of an eye, entered into a united front with the Social Democratic Party, a party that up till then it had rejected on principle as social-fascist – a united front not for struggle against the bourgeoisie, but – ***for an alliance with the bourgeoisie against the working class, against the proletarian revolution***.

In 1936, the workers of France had risen up in a gigantic revolutionary surge. Following the example of the German SP and Austrian SP in 1918/19 the SFIO and the Stalinist PCF formed a 'People's' Front with the left-bourgeoisie and threw the masses the bait of a 40-hour week, in order to lull them. They did not touch capitalist ownership of the large workplaces or the capitalist state apparatus. Using all available means, they opposed the attempts of the workers to continue the struggle and intensify it; in this way they disappointed and disintegrated the masses. In 1938, having performed this service for it, the bourgeoisie threw Blum, Thorez & Co., together with their 'People's' Front, onto the scrap heap – the 40-hour week was dead in the water and the road was clear for the victory of fascism in France and for the victory of Hitler over the French masses, thanks to Social Democracy and Stalinism.

In 1936, the workers of Spain rose up with tremendous revolutionary *élan*. They began to establish independent organs of proletarian class power, the workers' councils, armed workers' militias, etc. The exhausted, destitute peasant masses in rural Spain rose up and began to seize the large estates of the nobility and the Church. Instead of putting itself at the head of the revolutionary workers and poor peasants against the bourgeoisie, the Stalinist party and Social Democracy formed the 'People's' Front with the Spanish left-bourgeoisie ***against the working class, against the poor peasants, against the oppressed, exploited masses in Spanish Morocco, against the Spanish revolution***. They didn't touch capitalist police, and the capitalist officers and bureaucrats kept their positions of command in the military apparatus and in the administrative machinery. Instead of expropriating the large estates of the nobility, the Church, etc., without compensation and, in the light of the special circumstances in Spain, dividing up without compensation a considerable portion of it among the poor peasants, they suppressed – using all available means – the agrarian-revolutionary attempts of the oppressed,

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[25] This is sometimes mistranslated in English as middle and petty bourgeoisie – Trotsky is clearly referring to middle and small capitalists, who are all part of the capitalist class (Ed.).

impoverished peasant masses. Instead of liquidating Spanish imperialism, they refused to give the Moroccans the right of self-determination – Franco was thus able to arm them and use them for his own purposes. In essence, they let the capitalists keep the factories, mines, etc. Using all available means, including force, they liquidated the workers' councils together with their militias, Stalin's GPU eliminated all the revolutionary leaders of the workers, or those who could have become revolutionary leaders, by means of assassination. When the revolutionary workers of Barcelona rose up in insurrection on 4 and 5 May 1937, in order to put an end to this counter-revolutionary activity, they were crushed in a bloody struggle by the 'People's' Front with the help of the capitalist police, whom it had conserved and quickly summoned – more than 2,000 workers were butchered in the process. The workers of Spain had risen up in 1936 with unparalleled heroism; they fought the battles with an unparalleled willingness to make sacrifices and their boundless heroism sufficed to win three revolutions – but the Spanish 'People's' Front disappointed the masses and disintegrated their tremendous fighting power. Simultaneously, under the banner of 'non-intervention', the French 'People's' Front prevented the fighters from receiving any support in the way of weapons, munitions, etc. Thus, the Stalinist party and Social Democracy were to blame for paving the way for the fascist victory of Franco, Hitler and Mussolini. The conditions were created that made it possible for German imperialism to launch the Second (imperialist) World War under conditions that were so extremely favourable for itself, and so extremely unfavourable for Soviet Russia.

In every country, without exception, Social Democracy and the Stalinist Party – to say nothing of the Labour Party in Britain, the trade union bureaucracy of the AFL, CIO, and MWU in the USA, etc. – continue to pursue exactly the same politics: the politics of collaboration with the mortal enemy of the workers, with the bourgeoisie, or at least with the left-bourgeoisie; nationally limited politics – they are preparing new catastrophes for the workers, unless, thwarting their politics of betrayal, the victorious proletarian revolution forestalls these catastrophes. Highly developed capitalism, i.e. capitalism at an advanced stage of decline, is the general precondition for a fascist dictatorship. However, in order that this becomes a reality, two additional specific pre-conditions have to be satisfied: the complete disintegration of the fighting power of the working class and the poor middle masses completely despairing of the workers. It is the SP, the StP, the LP, the degenerated bureaucracy of the trade unions, co-operatives etc., who again and again create these special preconditions: by thoroughly disappointing both classes, by paralysing the working class, depriving them of any vista, any prospect, any self-confidence, and thereby depriving the middle strata of society of any hope and confidence in being rescued by the proletariat. Fascism does not owe its victory primarily to its own strength, but to the paralysis of the fighting power of the masses that has been brought about by the Social Democratic, Stalinist and Labour betrayal; it is not primarily due to its own strength that the fascist dictatorship is able to assert itself for so long, but thanks to the ongoing betrayal by Social Democracy, and by the Stalinist and Labour parties, and the trade union bureaucracy – even after the victory of fascism – without exception in every country, and the ongoing paralysis of the masses brought about by this.

In the less developed advanced capitalist countries, dictatorships with semi-fascist characteristics appear in all kinds of transitional stages.

Generally speaking, once in power, the fascist dictatorship goes through the following stages of development. With the help of the fascisised middle masses, monopoly capital brings the

bourgeoisie round to fascist forms of its overt capitalist dictatorship. However, it is not able to satisfy the fundamental needs of the middle strata and is bound to disappoint them. After a more or less lengthy process, this gradually begins to dawn on the petty-bourgeois masses who had been carried away by the fascist bloodlust. They begin to slowly distance themselves again from the bourgeoisie and regroup in a direction that is finally bound to bring them closer to the proletariat again. From the outset the monopoly bourgeoisie has foreseen this inevitable course of events, because it is not aiming to help the middle masses seriously, but merely to make use of them against the working class. It is precisely for this reason that it has drastically reinforced the steel mesh of the capitalist power apparatus, more than trebled it, so that, based on the enormously reinforced power apparatus, it can maintain its dictatorship despite dwindling mass support. In this way the fascist dictatorship turns into a higher-level military-police-dictatorship, based on the tremendously enlarged fascist power apparatus. This process of social regrouping would lead the fascist dictatorship into the abyss, if the capitalist class led by the monopoly bourgeoisie had no way out at all. However, from the outset, it has had in mind precisely this way out, admittedly one that is highly risky, desperate, and at best transient, but still a temporary way out – it is precisely this way out that it seeks and hopes to find in a new still more gigantic imperialist world war. The issues of selling commodities profitably, of investing capital profitably, of raw material sources, of unemployment, the agrarian question, etc. – it wants to resolve all this by means of war, by murdering and robbing on a much greater scale. The imperialist war drives the middle masses still more to the left, accelerates the process of them drawing closer to the working class and their revival. Thus, the special social conditions that make the fascist form of its dictatorship possible and suitable for the bourgeoisie, begin to disappear more and more: i.e. the possibility of being able to hurl the middle-masses rabidly against the paralysed proletariat. The time has come, when the bourgeoisie again has to prepare and carry out the transition to the democratically veiled form of its dictatorship, by getting rid of its fascist torturers one way or another, shifting all the blame onto them in front of the masses, and drawing their Social-Democratic, Stalinist, Labour and such like lackeys into collaboration, in order, with their help, to keep the millions of workers, poor peasants/farmers and petty bourgeois away from the proletarian revolution, or to disintegrate and finally crush them again. In this way the bankrupt parties of betrayal, despite the fact they are to blame for the preceding proletarian catastrophes, get back on their feet again for a certain time. Once the lackeys have again performed their services, once they have again paralysed the proletariat, crushed them once again, the bourgeoisie changes once again to its overt capitalist dictatorship, in the end to one of a fascist character as well, with new slogans, disguises, emblems, promises, and subterfuges and dirty tricks.

The form of the bourgeois dictatorship changes again and again, but the dictatorship of the capitalist class remains in place for as long as the worker masses, the poor peasant/farmer and petty bourgeois masses follow the parties, and other organisations of the degenerated workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy, such as the SP, the StP, the LP and such like that work covertly together with the bourgeoisie.

Fascism cannot be vanquished while being in party alliance with capital, with the bourgeoisie or sections of it. Whoever fights against Italian or German fascism in party alliance with the British or American imperialists, is paving the way for fascism in Britain and the USA. Only by detaching themselves from the petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties, from the degenerated workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy, by gathering round their class party, only by waging a

victorious struggle on the proletarian-revolutionary line are the worker masses able to put an end to the changes in the form of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, by getting rid of the conditions for ***all*** capitalist dictatorships: by destroying the capitalist state apparatus, expropriating the capitalist class and – on the ruins of the bourgeois state – establishing the dictatorship of proletarian democracy against the bourgeoisie.

The fascist dictatorship does everything in the gigantic power of the bourgeoisie, not flinching from any available means, in order to finally liquidate the proletarian revolution. However, against its will, fascism, in a huge object lesson, teaches the best elements in the masses two things: firstly, the complete unfitness for purpose of Social Democratic politics and the Social Democratic Party, Stalinist politics and the Stalinist party, Labour politics and the Labour Party and such like that were to blame for the fascist catastrophe; secondly, it teaches the masses by means of a real and very bloody lesson, better than all books, the methods they have to use to tackle their capitalist tormentors, in order to deal with them and with capitalist oppression and exploitation, finally, once and for all.

> The revolution made progress, forged ahead, not by its immediate tragicomic achievements but, on the contrary, by the creation of a powerful, united counterrevolution, by the creation of an opponent in combat with whom the party of overthrow ripened into a truly revolutionary party (Marx, [1850] 1895, p.20).

Against its will, fascism creates important preconditions for the proletarian-revolutionary victory, by showing ever larger masses tangibly, what weaknesses, what mistakes, what barriers there are, and that above all they must rid themselves of the Social-Democratic, Labour and Stalinist parties of betrayal, that they must build up their Party, their International, the proletarian-revolutionary Party, the proletarian-revolutionary International, the Fourth International, and indeed on the basis of all these cruel lessons, so that the petty-bourgeois degeneration, the petty-bourgeois betrayal does not repeat itself for the third time.

VI. The Prospects for the Capitalist Dictatorship

A. In the long term

Let us assume the most favourable conditions for capital, without initially asking whether they are, in practice, seriously within the bounds of possibility. We assume, therefore, that the world monopoly bourgeoisie would not encounter any resistance on the part of the masses, or that it would be in a position to crush their revolutionary insurrections again and again. Furthermore, we assume that the world monopolists would have joined together, one way or another, in a unified world trust that encompasses the whole of the globe and be organised as a world joint-stock company based on the size of their capital; indeed we will assume they would have finally managed to establish a capitalist collectivism, a 'communism' of the monopoly capitalists amongst themselves – the kind that Plato had extolled to the slaveholders of Antiquity as the most perfect form of organisation, or as practised, at a lower level, by the Jesuits in Paraguay in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; the anarchism of capitalist production would have been abolished: a commune of gigantic world monopolist robbers would have at their disposal a rigorously and thoroughly organised, centrally-led world economic undertaking for systematically exploiting, sucking dry and plundering the whole of humanity in an integrated way; the disproportionality between the branches of the economy would be abolished, agriculture and industry, industry devoted to the means of production and means of consumption, together with the distribution apparatus and transportation would have been carefully geared to each other's needs, as a whole and in all their parts. There would be no competitive struggle between the monopoly capitalists organised as an association, as a world joint-stock company or world co-operative or in some other way 'communistically'.

As the owners of the world means of production, as the masters of the world bourgeois states, they would decide according to their own interests, what and how much to produce; they would then be confronted by two major options: either reproduction on an extended scale or simple reproduction.

Let us assume they decided to continue to operate the world economy in the most careful manner on the line of expanding reproduction – on a capitalist basis of course, i.e. with profit. This would inevitably again and again entail the following processes: firstly, an increase in production; secondly, an increasing number of workers losing their jobs or at least an increase in the amount of short-time working, a decrease, therefore, in the total real wage of the world working class, and, consequently, a decrease in the purchasing power of the world masses as a whole, who would only be able to purchase an ever declining proportion of the total social product, because expanded reproduction on a capitalist basis means an ongoing reduction in the social wage capital in relation to the social material capital. Any untapped market, something that already today no longer exists, would then more than ever be unavailable. The sale of commodities, the turning of value, including the surplus value, into money form, would be far more difficult than is already the case today, and indeed would be less and less possible. The way out, as a temporary solution, by means of one section of monopoly capitalists eating up another section would no longer be feasible according to our assumption, as a result of them being organised on 'communistically' basis; average profit would not come about via competition but would be calculated periodically by the accounts department of the capitalist world state. Certainly, the world monopolists could and would progressively boost exploitation,

and increase the amount of surplus value more and more, but precisely by doing this they would inevitably lower the real income of the world masses, at least relatively, and, as this process advances, the masses – in comparison to the total social product and total social value – would be able to again and again only purchase an ever reducing proportion of this. The realisation of the value of the commodities – including their surplus value – in the form of money, would therefore become increasingly more and more difficult, and it would become harder and harder to extract the profit – i.e. the surplus value in money form – from the social reproduction process.

> The entire mass of commodities, i.e. the total product, including the portion which replaces the constant and variable capital, and that representing surplus value, ***must be sold***. If this is not done, or done only in part, or only at prices below the prices of production, the worker has indeed been exploited, but their exploitation is not realised as such for the capitalist (Marx, [1894] 1919a, p.225).

Therefore, even if the exploited masses were to offer no resistance at all, and even if when they rebelled, rose up in revolt, they were to be crushed again and again, continuing production in a ***capitalist*** form, i.e. with profit, would become progressively harder, and less and less possible. In order to be able to continue to carry on production on the basis of a world monopoly, the world monopoly bourgeoisie would inevitably have to resort more and more to forms of the exploitative economy based on barter, which did not absolutely require the transformation of the surplus value, of value, into money form, to ***feudal*** (serf-like) or even ***slave-based*** forms of the social reproduction process, indeed the first steps in this direction are in fact already currently being taken. Consequently, the world monopoly bourgeoisie would inevitably have to increasingly tread the path of a ***process of retrogression*** of human economy and society, with all the resulting consequences of a process of retrogression that has indeed in actual fact already started before our very eyes.

In order to escape these difficulties, the world monopoly capitalist robber gangs, organised among themselves ‘communistically’, would have no choice but to take the path of limiting themselves to the line of simple reproduction. They would therefore content themselves with replicating the capitalist reproduction process on a world scale again and again on the basis of one and the same dimensions and proportions, without changing the economic composition of the world economy. It would then become perfectly clear that any development of the productive forces had ceased altogether, that the entire economy, that human society as a whole was ***stagnating*** completely.

Manifestations of stagnation, precisely where the development of the productive forces are concerned, are already appearing in today’s monopoly capitalism, and indeed are becoming more frequent on a wave-like trajectory.

In both cases the reproduction process would pass through the industrial cycle again and again, and indeed, in the case of expanded reproduction, periodically accompanied by sharpening cyclical crises. In both cases there would periodically be a certain upswing, which, however, would change nothing with regard to the basic tendency of retrogression or stagnation that would dominate the whole process.

Even a fully developed world trust, which is neither disturbed by the masses nor by the struggles of the monopoly capitalists among themselves, would therefore not get rid of the deepest, fundamental contradiction that arises from ownership of the means of production, and under capitalist conditions, gapes between the productive forces and the purchasing power of the masses, and inevitably becomes ever sharper, because capitalist production is production, not for the needs of human beings, but to make profits for the capitalist exploiters. The most perfect monopoly capitalist 'planned economy' cannot abolish this contradiction – even if it encompasses world production in its entirety – and is bound to lead the human economy and society deeper and deeper downwards in economic terms, staggering from retrogression to stagnation, from stagnation to further retrogression and so forth.

Is it possible in practice, that an economic system of this kind would encounter no resistance from the masses or that the monopolist world bourgeoisie could again and again break the resistance, the revolts, the insurrections of the masses? Let us assume present-day conditions. Of the total world population of around 2,200 million, the capitalists and their entire families, including the very smallest capitalist exploiters too, on the basis of a very high estimate, amount to 10%, i.e. about 200 million human beings. By the time the all-encompassing world trust comes into being, the total population could increase, although it would probably have decreased by then, but for our purely illustrative purposes we can for simplicity's sake assume a by and large stable total population. The realisation of this world trust would inevitably be accompanied by the proletarianisation of all the middle stratum of society, the complete crushing all the weak, middle and even most of the big capitalists competitively, the centralisation of the entire capitalist economy in the hands of the biggest capitalist giants, i.e. the world monopoly capitalists. United in the world trust, the world monopoly bourgeoisie, together with their entire families, would therefore ultimately at most number one million, probably far fewer. The numeric relationship of the exploited to the exploiters would therefore be approximately 2,200 million exploited to 1 million exploiters.

We saw above that a capitalist world trust operating on a line of expanded reproduction, would, inevitably, be bound to continue to lower the real income of the 2,200 million; unemployment, short-time working, impoverishment and the class antagonism between the 2,200 million exploited and the one million exploiters would, on the basis of the ongoing retrogression of the capitalist economy and society, be bound to grow at a faster rate. The decline of slavery in Antiquity did not lead to a revolution, but – accompanied by countless struggles – to growing despair, despondency and hopelessness on the part of the masses. Early Christian communism at best offered a better distribution of the relatively very small total social product; it could not do away with poverty and destitution, only ameliorate them, and had no solution to society's fundamental problem. Given the undeveloped state of the productive forces, even the most advanced elements of the exploited, oppressed, suffering masses at that time, could not find a socialist solution, a solution that would have had to have been one that was combined with increasing production. Thus the clerical bureaucrats of the early Christian organisation, the *clerus*, sought and found the 'Christian' solution, ultimately in coalition, in a working partnership (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft*), in co-operation, in a 'people's' front with the slave exploiters against the slaves, against the poor and oppressed, turning the early Christian teachings into their opposite, fobbing the masses off and consoling them with a nebulous kingdom in the sky, in place of the real kingdom of heaven on earth, and exterminating the revolutionary early Christianity as 'heresy' with fire and sword.

However, the decline of the capitalist economy and capitalist society takes place – and would take place all the more so in the case of retrogression under the conditions of a capitalist world trust – on the basis of the most modern productive forces, which would provide the striking proof to every single worker that it does not have to be this way, that the sources of human existence flow in abundance and could provide in plenty, if they were freed from the capitalist form of their application and from the control, the ownership, and the state power of the gigantic capitalist parasites. If the world trust were to confine itself to simple reproduction, then the contradictions would admittedly be somewhat less crass, but the glaring gigantic contrast between the gigantic productive forces and the eternal monotony of reproduction would day by day become all the more crass, a gigantic contrast that is repeating itself on the same track, on the same scale, with all the capitalist manifestations accompanying it. Would the 2,200 million that make up the masses remain quiet in the face of this? Certainly not. Would they rise up? Certainly. Would they be victorious? They would in the end certainly be victorious. Their victory would then only be a question of the consciousness of the masses, which it is already today too. Not despondency, not hopelessness, but raging increasing anger, utter determination to fight would grip these 2,200 million and the exceedingly simplified conditions would also bring them rapidly deepening insight and clarity. The relations of production, the class relationships and political conditions would be so unambiguous, so transparent and at the same time so crass, that even the capitalists switching to and fro from stick to carrot, from force to trickery, from fascism to the Labour Party, Social Democracy, Stalinism, centrism, 'ultra-radicalism' and anarchism, or, conversely, from the carrot to the stick (all this supported by the gigantic stultification machine of capitalist cinema and radio, of the capitalist Church and of capitalist schools, press, etc.) would not be capable of preventing the unfolding of the revolutionary consciousness of the masses in leaps and bounds, indeed like lightning, nor indeed preventing their goal-conscious, and in the end victorious, revolutionary mass action.

In reality, in practice, it would be impossible for the monopoly capitalists to achieve an all-encompassing world trust. The centralisation process of the capitalist economy does not take place uniformly. Where and when capitalists join together in cartels, syndicates and trusts, they do not get there other than by way of the sharpest competitive struggle. Once created, the cartels, syndicates and trusts do not abolish competition, but intensify it even more, make it ever more explosive; they only turn the free competition between individual capitalists more and more into monopolist competition between the monopolist conglobations, between the monopoly organisations that make the state subservient to them, and again and again in the final analysis fight their competitive struggle with guns, battleships, bombers, etc.

> In capitalism no other basis and no other principle for division is possible except force [...] capitalism means private property in the means of production and anarchy in production. To advocate a 'just' division of proceeds on such a basis is Proudhonism, petty-bourgeois, philistinic stupidity. Division can be effected in no other way than in proportion to strength… There is and there can be no other way of testing the real might of a capitalist state than by war. Under capitalism the smooth economic growth of individual economies or individual states is impossible (Lenin, [1915] 1921g, p.125).
>
> The capitalists divide up the world among themselves not out of particular malice, but because the degree of concentration reached forces them to tread this path

> in order to be able to make any profits at all; at the same time they divide it 'in proportion to capital', 'in proportion to strength' – there cannot be any other method of division under the system of commodity production and capitalism. But strength varies with the economic and political development […]
>
> Finance capital and the trusts do not diminish but increase the differences in the rate of growth of the various parts of the world economy. But once the relation of forces is changed – how then ***under capitalism*** should the antagonisms be settled other than by ***force***? (Lenin, [1916] 1926, pp.67-68, 86-87).
>
> Theoretically, it is admittedly possible to conceive a situation in which the bourgeoisie as a whole constitutes itself as a joint-stock company, which administers the whole national economy by means of its state... Under an integral (all-encompassing; auth.) 'state capitalism' the law of the equal rate of profit would not be realised in a roundabout way (*auf Umwegen kommen*), that is to say by means of competition between capitals, but directly and immediately through state book-keeping. Such a regime, however, has never existed and because of the profound antagonisms between the proprietors themselves, will also never exist – the more so since the state, in its role as universal representative of capitalist property, would be too tempting an object for the social revolution (Trotzki, 1936a, p.239).

Progressive capitalist centralisation and concentration is inevitable, which inevitably leads to an ever more all-embracing cartelisation, syndicalisation and trustification of the capitalist economy, combined with the following processes:

1. Falling real incomes of the worker masses, of the petty-bourgeois, small-peasant/small-farmer masses, of the colonial and semi-colonial masses, i.e. the growing impoverishment of by far the largest section of humanity, which can only purchase a smaller and smaller part of the total social product;

2. The periodic crises will become ever more catastrophic in extent and duration, in particular with regard to unemployment; they will ruin millions of middle-class livelihoods and also an ever greater number of weaker, middle and even big capitalists; as a result of this the gap between the productive forces and purchasing power of the masses will be torn open in leaps and bounds, and ever wider and deeper;

3. Only imperialist wars with increasingly immense armaments, ever more devastating in their destruction, will create new breathing spaces for the victorious capitalists, who forcibly appropriate the markets and investment markets, the sources of raw materials and the productive apparatus of the vanquished capitalists in various forms, and whose productive apparatus they inevitably constrain, turning the vanquished countries more or less back into agricultural countries; the breathing spaces are bound become shorter and shorter; new untapped markets are no longer available and imperialist war – on an even more immense scale than capitalist economic crises – ruins middle-class livelihoods, the small, bigger and even the big capitalists above all in the vanquished countries, and exacerbates this contradiction between the productive forces and the purchasing power of the masses all the more, leads

therefore inevitably to even more gigantic economic crises, to even more destructive imperialist wars. Admittedly, the overall process of capitalist decline also moves in a wave-like trajectory: there are phases of temporary upswing, of partial improvement; however, this fundamental contradiction with all its consequences asserts itself again and again, and indeed again and again increasingly so in leaps and bounds.

> But as matters stand, the replacement of the capital invested in production depends largely upon the consuming power of the non-producing classes; while the consuming power of the workers is limited partly by the laws of wages, partly by the fact that they (the workers; trans.) are used only as long as they can be profitably employed by the capitalist class. The ultimate reason for all real crises always remains the poverty and restricted consumption of the masses as opposed to the driving force of capitalist production to develop the productive forces as though only the absolute consuming power of society constituted their limit (Marx, [1894] 1919b, p.21).

Long before the monopoly capitalists would seriously come close to forming an all-embracing world trust, all these processes are therefore inevitably bound to drive the masses in their hundreds of millions to rise up, to rebel, to revolt – on pain of regressing into barbarism, indeed finally perishing altogether – in order to avert the fate threatening them and the whole of human society. All these processes are inevitably – on pain of going under – bound to revolutionise more and more the consciousness of the masses, above all the consciousness of their best elements and thus bring about the subjective conditions for the proletarian-revolutionary victory, for which today the objective conditions are long since ripe.

B. In the short term

A long-lasting compromise between the two warring imperialist power groupings is impossible, economically – even at the expense of Soviet Russia and of French and Italian imperialism it is not possible. The productive forces of the USA, Britain, Germany and Japan are so enormous, that the reducing purchasing power of the world masses as a whole no longer suffices – by a long way – to enable all the capitalists in these countries to carry on production on a capitalist basis (i.e. on a viable, profitable basis).

The world has become much too small for the gigantic capitalist predators. The concessions in terms of booty that the British and French monopoly bourgeoisie made in Munich (October 1938), did not suffice for the profit needs of German monopoly capital, whose predatory demands – dictated to it by the fact that it can produce profitably on a capitalist basis only by utilising a certain minimum level of its gigantic productive apparatus, only by selling a certain minimum proportion of its products – far exceeded what British, French and American monopoly capital could accede to, without seriously endangering their own profit needs. In the further course of events the British monopoly bourgeoisie had to hand over important morsels of its gigantic, plundered wealth to American monopoly capital. A compromise that was, for economic reasons, impossible from the start, is now even less possible. Only by liquidating the degenerated proletarian state by means of victorious capitalist counter-revolution, and turning it into an economically considerably weaker capitalist state and completely defeating the other imperialist grouping, can the victorious imperialist grouping hope to gain greater latitude for a certain period of time and be able to continue to its economic activity in capitalist form again for a period of time. In the very best case, a compromise would at most take the form of a ceasefire for a short period of time; after a few years imperialist war would be bound to break out again once again, even more fiercely, more cruelly, more destructively than before – provided the victorious proletarian revolution did not pre-empt it.

Let us assume the most favourable outcome of the Second (imperialist) World War for capital: the war is concluded at the expense of the degenerated proletarian state, which would be transformed into an economically considerably weaker capitalist state, and at the expense of the defeated group of capitalist powers, including France and Italy; the victors succeed in dealing with the proletarian revolution brought about by the Second (imperialist) World War, above all in the defeated countries; the fascist reign of violence, the Stalinist, Social-Democratic, centrist, ultra-'left', anarchist betrayal, the betrayal by the Labour Party, AFL, CIO, MWU, etc., has left the proletariat far too weakened; the formation of the proletarian-revolutionary party is delayed too much or proved itself insufficiently capable of gathering the masses for the revolutionary struggle in time to lead them forward to victory. Regardless of which of the two power groupings we assume as victor, the picture would be essentially the same. (A total victory of the German-Japanese group of powers would mean the following for Anglo-American imperialism: the complete loss of its European markets; the loss of most its Asian, African and even South American markets and investment markets, as well as the sources of raw materials there; loss of competitiveness in the world market. The gigantic economic apparatus of the USA and Britain could not continue on a capitalist basis, i.e. with profit, it would be bound to shrink catastrophically; long-term mass unemployment on a huge scale, and a radical, rapid, revolutionary development in Britain and the USA would inevitably be the consequence.) In order to clarify this more easily, let us assume that the imperialist group of powers led by the

Anglo-American monopoly bourgeoisie is completely victorious. The markets, investment markets, the sources of raw materials, the productive apparatus of Germany, Japan, Italy and their vassal states, and in addition those of France and also of the liquidated degenerated proletarian state would come under the effective control of the victorious capitalists (the more or less cunning, veiled methods used to bring about these enormous expropriations are not the subject of discussion here). At the same time, the industrial apparatus in all the vanquished countries would be to a greater or lesser extent reduced by the victorious capitalists and forced to revert back in the direction of predominantly agricultural and raw material production. China would be integrated into this system as an object of exploitation by means of the 'Open Door' policy, India would remain – with a certain change to its facade – in one form or another an actual colony or semi-colony. The victorious bourgeoisie would therefore have won enormous latitude in material terms. Although measured in terms of the actual captured purchasing power of the masses, the latitude gained would be considerably smaller. Naturally, the victorious capitalists would force the masses to pay for the bill of several hundreds of billions of dollars for the capitalists' war expenditure including squeezing the interest on their enormous war loans out of the masses. This would reduce the latitude gained in terms of purchasing power even more, but it would still be considerable.

After a relatively short demobilisation crisis a significant upswing would set in: the destruction due to the war would have to be made good, the depleted warehouses would have to be filled up again; the victorious capitalists would increase their economic latitude significantly at the expense of the liquidated degenerated proletarian state and the defeated capitalist groups; in this way they would increase their profits considerably, would rake in huge new super profits; this would again provide them with the opportunity – the conditions for this have already begun to disappear for them – of using a small part of their increased super-profits, in order to continue to corrupt the working class of their own country at the expense of the masses of the defeated countries and the colonies, including the semi-colonies, by means of 'generous new social reforms' (see the Beveridge Plan in Britain), to continue to bribe especially the upper layer of the proletariat at home, the workers' bureaucracy, workers' aristocracy by means of 'generous liberalism' (well-paid, prestigious positions, etc.) and thus to secure the conditions, for a period of time, to continue to exercise the capitalist dictatorship in their own country in a democratic form for a certain period of time. (The German, Japanese and Italian monopoly bourgeoisie could in the event of victory: a) stop the agrarian-revolutionary tendencies in their own country for a certain period of time by providing a section of their small peasants/farmers with land robbed from the peasants/farmers of other countries, whereby the main part of the plundered land would be seized by the big landowners; b) strengthen the upper stratum of the petty bourgeoisie economically using the booty for a while; and, finally, c) it could bribe the upper layer of the proletariat in a big way, corrupt the proletariat at home, along the lines of and with the same methods that the capitalists in Britain and the USA use, and could go over to more or less parliamentary democratic forms of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie in their own country.)

The victorious bourgeoisie would of course resort to all possible measures, in order to avoid a repetition of the disastrous course that things took from 1917-18 to 1939. In the economic sphere, it would organise a far-reaching, perhaps state-directed capitalist 'planned economy', i.e. an economy systematically organised and managed on the basis of capitalist property in the means of production and the capitalist state, within the boundaries drawn by the supreme law of capitalist profit – with the whole thing dressed up as economic planning 'for the well-being of the

whole of humanity'. It could therefore only be a question of economic-organisational measures, like already every trust today carries out within its own sphere, only this trust would be far more gigantic, and, for this reason, the reach of its economic organisation too. The main purpose of this brand new trust organisation, dressed up with all kinds of 'socialist' humbug would still be to sweat increasing amounts of surplus value out of the workers, to achieve increasing profits: the fundamental capitalist contradiction between the productive forces and the purchasing power of the masses would therefore not only not be overcome, not be abolished, but would be torn open even more thoroughly and more deeply.

Economic centralisation and concentration would be accompanied by political concentration. Whether or not they were to call themselves the 'master race' or not, the victorious capitalists would actually be masters of the world, with all other human beings and peoples living in servitude. They would establish a political world organisation, which would have the task of securing this state of affairs. Externally they would masquerade as a 'peace organisation', as a world organisation to protect peace among human beings against disturbers of the peace; its true purpose would be to guarantee for the victorious capitalists the peaceful, undisturbed exploitation, sucking dry, exhausting, plundering, slave-driving of all human beings in peace, and on the basis of law and order. In order to keep this peace in the long term, the world peace organisation would be equipped with sufficient airborne forces to very rapidly blow any 'disturber of the peace' to smithereens. The imperialist robbers and their Labour, Social Democratic, Stalinist and other such accomplices are already racking their brains to think of a name for this 'world peace organisation'. The name 'League of Nations' seems to them to be inadvisable because too many people know that it was nothing but an organisation to secure the continued existence of the predatory order created by the First (imperialist) World War, for the benefit of the British and French monopoly bourgeoisie and their vassal states.

Whatever its name, the robbers and their helpers – using as much 'incense' as possible – will do their utmost to deceive the masses about the true, namely the predatory, character of this 'peace organisation'. There would be no question of an independent economic and political union of Europe; preventing this, in whatever form, is one of the main war aims of American and British monopoly capital; they fear the competitive power of European capital organised on a unified basis and even more so the economic power and the attraction of a unified socialist Europe. (The 'New Europe' of the Nazis would be a slave-Europe organised on a unitary basis with the German monopoly bourgeoisie as the slaveholder.) In the ideological sphere, the victorious bourgeoisie would build up on a world scale a gigantic unitary, centralised stupefaction-apparatus that would pour mental hogwash over humanity in giant streams and in all kinds of forms without interruption.

Every precaution possible within the bounds of capitalism would therefore be taken in order to secure the stable operation of the exploiters' economy, to secure stable social conditions. However, all these precautions would still take place on the basis of capitalist property in the means of production, where profit is the capitalists' aim and purpose of production, and therefore on the basis of the fundamental capitalist contradiction between the productive forces and the purchasing power of the masses. After several years of upswing there would inevitably be an even bigger economic crisis than that which began in 1929, threw 40 million workers onto the street and lasted for years – it would make 60-80 million workers unemployed and last even longer.

How did the bourgeoisie 'overcome' the previous economic crisis? In the USA, it 'advanced' billions from the reserves it had built up from accumulated profits, in order to 'pacify' the masses by means of a system of social reforms (public relief work, unemployment insurance, etc.), (the New Deal). This is the same policy of social reforms (sickness insurance, accident insurance, etc.) to which the German and Austrian bourgeoisie resorted in the 1880s and 1890s, in order to distance the workers and entice away them away from the revolutionary path. Besides this, Roosevelt's 'New Course attempted, by means of voluntary agreements between capitalists, on the basis of private property, to arrive at a kind of economic 'planning', whereby it suffered, and was bound to suffer complete shipwreck. Germany, Japan, Italy, etc. 'overcame' unemployment and the crisis, by creating 'markets', by means of rearmament on a gigantic scale; a means to which more and more the bourgeoisie of the other capitalist countries resorted as well – even the American bourgeoisie as the failure of the 'New Deal' became more and more evident. Finally, for the bourgeoisie of all countries, the Second (imperialist) World War was the only (temporary) capitalist way out of the crisis. In reality, the Second (imperialist) World War is the continuation of the economic crisis of 1929 in another form. In order to escape the capitalist economic crisis, which arose from the fact that the gigantic stream of capitalist production was no longer being realised as ringing profits for more and more capitalists, the capitalist production process was converted from producing commodities that are useful for human life to producing commodities for the purposes of destroying lives and possessions. During an economic crisis production is cut back, less is produced – during an armaments 'boom', during a war 'boom' production is at full steam, but commodities are produced that are without use value for individuals, are without use for humanity, commodities that go up uselessly in smoke and besides this bring about the tremendous destruction of other commodities. Either way, no commodities are produced that provide for human beings, that are for the maintenance, development and ascent of human society; either way, in reality, nothing is being produced, in both cases production stalls – they are only two different forms of one and the same crisis.

In the face of this ***new, even bigger economic crisis*** the world bourgeoisie would have no other means than finally to resort to rearmament, on an even more gigantic scale, to a new, even more enormous, ***Third (imperialist) World War***.

It would reach this point after about 20 years, perhaps sooner, perhaps later. More likely sooner, for rebuilding the houses and ships that have been destroyed, replenishing the warehouses, etc., would take place under advanced conditions of production, which would make possible their reproduction in a shorter timescale. Despite all capitalist counter-efforts, the objective conditions for the proletarian revolution would therefore finally turn out to be significantly even more favourable than already during and throughout the Second (imperialist) World War. All the things that the masses have such difficulty seeing through, would be far clearer to them than today; the conditions for the revolutionary clarification, for the revolutionising of the masses would become better and better.

How would the bourgeoisie react to this with its dictatorship? It would apply its ***policy of the great capitalist pendulum***. When the capitalist system of exploitation cannot be maintained in any other way, it resorts to the unveiled, overt forms of dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, if necessary in its most extreme form, escalated to its fascist form. If it can, if it is advisable to do so, it changes back to the veiled form of the capitalist dictatorship, to the (bourgeois-) democratic dictatorship, to (bourgeois) 'democracy' – and it resorts to this even more so when it

is left no other choice. ‘The bourgeoisie passes from one method to another (from force to cunning and vice versa; auth.) not because of the malicious intent of individuals and accidently, but owing to the fundamentally contradictory nature of its own position’. (Lenin, [1910] 1938, p.477). In the era of capitalist decline too, capitalist production takes place within the ups and downs of the industrial cycle. Periodic crises are replaced by periodic upswings. However, the cyclical periods of crisis become longer and longer, more and more acute, the periods of upswing, in contrast, ever shorter, more moderate. However, even in capitalist decline there are times of relative prosperity. For the capitalists who emerge victorious from the Second (imperialist) World War the upswing would even be on a relatively considerable scale, with gigantic profits, super profits, and the conditions for bribing the upper layer of the proletariat, for corrupting sections of the masses would exist. When it becomes advisable for the bourgeoisie, it will change over to democratic forms of its dictatorship. And it will become advisable for it to do so, when it appears that fascism is incapable of permanently eradicating the roots of revolutionary consciousness in the workers, when it becomes apparent that the object lesson of fascism has clarified, deepened the revolutionary consciousness of broad strata of the workers. Then the bourgeoisie will again get its Social Democratic, Stalinist and Labour parties of betrayal and others such as this to ‘engage in co-operation’ – in new forms, in novel ways, more or less openly – which ‘in the interests of the country, the people or the working class’, or ‘in the interests of the revolution’, or ‘in the interests of socialism or communism’ will do their utmost to dupe the workers once again, to harness them to the bourgeoisie, to lull and disintegrate them, until in this way the bourgeoisie is out of the dangerous phase again, and simultaneously the conditions are created for it once again to be able to swing over to forms of the overt capitalist dictatorship and so forth. But even more so the bourgeoisie will change over to democratic forms of its dictatorship, when it must, when, with its fascist dictatorship shaken by defeat in the war, it is in danger of succumbing to the immediate revolutionary onslaught of the masses. Then it will drop, sacrifice its fascist torturers and, changing the facade, skip over to (bourgeois) ‘democracy’, with the help of the Social Democratic, Stalinist, Labour, etc. parties of betrayal, which enthusiastically hold themselves ready for this, and with the help of the victorious capitalists, will do their utmost, to prevent or put down the proletarian revolution. The revolution in Germany and Austria, the revolutionary ferment in France, Italy and Britain prevented the world bourgeoisie after the First World War from attacking the Russian Revolution effectively. This time round the mole of history is digging even more thoroughly. The Anglo-American bourgeoisie, which is already today preparing itself to prevent, to choke, hold down and put down the revolution in Europe, will have its hands full with the flaring up of revolutionary ferment in their own countries, above all in Britain.

The objective conditions for the proletarian revolution will be much more favourable at the end of the Second (imperialist) World War than at the end of the first one. It all depends on the subjective factor! Here it may outwardly look bad – the capitalist dictatorships and the Stalinist dictatorship are suppressing the slightest revolutionary ferment using all available means, and are supported by the AFL, CIO, MWU, LP, SP, etc. and the degenerated bureaucracy of the trade unions and co-operatives and such like; however, deep down within the proletariat molecular processes are taking place that will enable and make it easier for the advanced workers to catch up in leaps and bounds, something that until now the overt capitalist dictatorships and the Stalinist dictatorship along with their helpers have to a large extent prevented: building up the proletarian-revolutionary party, gathering the masses around the

revolutionary party, leading the masses forward for the overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy too, for the establishment of the dictatorship of proletarian democracy in the capitalist states, for the restoration of the proletarian-democratic state in Russia, for the liberation of the colonial and semi-colonial peoples, for the world revolution.

Let the bourgeoisie use its system of the great capitalist pendulum, let it twist and turn any way it wants, let it switch from the stick to the carrot, from satanic cruelty to devilish cunning or vice versa, and let it mix both in any way it wants, it will ultimately not escape the proletarian-democratic dictatorship, this is inevitable, because humanity does not want to return to barbarism, does not want to perish, but wants to go upwards and forwards.

VII. The Proletarian State

The proletarian state is the 'proletariat organised as the ruling class' (Das Kommunistische Manifest, [1848] 1891, p.23); it is the rule of proletarian democracy, its organisation of rule, it is the ***dictatorship of proletarian democracy***. The proletarian state is the reciprocally interpenetrating ***unity of proletarian democracy and proletarian dictatorship***; these are only two sides of one and the same proletarian state, its internal and external sides. Looked at from the standpoint of how the ruling classes in it are organised internally, namely the working class and the exploited peasant/farmer, petty-bourgeois class, the proletarian state is ***proletarian democracy*** – looked at from the standpoint of how it is organised outwardly, as the instrument of rule of the ruling exploited classes against all exploiters, it is ***proletarian dictatorship***.

The proletarian state can and will assume the most varied forms. It changes the way it is organised according to the situation and what is appropriate. However, all these countless changes must take place within the limits of the proletarian class interests. Whatever form the proletarian state assumes, its class content must be and remain proletarian. In other words, every proletarian state, whatever its form must be in keeping with the ***proletarian state purpose***, which is determined by the common enduring interests of the workers of the entire world. This includes: securing the collective property of the working class in the decisive means of production, realised through them being the property of the proletarian-democratic state; holding down the exploiters; maintaining the proletarian class-based state apparatus; proletarian democracy; consistently pursuing socialist construction; the liberation of all workers, indeed of all the oppressed and exploited, and therefore also the oppressed, exploited peoples, in particular the colonial peoples worldwide; the dictatorship of proletarian democracy on a world scale, proletarian world democracy, proletarian world dictatorship, the world soviet republic; liquidating all classes, states and parties; making a world co-operative a reality, a world co-operative that encompasses all human beings without difference and administers itself fraternally in freedom and equality.

Regardless of whether one considers a human body from the outside or the inside, it is – despite all the differences – one and the same body. The internal organisation and external organisation of the body interpenetrate one another; they cannot function without one another. If the internal organs of the body are not working properly, then its external organs can also not work properly and vice versa. It is exactly the same in the case of the proletarian state. If the proletarian state does not function properly internally, i.e. if a genuine, healthy proletarian democracy is not alive and active within it, then indeed it can act very dictatorially externally, but it acts less and less as a ***proletarian*** dictatorship and more and more as an ***anti-proletarian*** one. If the proletarian dictatorship does not function properly externally, i.e. if it pursues proletarian politics less and less and anti-proletarian politics more and more, then this inevitably leads to the liquidation of proletarian democracy and at best paves the way for an anti-proletarian democracy. ***Every honest, healthy proletarian state must be a proletarian democracy and a proletarian dictatorship. Proletarian dictatorship can only be realised with a genuine, healthy proletarian democracy – proletarian democracy is viable, remains alive, lives only under a genuine, healthy proletarian dictatorship***. From this it follows that a monarchy or a usurped dictatorship by an individual, or a clique or an oligarchy, or by a stratum like the bureaucracy, contradicts the essence of the proletarian state; they contradict proletarian democracy and for this very reason inevitably lead to the liquidation of the proletarian

dictatorship; they endanger the proletarian state more and more, progressively increase the opportunities for the bourgeoisie to overthrow the proletarian state and again re-establish once the capitalist state in some form or other. The dictatorship of the Stalinist bureaucracy, of the oligarchic Stalinist clique, Stalin's personal dictatorship are forms under which the new Russian bourgeoisie that is developing under Stalinism and as a result of it, and the world bourgeoisie in general are – by means of the degenerated, petty-bourgeoisified Stalinist bureaucracy, workers' aristocracy and the Judas Stalin – undermining and hollowing out more and more thoroughly the proletarian class character of the Soviet state, with the aim of finally smashing it by the counter-revolutionary suppression of the Russian proletariat in open struggle, and establishing a new capitalist state in Russia on the ruins of the Soviet state.

Are ***dictatorial rights in a proletarian-democratic state*** excluded altogether? Not at all. Under special circumstances – depending on the situation and appropriateness – ***proletarian democracy*** will vest this or that person, or this or that committee, and in certain circumstances the government or the head of the government of the proletarian state or the commander of the proletarian-revolutionary army or someone else with dictatorial powers. However, 1) proletarian democracy does this of its ***own free will in complete freedom*** by virtue of its right of self-determination, if it considers it appropriate and necessary; 2) it determines the precisely circumscribed ***extent*** and the ***duration*** of these dictatorial rights; 3) it ***puts in place safeguards against their misuse*** and for the taking of full responsibility in the event of misuse; 4) it ensures that there are appropriate forms of ***control*** over the person or persons to whom it has given dictatorial powers. Such instances of the awarding of dictatorial powers can and will certainly occur, especially in civil war or war, when the most rapid action and greatest secrecy are particularly important. ***A dictator appointed by proletarian democracy, with certain limits to their power and for a certain period of time is and remains the servant – proletarian democracy is and remains the master, the ruler*** – it can depose the person given dictatorial powers at any time and can restrict or extend their powers; it monitors them all the time, it can call them to account or at any time put in place new, strengthened safeguards against misuse.

In all circumstances, however, what is and remains absolutely incompatible with the essence of a proletarian state, is that a person, a clique, an oligarchy, a stratum or someone else – liquidating proletarian democracy – gains dictatorial rights by deviousness, cheating, extortion or underhand means and maintains them using trickery and force, murder trials, assassinations, etc.

Likewise, a ***monarchy*** contradicts the essence of the proletarian state. Because either it is a hereditary monarchy or an elective monarchy. For proletarian democracy to acknowledge anybody's right to lead the state, or even represent the state, on a hereditary basis, or even only for life, would in essence mean castrating proletarian democracy, in actual fact renouncing it – even when it was a question of a constitutional monarchy.

In contrast a ***president*** of a proletarian republic, elected by means of proletarian democracy (by the central workers' and small-peasants'/small-farmers' council) for a limited number of years and to whom it freely grants certain representative powers at its own discretion, according to the situation and suitability, is totally compatible with the essence of the proletarian state and is entirely appropriate, especially for representative purposes.

A. Proletarian democracy

It is only by developing its full fighting strength to the utmost in every sphere and developing it ever higher, and indeed not just momentarily, not just for a short time span, but for a long, great epoch of human history, i.e. for the whole transitional era of the liquidation of capitalist society, until a classless society becomes a reality across the entire globe – it is only in this way that the working class is able to emancipate the whole of humanity, together with itself, from oppression and poverty and lead it forwards.

> In order to bring about a great social revolution, there must be for the proletariat a supreme manifestation of all its powers and all its capabilities – the proletariat is organised democratically, precisely in order to force its enemies to submit… The sword of dictatorship is directed against the class enemies: ***the foundation of the dictatorship is proletarian democracy*** (Trotzki, 1936c, p.68).

The proletariat is only capable of the highest, enduring, ever greater, increasingly more wide-ranging and deeper expression of strength, by organising itself in such a way that as a class it in actual fact determines its own fate, whereby at the same time every individual worker, male and female, in actual fact co-determines the fate of the working class. It is only in this way that the working class able to effectively put its leadership role in the struggle for the emancipation of all exploited classes and strata into practice, this leadership role, which stems from its decisive economic and social role – provided of course that it always consistently follows the proletarian class line. Political, economic and social ***self-determination by the working class*** is realised organisationally by organising the working class democratically in all spheres of its political, economic and social struggle, i.e. in workers' democracy, in the regime of workers' democracy, in ***proletarian democracy***. This comprises above all ***party democracy, democracy in the trade unions and in the co-operatives*** – in short, ***democracy in the proletarian mass organisations*** – ***workplace democracy and soviet democracy*** (proletarian state democracy in the narrower sense). Here we are only concerned with the last of these, the others we deal with elsewhere.

Proletarian state democracy extends not only to the workers, but also to the semi-proletarians, indeed to the whole non-exploiting class of farmers/peasants and petty-bourgeois, who are themselves oppressed and exploited. Only in alliance with this class is the proletariat able to vanquish the bourgeoisie and to safeguard its victory; only in alliance with and under the leadership of the working class are the exploited peasants/farmers and petty bourgeois able to emancipate themselves from capitalist exploitation and oppression. Although, for example, in Britain the workers on their own form the overwhelming majority of the total population, they will nevertheless include the non-exploiting, themselves exploited British farmers and petty bourgeois in proletarian state-democracy. Firstly, because they are exploited, oppressed, toiling strata and the working class has the historic task of emancipating all the exploited and oppressed, and can only emancipate itself by doing away with all exploitation and oppression, whatever form it takes. Secondly, because this task will not be solved in Britain alone, on a national scale, but only on an international one: in order to emancipate the workers of any particular country, every form of oppression and exploiters' economy must be abolished across our entire planet, and it is precisely for this purpose that the workers of every country must seek, must bring about the alliance with the exploited peasant/farmer and petty-bourgeois masses in all countries, and therefore those in its own country too. The alliance of the workers and the

exploited peasants/farmers and petty bourgeois finds its organisational expression in the workers' council, in the ***workers' and small-peasants'/small-farmers' council***.

In a bourgeois-democratic state the decisive means of production are in the hands of the capitalist class – in a proletarian-democratic state they are the property of proletarian democracy, i.e. the democracy of the workers, poor peasants/farmers and petty bourgeois; in a bourgeois-democratic state, the state apparatus is capitalist in terms of its class composition – in a proletarian-democratic state it is built up on a proletarian class basis.

In reality, the bourgeois-democratic state only realises a sham democracy; the proletarian-democratic state on the other hand is a true democracy – real, living rule by the people, because rule is actually by the masses (the workers, poor peasants/farmers and petty bourgeois), not only in terms of its form, but also its substance: they have the decisive means of production at their disposal, they have at their disposal the state power, schools, the press, meeting halls and radio and indeed all the decisive tools for clarifying minds and the formation of will – tools that in bourgeois 'democracy', in capitalist 'rule by the people', are essentially in reality only at the disposal of the bourgeoisie. In proletarian democracy, the masses, in the last analysis, determine wages, labour time, etc., whereas in bourgeois democracy the capitalist class determines these. ***Proletarian and bourgeois democracy*** are irreconcilably opposed to each other. It is precisely for this reason that all those who deceive the working class, notably the petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties, only talk about democracy' in general, in order to conceal from the masses the fact that they in reality fight singly and solely for bourgeois democracy – and against proletarian democracy.

Proletarian state democracy encompasses the working class and the middle class ***under the leadership of the proletariat***. Why? Because the proletariat, economically, in terms of its role in production, is the class that is decisive for the continued existence and the ascent of the whole of humanity and produces an ever bigger part of everything human society needs, in order to survive and develop its existence. Secondly, because the proletarian class interests necessarily also include the emancipation of the exploited middle class, whereas, conversely, the petty-bourgeois, small-peasant/small-farmer class interests in no way incorporate the emancipation of the working class.

> The dictatorship of the proletariat assumes and signifies a clear knowledge of the truth that the proletariat, because of its objective economic position in every capitalist society, *correctly* expresses the interests of the ***entire*** mass of the toilers and the exploited, of all the semi-proletarians (i.e. those who live partly from the sale of their labour power) and all the small peasants, etc. (Lenin, [1920] 1930d, p.380).

Thirdly, because the proletariat is the only class that is consistently revolutionary to the end, whereas the exploited middle strata, who base themselves on private property in the small means of production, are, in their mass, inevitably subject to vacillations, often big, dangerous vacillations, which frequently bring them closer to the main enemy of the emancipation of humanity, the capitalist class. The enormous power of the capitalist exploiters can only be vanquished and this victory safeguarded by means of unbending, consistent struggle of all non-exploiting, exploited classes. Proletarian democracy, which encompasses the working class and the exploited middle class, is only able to wage this struggle under the hegemony, under the

direction-giving leadership of the proletariat. Organisationally, the leadership role of the working class in its alliance with the exploited middle strata expresses itself in the proletarian class composition of the state machine and in proletarian state democracy. There is no question of an alliance of the two classes ***within*** the proletarian-revolutionary party; certainly, small peasants/farmers, petty bourgeois, and in particular semi-proletarians are also members of the proletarian class party, but are members because they honestly and out of conviction take the proletarian class position and hold fast to it.

We rightly also call the proletarian-democratic state, the dictatorship of proletarian democracy, the proletarian-democratic dictatorship, the ***workers' and small-peasants'/small-farmers' state***, the ***workers' and small-peasants'/small-farmers' republic*** – these latter terms are totally identical with the former, only they express more distinctly and in a more generally understandable way that in the proletarian state, rule is exercised by two classes, by the working class and the exploited small-peasant/small-farmer, petty-bourgeois middle class under the leadership of the proletariat.

By contrast, the exploiters, of whatever kind, do not in any way belong to those who rule in the proletarian state – on the contrary they are excluded from proletarian-democratic rights. Bourgeois democracy hypocritically pretends that it gives the workers, poor peasants/farmers and petty bourgeois freedom and equal rights. 'Proletarian democracy holds down the exploiters, the bourgeoisie – and is therefore not hypocritical, does not promise them freedom or democracy – however, it gives real democracy to toiling people' (Lenin, 1918c, p.8). 'When the bourgeois republicans overthrew thrones, they did not worry about formal equality between monarchists and republicans' (Lenin, 1918a, p.7).

Bourgeois democracy is paper democracy, it gives equal rights and freedom only on paper – proletarian democracy gives the workers, semi-proletarians, small peasants/farmers and petty bourgeois the real opportunity to exercise the democratic rights and freedoms to an extent that even the very best bourgeois-democratic state does not and cannot provide. This is already the case because of the important fact that they have been emancipated from the capitalist yoke. Under the rule of the bourgeoisie the workers organisations only lead a miserable existence; at every step of the way their activity and work are monitored by the capitalist police, under the restrictions and prohibitions of capitalist laws, etc. Only when there is proletarian democracy can they develop themselves fully. It is precisely by means of this that the ***democratic self-determination of the workers*** is enabled, promoted and realised to a large extent. Furthermore, only proletarian democracy creates the prerequisites for a ***real democracy***, for real rule by the masses, namely the workers (obviously always including the female workers, white-collar workers, officials, young workers, old workers, the unemployed, etc.), semi-proletarians, small peasants/farmers and petty bourgeois, by working in a goal-orientated manner towards a fundamental improvement in their material and cultural situation, towards a reduction in their labour time, etc., and implementing this step by step.

Proletarian democracy does not restrict the workers, semi-proletarians, small peasants/farmers and petty bourgeois to the right to debate or to pass laws, but brings them at once into an entirely different relationship with the organisation of administration, with the administration itself, with the state apparatus, with the monitoring and management of the state itself. Already by virtue of the fact that elections are not held on the basis of area-based electoral districts, but on the basis of workplaces, they are connected far more closely with the

workers' and small-peasants'/small-farmers' council (the soviet) than they are as voters with the bourgeois parliament, particularly because they can at any time recall, depose any person they have elected and replace them by another person. The soviet combines legislative and executive powers. Not only does it control, and indeed control effectively, the state apparatus (and therefore also the economic apparatus of the state), by being able to depose at any time officials who are disloyal or incompetent, but it also intervenes continuously and directly in the administration, for example, by means of special committees that fulfil this or that administrative task. Very many workers, semi-proletarians, small peasants/farmers and petty bourgeois learn via the soviets the art of administration, something from which they are kept at a distance in the bourgeois state. From the start the proletarian state machine is built up strictly on the basis of class, above all from the working class; as a result, from the start it is democratic on an entirely different scale to that of the state apparatus of the conceivably best bourgeois-democratic republic. Obviously, the proletarian-democratic state apparatus is recruited particularly from the soviets and is in any case built up with their continuing collaboration and control. By working without interruption at raising all those who toil ever higher in economic terms, at extending their free time more and more by reducing their labour time, at raising and deepening more and more their intellectual abilities, the standard of their cultural life, their ability to think independently in a revolutionary manner, to judge independently in a revolutionary manner, proletarian democracy works to create the actual prerequisites for those who toil to participate in ever greater numbers in the administration, so that the administration is ultimately taken care of – systematically in turns – by all those who toil. The soviet elects the government of the proletarian state and can depose it at any time and replace it by another that is more acceptable to it.

The central soviet is elected from the lower soviets. The lower soviets – elected directly by the workers, semi-proletarians, small peasants/farmers and petty bourgeois – can on their part recall and depose at any time the representatives they have sent to the higher soviets and replace them by other representatives who are acceptable to them. Furthermore, the lower soviets enjoy a high degree of autonomy. Every soviet can at any time depose the executive committee of the appropriate autonomous body (local soviet, area soviet, district soviet, etc.) and replace it by an alternative committee that is acceptable to it. In this way all those who toil participate closely in the leadership centre of proletarian democracy: they can at any time replace the deputies of the central soviet whom they have elected and the central soviet can replace the government at any time. This is and remains not just a formal right. The same proletarian democracy works without interruption at raising the standard of living of all workers, semi-proletarians, small peasants/farmers and petty bourgeois at extending their freedom, and at raising their consciousness to an ever higher level, so that they are more and more enabled to understand state affairs and to monitor and manage them on the basis of understanding them. In this way proletarian democracy together with all its constituent parts raises itself to an ever higher level. The laws of proletarian democracy are passed by means of a ***majority vote***, with the active participation of the minority at the time, which, within the framework of the principles of proletarian democracy, criticises, makes proposals, puts forward motions and co-decides. These laws bind all members of proletarian democracy, including those who remained in the minority when the resolution was passed. ***In this sense compulsion prevails*** within proletarian democracy as well – this is not compulsion as used by the exploiters against the exploited, as in capitalist democracy, but the self-evident, necessary binding of all members participating in proletarian democracy to their own resolutions and laws which have not been

obtained by economic or political force but have arisen ***out of their own free will***. Not all workers gain full class consciousness at once through the establishment of proletarian democracy; especially at the start it has to reckon with backward sections of workers, who tend to put partial interests, special interests or momentary interests before the proletarian class interests. The universally binding nature of the resolutions and laws of proletarian democracy also applies to them; they participate with full rights in making the resolutions and laws, but at the same time proletarian democracy strives to overcome their backwardness and raise them in every respect, especially their consciousness. Coercion as applied in capitalist democracy exists in proletarian democracy singly and solely to be used against the exploiters class, against the exploiters.

The workers' council (or workers' and small farmers council or soviet)

> The soviet of workers' deputies came into being to fulfil an objective need – a need created by the course of events – for an organisation that could be authoritative, and yet had no traditions, an organisation that could immediately encompass the scattered masses in their hundreds of thousands, without imposing too much organisational restriction upon them, that would unite the revolutionary currents within the proletariat, that was capable of initiative and could control itself automatically, and, most important of all, that could be brought into being within 24 hours. The Social Democratic organisation that held together a few hundred workers, and in addition exerted significant political influence on several thousand workers in Petersburg, had known how to speak for the masses and reflect this in their slogans by illuminating their immediate experience with the lightning of political thought – but its strength did not suffice to unite the masses in their hundreds of thousands by means of a living ***organisational link***, if only because it had always undertaken the main part of its work clandestinely, concealed from the eyes of the masses… The internal friction between two equally powerful factions of Social Democracy on the one hand, the struggle of both factions with the Social Revolutionaries on the other, rendered the creation of a ***non-party*** organisation absolutely indispensable. In order to have authority in the eyes of the masses on the very day it came into being, such an organisation had to be organised on the basis of the very broadest mode of representation […].
>
> All that remained was to adapt the representation to the factories and workplaces[26]. […] Already on the 26th (October; auth.[27]) […] the first sitting of the future soviet took place. Not more than 30-40 delegates attended, and it was

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[26] 'A delegate came for every 500 workers. Small industrial undertakings combined into groups for election purposes. The young trade unions also received the right to representation. – However, it must be said that the numerical norms were not observed too strictly; there were also delegates here and there representing a hundred or two hundred workers, even a smaller number.' Original footnote in Trotsky's work; Ed.

[27] 8th November in the modern (Gregorian) calendar; Ed.

> decided to call upon the proletariat of the capital to proclaim a political general strike, as well as making proposals for the election of delegates. […]
>
> This immensely important resolution was adopted unanimously […] From the moment it came into being until the moment it perished the Soviet stood under the mighty pressure of the elemental revolutionary force, which unceremoniously outstripped the work of political consciousness. Every step of the workers' representation was determined in advance and its 'tactics' obvious. The methods of struggle did not have to be discussed, there was hardly time to formulate them […]
>
> The October Strike was approaching its high-point with a sure step […] (Trotzki, 1909, pp.82, 83).

Thus, Trotsky describes the coming into being of the first workers council in the first Russian Revolution, 1905.

In the fascist countries where all workers' organisations of any kind whatsoever are smashed and where the masses are deliberately held down in a state of utmost fragmentation, the revolution, surging upwards (*emporschnellen*) like the spring tide, will reproduce the same requirements, which in 1905, in the revolutionary struggle against Russian tsarism, gave birth to the workers' council. Even a bourgeois-democratic revolution in the colonies and semi-colonies that has matured to the extent that the bourgeoisie there, out of fear of the revolutionary colonial or semi-colonial proletariat, is beginning to turn away from the bourgeois-democratic tasks, generates the same requirement for a gigantic mass organisation that shoulders the task of consistently carrying out and finishing the bourgeois-democratic revolution and finally leading it over into the socialist revolution, against both the bourgeoisie in the colonies and semi-colonies and imperialism. Apart from a small minority, the masses in these cases are just as unorganised as they were in tsarist Russia in 1905. See China, for example, where at the very latest in the spring of 1926 – after the first counter-revolutionary thrust of Chiang Kai-shek, the agent of the Chinese bourgeoisie – the process of forming soviets should have been started. Indeed, as early as 1925 during the great Hong Kong strike it would have been appropriate to create soviets as organs of the open revolutionary mass struggle with the prospect of later on, at a higher level, turning them into organs of the immediate power struggle. In bourgeois-democratic countries there are proletarian mass organisations of various kinds. But even the British and American trade unions, big as they are, only embrace a small proportion of the entire mass of the proletariat – and it is precisely an organisation that includes gigantic masses that is indispensably necessary in the revolution. Trade unions, workers' councils or such like can suffice during the early period of the revolution in order to gain time. However, sooner or later it is necessary to transition to a workers' council as the form of organisation. Firstly, in order to actually embrace the masses in their entirety. Secondly, because of the political fragmentation of the proletariat, which makes it indispensably necessary to have a form of organisation that enables vast masses to act in unison against the capitalist class, despite having differences in this or that issue. The workers' council is precisely such an organisation: it is a ***united front organisation***, the highest form of the proletarian united front, the highest united front organ of the working class. Therefore, like any united front or united front organisation, the workers' council too is the result of an agreement, a joint, unanimous decision by the various parties and organisations of the working class, which under the pressure of a revolutionary situation

recognise its creation as necessary and at the same time determine the nature of its formation and composition, and the start of its activity. If a genuine proletarian united front, namely one which in actual fact is intended for the struggle against the bourgeoisie, has already been secured in the pre-revolutionary period, then this makes the rapid creation of a workers' council in an acute revolutionary situation considerably easier.

If the proletariat is not divided, then the workers' council results solely from the decision of the proletarian-revolutionary party – if it is sufficiently connected to the masses. Thus, for example, during the ascent of the Chinese Revolution, soviets could have been called into being by the Chinese CP with the prospect of success but were prevented from doing so by Stalin's anti-revolutionary politics. (A workers' council can also come into being through the initiative of a petty-bourgeois 'workers' party, but only as a ***sham workers' council***, which by means of its name pretends to the workers that there is a turn towards revolution, when in reality it has been called into being precisely in order to keep the workers away from revolution. Thus, for example, the Austrian SP created its 'workers' council' during the January strike of 1918).

No form of organisation is so elastic as that of the workers' councils. With the progress of the revolution, the ambit of the masses drawn into it spreads continuously, often in leaps and bounds; they are embraced without any trouble by the workers' council. It is precisely during the revolution that the consciousness of the masses unfolds far more quickly than otherwise, often like lightning, so that frequently the danger arises that the consciousness of the advanced proletarian elements, indeed even the consciousness of the party, lags behind the revolutionary stream. It is of the utmost importance that the rapidly developing consciousness of the masses, the will of the masses is converted into 'mass-energy' (*Massenenergie*) as quickly as possible, always working towards what is critical at that time. By being able to recall their delegates at any time and replace them with representatives acceptable to them, the masses adapt the composition of the workers' council to the prevailing stage of development of the consciousness and will of the masses, giving it organised expression with as little delay as possible. In this way the proletarian party gains an extraordinarily important barometer that allows it to 'read off' fairly accurately the direction and strength of the will of the masses and the prevailing degree of consciousness of the masses, a factor that is so crucial for the revolutionary victory and for its strategic and tactical decisions. After the revolution is victorious the workers' council keeps these advantages too.

> The very reason why the soviets are an irreplaceable apparatus of proletarian rule is that their framework is elastic and flexible, so that not only social but also political changes in the present relationship of classes and strata can immediately find their expression in the soviet apparatus. Beginning with the largest factories, the soviets then draw into their organisation the workers of the smaller workplaces and the shop assistants, spread out to the rural areas, organise the peasants against the landowners and then the lower and middle layers of the peasantry against the kulaks (village usurers) (the big peasants/farmers, auth.). The workers' state picks numerous white-collar workers who, to a considerable extent, come from the ranks of the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois intelligentsia. To the extent they become disciplined under the soviet regime, they get representation in the soviet system. By expanding – or at times contracting – in line with the expansion and contraction of the social positions

> conquered by the proletariat, the soviet system remains the state apparatus of the social revolution, in terms of its internal dynamics, its ebbs and flows, its mistakes and achievements. In parallel with the final triumph of the social revolution, the soviet system will extend to cover the whole population, in order thereby to lose the characteristics of a state and melt away (*aufgehen*) into a mighty production and consumption co-operative (Trotzki, 1920, pp.86-87).
>
> The soviet form has no mystical powers whatsoever. It is not at all free of the mistakes of any form of representation, and these remain unavoidable as long as this form itself is unavoidable. But its strength lies in that it reduces these mistakes to a minimum. One can say with certainty – and experience will soon confirm this – that any other representative body, atomising the masses, would have given expression to their real will in the revolution incomparably less effectively and with far greater delay. Of all the forms of revolutionary representation, the soviet is the most flexible, direct and transparent. But still it is only a form. It cannot give more than the masses are capable of putting into it at any given moment in time. But beyond that it can make it easier for the masses to understand the mistakes that have been made and correct them (Trotzki, 1931a, p.241).

The workers' councils are organisations of struggle, organisations of the struggle of the working class for power and, after the establishment of proletarian power, organs of exercising this power by the masses. This is their basic task; all the other tasks of the workers' councils must be subordinated to it and integrated into it.

> The task of the soviet was not to transform itself into a parody of parliament, but to create the conditions for parliamentarianism, not to organise equal representation of the interests of different social groups, but to give unity to the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat (Trotzki, 1909, p.234).
>
> From organs for controlling the government the soviets turned themselves into organs of administration. They would not accommodate any theory of power-sharing and intervened in the administration of the army, in economic disputes, in issues involving food supply and transport and even judicial matters. Under pressure from the workers, the soviets decreed the eight-hour day, deposed over-zealous reactionary administrators, dismissed the more intolerable commissars of the Provisional Government, made arrests and conducted house searches, and prohibited the publication of hostile newspapers. Under the influence of the continually growing food supply difficulties and a goods famine, the provincial soviets resorted to regulating prices, prohibiting exports from certain governates and requisitioning supplies. Moreover, everywhere at the head of the soviets were Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, who rejected with indignation the Bolshevik slogan 'All power to the soviets' (Trotzki, 1931a, p.344).
>
> It must not be forgotten that in Russia the soviets were already there in the 'democratic' stage of the revolution, that at that stage they had been so to speak legalised and that we subsequently inherited them and made use of them. This

will not be repeated in the proletarian revolutions in the West. There, in most cases, the soviets will be formed in response to the demands of the communists, and consequently therefore as direct organs of proletarian insurrection. Of course, it cannot be excluded that the disintegration of the bourgeois state apparatus will be pretty far advanced before the proletariat can seize power and that would create the pre-requisite for creating soviets as ***organs openly preparing the insurrection***. But this is not likely to be the general rule. In the event it is very likely that it will only be possible to create soviets in the very last days, as direct organs of the insurgent masses (Trotzki, 1925, pp.43-44).

The task of the soviets is not simply to call for the insurrection or to carry it out, but to ***lead the masses towards the insurrection through the necessary stages***. At first the soviets do not rally the masses under the slogan of armed insurrection, but under many different partial slogans, so that only later are the masses brought to this slogan step by step... A soviet comes into being primarily and most frequently during strike movements that have the prospect of revolutionary development but have in the given moment limited themselves to purely economic demands. The masses must sense and understand during the action, that the soviet is ***their*** organisation, that it marshals their forces for resistance, self-defence and attack. They cannot sense and comprehend this from an everyday action nor in general from any single act, but through the experience of a whole series of weeks, months and perhaps even years – with or without interruptions... We value the soviets as that broad and elastic form of organisation that the just awakened masses can grasp in the early stages (of their revolutionary upsurge, Ed.) and is capable of uniting the working class in its entirety, regardless of which section of the masses has already matured to the point of understanding the task of the seizure power (Trotzki, 1929, p.183).

The workers' soviet does not mean the immediate struggle for power. This is undoubtedly the perspective, but one which the masses can attain only through their own hard experience ***and with the help of the clarification work of the communists***. The workers' soviet today means the gathering of the fragmented forces of the proletariat, the struggle for the unity of the working class, for its independence. The workers' soviet provides strike aid, meals for the unemployed, it establishes links with the soldiers, in order to prevent bloody clashes between them and the workers, and links between town and countryside, in order to secure the alliance of the workers with the poor peasants/farmers. The workers' soviet also brings in representatives from army units. In this way and only in this way will the soviet become an organ of the proletarian insurrection and later too the organ of power (Trotzki, 1931e, p.19-20).

The soviets are organs for the preparation of the masses for insurrection, organs of insurrection and after the victory – organs of power (Trotzki, 1933a, p.485).

The soviets are defined most frequently as organs of the struggle for power, as organs of insurrection, and finally, as organs of dictatorship... Just as the trade unions are a rudimentary form of the united front in the economic struggle, so the

> ***soviet is the highest form of the united front*** under conditions in which the proletariat enters the epoch of the struggle for power (Trotzki, 1932c, pp.53-54).

The workers' councils are, in terms of their basic task, organisations of struggle – they are therefore not a working-class parliament, not an organ for proletarian clarification, nor an organ of proletarian self-government. 'The Commune was to be a working – not a parliamentary – body, executive and legislative at the same time' (Marx, [1871] 1891, p.46).

> If one looks at any country ruled by parliament, from America to Switzerland, from France to Britain, Norway, etc., the real business of 'state' is carried out behind the scenes by the departments, chancelleries and General Staffs. Parliament is given over to chattering, and indeed with the specific purpose of fooling the 'common people'... The way out of parliamentarianism is not, of course, the abolition of representative bodies and the elective principle, but the conversion of the representative bodies from talking shops into 'working' bodies (Lenin, [1918] 1933, p.30).

> The soviet of workers' deputies is not a workers' parliament and not an organ of proletarian self-government, not an organ of self-government at all, but a fighting organisation for the achievement of definite aims (Lenin, [1905] 1925b, pp.170-171).

The general line of the opportunists, once they cannot prevent a workers' council coming into being, is to keep it away from the real struggle for power, to make it into all kinds of things, just not into an organ of proletarian struggle for power. The Mensheviks, Social Revolutionaries, Social Democracy and the Stalinist bureaucracy misuse the workers' council in order to prop up and conceal their treacherous coalition with the bourgeoisie and their nationally-limited, anti-proletarian, anti-revolutionary, anti-socialist, anti-communist politics by making use of the authority of the workers' council; they seek to tie the hands of the proletarian revolutionaries as far as possible with regard to independent, revolutionary action, by means of the opportunistically-led workers' council. The Austrian SP turned the workers' council into a debating society, into a pure talking shop. All opportunists strive to wear out workers' councils with meaningless, trivial minutiae, exhausting the masses with this, pushing workers' councils more and more onto a side-track and finally letting them die a gentle death, for the benefit of the capitalist parliament and the capitalist state. The plan of the Social-Democratic centrists (the USPD and the Austro-'Marxists') to anchor the workers' councils in the capitalist state constitution amounted to turning the workers' councils into an instrument of the bourgeois state against the working class, against the proletarian revolution.

The opportunists really like the workers' council as long as they can make use of it for their alliance with the bourgeoisie and for their nationally-limited, anti-proletarian, anti-revolutionary politics. As long as the workers' council has a reformist, anti-revolutionary majority, the opportunists are for the strictest ***discipline*** in the workers' council. Once it has a revolutionary majority, however, they begin to like it less and less, and want to know about it less and less; indeed they seek to boycott it as much as possible. As a united front organisation, the workers' council demands discipline within the framework of the united front, that is to say within the framework of what was agreed for the struggle on which it is based. Outside this agreement there exists of course complete political freedom of action for the parties and organisations that

concluded the united front. Without that discipline and freedom of action the objective being fought for by the united front could not be achieved.

The proletarian revolutionaries therefore keep the discipline of the workers' council within the action framework of the soviet, even if this majority is Social Democratic, or in any way opportunist, without of course even for a moment renouncing their independent revolutionary action outside the framework of the agreement underpinning the struggle, an agreement that they made voluntarily. The Bolsheviks proved this clearly during the six months of the Menshevist-Social-Revolutionary majority in the soviet.

Of course, in an alliance for the purposes of fighting, only those who fight for the aims of this alliance belong in it. For this reason, for example, the anarchists were excluded from the workers' councils in Russia in 1905 – because they rejected the struggle for state power on principle (see Lenin, [1905] 1925b, pp.170-171). Honest revolutionary-minded workers, who still adhere to anarchism due to lack of clarity but take part actively in the revolutionary struggle for the establishment and safeguarding of proletarian-democratic state power have of course also a part to play in the workers' council.

Is the dictatorship of proletarian democracy, is the proletarian-democratic state incompatible with the existence or activity of ***opposition parties***? Not at all. The development of class consciousness does not take place at an even rate in all strata of the working class. The fundamental prerequisite for establishing the power of the working class is that the majority of workers are imbued with revolutionary spirit and will. However, even after the proletarian revolution is victorious a section of the workers is imbued to a greater or lesser extent with petty-bourgeois spirit and petty-bourgeois will and therefore sees its political representation in Social Democracy and other such parties. To exclude these sections of the working class from proletarian democracy, to keep them at a distance from the workers' councils, to deprive them of the opportunity to organise, agitate, make propaganda or have a press, would not make the process of revolutionary development of those sections of the working class any easier or accelerate this process, but would, on the contrary, make it more difficult and slow it down. By taking part in proletarian democracy as opposition, the petty-bourgeois mindset of their party or parties will – in the light of the burning questions that each day brings – be confronted again and again by the revolutionary politics, by the politics of the proletarian-revolutionary party leading the proletarian state. The fact that these opposition parties criticise the workings of the developing proletarian state apparatus has – against their will – a certain advantage, from the point of view that in its leadership role, the revolutionary party can at an earlier stage notice and get rid of some deficiencies in the construction, structure and workings of the proletarian state machine that would otherwise have escaped it, and whereby its struggle against the danger of the bureaucratisation of proletarian officials (in the state and the state economy), is made easier.

There is no doubt that the existence and activity of these opposition parties is also associated with harm, indeed danger for proletarian democracy. Their right wing works consciously, their left wing does so in any case objectively, by the effect of its actions, for the benefit of the mortal enemy of proletarian democracy, for the benefit of the capitalists in the country concerned and in the last analysis for the benefit of the world bourgeoisie. Generally speaking, the proletarian state is strong enough to counter these dangers and as a rule, therefore, the advantages for the development of the proletarian revolution are bigger than the

disadvantages. However, there are undoubtedly two ***limitations*** to letting such opposition parties exist or at least operate. In the most critical times like civil war or war, and especially if the proletarian state machine has not been sufficiently developed and consolidated, the temporary restriction on, or indeed cessation of, the operations of such opposition parties, must be seriously considered, if they, instead of joining the struggle for the defence of the proletarian-democratic state against the bourgeoisie, against the capitalist counter-revolution, make it more difficult by their passive or indeed active behaviour – and a decision made that is always based on a rigorous examination of the concrete situation. Thus, for example, on the 14 January 1918, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies passed a resolution excluding the representatives of the Menshevik party and the right Social Revolutionaries. However, in normal times the activity of such opposition parties will have to take place within the framework of the laws of the proletarian state.

Taken purely formally: in the same measure as the capitalist exploiters' state – supported in this by the SP, the LP and the StP and other such parties and organisations – permits the legal activity of a proletarian-revolutionary party or organisation, the state of the exploited and oppressed permits (within the same framework and on the same scale, according to the same rules and considerations of suitability) the petty-bourgeois-reformist, petty-bourgeois-'socialist', petty-bourgeois-'communist', etc. parties and organisations, i.e. parties and organisations that are, from the standpoint of the proletarian revolution, at least objectively, ***reactionary***, to operate legally. Of course, in certain situations, sections of them, despite differences in some questions, place themselves on the side of the proletarian state power fighting for the revolution. Thus, for example, the Left Social Revolutionaries in 1917-18, who precisely for this reason were even drawn into the Soviet government to work collaboratively as part of it. However, even in such very favourable instances, their fundamentally petty-bourgeois attitude ultimately re-asserts itself, at least in the case of parts of this section, as the history of the Left Social Revolutionaries proves.

All ***exploiters*** are completely excluded from proletarian democracy.

> And it must be said that the question of depriving the exploiters of the franchise is a nationally specific question and not a question of the dictatorship (of the proletariat; trans.) in general [...]
>
> One must approach the question of restricting the franchise by studying the *specific conditions* of the Russian Revolution and the *specific path of its development*. [...] However, it would be a mistake to guarantee in advance that all or the majority of the impending proletarian revolutions in Europe would necessarily be accompanied by a restriction of the franchise for the bourgeoisie. It may happen this way. After the war and after the experiences of the Russian Revolution, it will probably be so, but it is not *absolutely necessary* for exercising the dictatorship; it does not form an *entirely necessary* characteristic of the logical concept of dictatorship, nor does it constitute an *indispensable* pre-condition for the historical and class concept of dictatorship.
>
> The indispensable characteristic, the necessary pre-condition of dictatorship is the *forcible* suppression of the exploiters as a class and consequently the

infringement of 'pure democracy', i.e. of equality and freedom *with regard to this class*. [...]

And in Russia, the Bolsheviks, who long before October had put forward the slogan of proletarian dictatorship, did not say anything in advance about disenfranchising the exploiters. *This* aspect of the dictatorship did not arise according to the plan of any particular party, but emerged *itself in the course of the struggle*. [...] The fury of the bourgeoisie against this independent and all powerful (because it was all-embracing) organisation of the oppressed; the struggle, in addition the most unscrupulous, self-seeking, sordid struggle of the bourgeoisie against the Soviets; and, lastly, the overt participation of the bourgeoisie (from the Cadets to the Right Social-Revolutionaries, from Milyukov to Kerensky) in the *Korniloviade* (the Kornilov Mutiny; trans.) – all this has led to the formal exclusion of the bourgeoisie from the Soviets. [...]

The Soviet Constitution disenfranchises all those who employ 'wage workers for the purposes of making profit. [...]

The *fact* that the Soviets disenfranchised the exploiters after a year of 'practical experience' *means* that the Soviets really are the organisations of the oppressed masses and not of the social-imperialists and social-pacifists, who have sold themselves to the bourgeoisie. The *fact* that the Soviets have disenfranchised the exploiters *means* they are not organs of petty-bourgeois politics of compromise with the capitalists, not organs of parliamentary palaver... but organs of the genuinely revolutionary proletariat, which is waging a life-and-death struggle against the exploiters. [...]

As is known, in 1903 Plekhanov was a revolutionary Marxist (before his unfortunate turn that made him into a Russian Scheidemann). And Plekhanov declared at that time at our Party Congress which was then adopting its programme, that in the revolution the proletariat would, if necessary, disenfranchise the capitalists and disperse *any parliament*, if it proved to be counter-revolutionary (Lenin, [1918] 1919, pp.23-24, 39 ,44, 45, 46).

The very notable words of Plekhanov (at the 2nd Congress of the Russian SP in 1903) went as follows:

Of course, today we are advancing universal suffrage, but as revolutionaries we must say openly, that we do not want to turn it into a fetish. For one can easily think of a situation, where the victorious working class withdraws the right to vote from its opponent – the bourgeoisie – for a period of time. [...]

If a given parliament is to be advantageous for the working class then we will of course endeavour to prolong it; but if it is against the working class, then if we are in a position to do so, we will strive to dissolve it within a fortnight (Sinowjew,1923, pp.91-92).

Experience since 1918 has shown that the exploiters in ***all countries must*** be excluded from proletarian democracy, and indeed not only for the duration of a civil war, but ***permanently***.

Without exception, the exploiters of all capitalist countries have underlined with a gigantic river of blood the fact that they will never ever bend the knee to a proletarian-democratic state, but on the contrary will move heaven and earth to prevent it coming into being, or to overthrow it. The experience in Soviet Russia has shown the same thing: the exploiter elements of all kinds were and are the main supporters and beneficiaries of the Stalinist reaction that, among other things, also gave them the right to vote in the soviets. Trotsky rightly wrote: 'No franchise under any circumstances for exploiting elements' (Trotzki, 1927, p.94). Only when the dictatorship of the proletariat is consolidated can erstwhile capitalist elements, who are not only thoroughly cured with regard to their capitalist private property, but also cured of their predatory capitalist attitude and perform useful services in the proletarian state, be allowed the right to vote; they are then in actual fact transformed in class terms and are no longer capitalists, but on the contrary proletarians among proletarians.

The right to vote for the ***exploited peasants/farmers and petty bourgeois*** is self-evident. Should they have voting rights that are equal to those of the workers? In Russia, the voting rights of both the workers and exploited peasants were graded in favour of the former. It was absolutely correct to do so. Culturally, the mass of the peasantry was far behind the workers. The workers – together with their families – numbered approximately 10 million in a sea of 160 million peasants. Without resolute, firm proletarian leadership the Russian Revolution could not have been victorious, and even more so could not have maintained this victory. In order to secure a leadership such as this, the grading of the voting rights in favour of the proletariat was, under these circumstances, an indispensable necessity.

> The Philistines of democracy are indignant at the inequality in representation of the workers and the peasants, which, in the Soviet constitution, reflects the difference in the revolutionary roles of town and country. Marx writes: 'The constitution of the Commune wanted to bring the rural producers under the intellectual leadership of the main towns of the region and there secured to them in the urban workers, the natural trustees of their interests'. However, the task was not one of making the peasant equal to the worker on paper, but of raising the peasant intellectually to the level of the worker (Trotzki, 1920, p.76).

When the number of workers had risen substantially and the cultural level of the peasants had significantly improved, it was possible to move to equality in the right to vote; Stalin misused this in order to wangle the right to vote for the exploiting, money-lending, kulak, big-peasant and indeed all capitalist elements, under the guise of establishing equality between workers and non-exploiting peasants with regard to the right to vote. In the advanced capitalist countries, the conditions are such that equality between workers, semi-proletarians, exploited farmers and petty bourgeois with regard to the right to vote can be considered from the start.

The ***unemployed*** participate in every respect in proletarian democracy with equal rights. There arises only the organisational question of where they are to be included in order to exercise their right to vote as elections are after all workplace-based. Hence, they will likewise be affiliated most appropriately with the workplaces where they last worked, namely the workplace with which they still have a certain connection.

The KAPD gave the revolutionary slogan 'All power to the workers' councils!' a doctrinaire meaning, i.e. for the workers' councils – against the Communist Party; for the soviets – against the party. This was an anarchist negation of the Party altogether.

Some honestly revolutionary-minded elements believed that this slogan meant that the workers' council was of more significance than the proletarian revolutionary party. Therein too – in a weaker form – lay an ultra-'left' deviation, that was based on a misunderstanding of the relationship between class (the masses) and leadership. The workers' council is the most all-embracing fighting organisation of the proletarian masses, it is the broadest proletarian mass organisation. It encompasses all workers without exception, once they have merely grasped the idea of the necessity of fighting against the capitalist exploiters and oppressors; on this basis it embraces workers with all sorts of levels of proletarian consciousness, and hence to a significant extent also the backward and most backward layers of the working class. Therein lies a huge advantage. However, at the same time, rooted in this is its indispensable need for leadership. The workers' council is the biggest, best, most powerful mass-lever of the working class, but it cannot lead, it requires a head which directs the lever. This role falls to the ***class-conscious*** elements of the working class, to their organisation, i.e. to the proletarian-revolutionary party. Without this the workers' council is incapable of acting in a revolutionary manner. Under the leadership of a reformist, centrist, Stalinist, ultra-'left' or anarchist party, or some combination of them, it can certainly act, however inevitably only as the instrument of collaboration with the bourgeoisie or sections of it against the proletarian revolution. Stalin's '***soviets in China***' are deliberate deceptions, are merely revolutionary peasants' councils, i.e. merely petty-bourgeois-revolutionary 'councils'; and by no means proletarian-revolutionary workers' and peasants' councils. In the catastrophe of Canton (December 1927), brought about by Stalin, the Chinese CP was literally destroyed; Chiang Kai-shek had more than 25,000 active Chinese communists executed, murdered. The revolutionary struggles of the impoverished, insurgent Chinese peasants continued, but without any support in the towns, where in consequence of the Stalinist bankruptcy-politics the Communist Party had ceased to exist. 'Soviets' of insurgent peasants, which lack the leadership by the urban councils (i.e. the workers' councils), by the Communist Party anchored there, are not soviets, are not workers' and peasants' councils, but a 'communist cloak' draped around treacherous politics that is bankrupt through and through, i.e. Stalinism. Exactly the same applies to Stalin's supposedly '***Red' Army in China***, where one can only speak of a revolutionary peasant army, i.e. merely a peasant, petty-bourgeois revolutionary army, but in no way a proletarian-revolutionary workers' and peasants' army: there is no Red Army without the influence of leadership by the workers in the towns and the leadership of the Communist Party anchored in the urban working class, in the urban masses. 'What is necessary is a determined struggle against the attempt to drape a communist cloak around revolutionary liberation movements that are not really communist in the backward countries' (KI, 1920, p.65).

In one of his last articles, Lenin refers to the fact that 'the Soviet type of state will have the finishing touches put to it only with the aid of the practical experience of the working class of several countries (Lenin, [1922-23], 1930f, p.116).

B. Proletarian dictatorship

> The 'special coercive force' of the bourgeoisie for the oppression of the proletariat, of the millions of toiling people by a handful of rich people, must be replaced by a 'special coercive force' of the proletariat for the suppression of the bourgeoisie (the dictatorship of the proletariat) (Lenin, [1918] 1933a, p.11).

It is directed ***only*** against the exploiters.

> The state is a special organisation of force, an organisation of force for the suppression of some class. But which class must the proletariat suppress? Of course, ***only*** the exploiters' class, i.e. the bourgeoisie. The toiling people need the state ***only*** in order to suppress the resistance of the exploiters, and only the proletariat is able to lead this suppression, is able to carry it out. For the proletariat is the only class that is consistently revolutionary, the only class that is capable of uniting all toiling and exploited people in the struggle against the bourgeoisie, in order to completely remove it (ibid. p.15).

The proletarian dictatorship is not based on any kind of law of the capitalist class, but singly and solely on the direct revolutionary force of the proletariat and, under its leadership, of the toiling masses.

> Revolutionary dictatorship, i.e. a power directly based on the revolutionary seizure, on the direct initiative of the masses from below, and ***not on a law*** that was enacted by a centralised state power. [...]
>
> The source of power is not a law that has first of all to be discussed and approved by parliament, but the direct initiative of the masses from below and... direct 'seizure of power' (Lenin, [1917] 1925b, pp.361-362).
>
> A dictatorship (i.e. a power based not on the law, but directly on the force of the armed masses) […].
>
> A dictatorship, i.e. a power based not on the law and the previously expressed will of the people, but on the seizure of power by force, accomplished by a specific class (Lenin, [1917] 1925b, pp.381, 381-382).
>
> The revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat is rule gained through struggle by the proletariat and based on the use of force by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, and is not restricted by any laws (Lenin, [1918] 1919, p.5).

Dictatorship is power organised as the state, the proletarian dictatorship is proletarian power organised as the state against the bourgeoisie.

Capitalist state and proletarian state, both are dictatorships, but the first is the dictatorship of the exploiting minority against the vast majority, the exploited and oppressed, whereas the second is the dictatorship of the vast exploited majority against the tiny exploiting minority.

> The exploiting classes need political rule to maintain exploitation, i.e. in the selfish interests of a tiny minority against the vast majority of people. The exploited classes need political rule in order to completely abolish all exploitation,

> i.e. in the interests of the vast majority of people against the tiny minority, the modern slaveholders – the landowners and the capitalists (Lenin, [1918] 1933a, p.15).
>
> The fundamental difference between the dictatorship of the proletariat and a dictatorship of the other classes [...] consists in the fact that the dictatorship of the big landowners and the bourgeoisie was a forcible suppression of the resistance of the overwhelming majority of the population, namely the toiling masses. In contrast, the dictatorship of the proletariat is the forcible suppression of the resistance of the exploiters, i.e. a clear minority of the population, the big landowners and capitalists (Lenin, [1919] 1925b, pp.519-520).

The proletarian-democratic dictatorship is absolutely necessary. Firstly, because even after the establishment of proletarian-democratic state power in one country, the bourgeoisie – although it has been defeated there, and it has also totally lost its capitalist state apparatus and its capitalist property in the decisive means of production – remains very dangerous and more powerful than the victorious proletariat for a long period of time: it has accumulated 6000 years of experience of class rule, in ruling, managing and organising, politically and economically, and is connected with the world bourgeoisie internationally by thousands of threads. Secondly, because the legacy of 6000 years of class oppression and class exploitation, even after the revolutionary victory, still for a long time continues to weigh heavily on the small-peasant/small-farmer, petty-bourgeois masses, indeed even on the proletarian masses, because class society in the course of 6000 years imposed on them many very harmful weaknesses to all sorts of degrees, often inculcating these weaknesses deeply so that they become a habit.

> What I did that was new was to prove: firstly, that the existence of classes is only bound up with the specific, historical phases in the development of production; secondly, that the class struggle ***necessarily*** leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat; thirdly, that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society (Marx, [1852] 1933, p.164; quoted in Lenin, [1918] 1933a, p.21).
>
> Between capitalist and communist society there lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state ***can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*** (Marx, [1875] 1928, p.37).
>
> If one thing is certain it is that our party and the working class can only come to power under the form of a democratic republic. This is indeed the specific form for the dictatorship of the proletariat, as the Great French Revolution has already shown (Engels, [1891] 1928, p.65).

The opportunists refer particularly to this sentence, in order to harness the workers firmly to the carriage of the democratically veiled capitalist dictatorship. In reality, the first sentence only means, that bourgeois democracy ‘is the nearest approach (*nächste Zugang*) to the dictatorship of the proletariat (Lenin, [1918] 1933, p.45). But the second sentence expresses with particular clarity that the specific form of the dictatorship of the proletariat – which is a dictatorship of the working class against the capitalist class, and just as Marx emphasises again and again – is the

democratic republic, which means that the proletarian dictatorship is nothing other than the ***proletarian***-democratic republic, i.e. the dictatorship of ***proletarian*** democracy.

> The necessity of this rule by force is, as Marx and Engels repeatedly explained in detail (especially in *The Civil War in France* and in the preface to it), is due *in particular to the existence of militarism and a bureaucracy*. But at the time when Marx made this observation, in the 1870s, it was precisely in Britain and America that these institutions were non-existent! (Now on the other hand they do exist not only in Britain, but also in America) (Lenin, [1918] 1919, p.7).
>
> The dictatorship of the proletariat is the harshest, fiercest, most ruthless war waged by the new class against a ***more powerful*** enemy, the bourgeoisie, whose resistance is increased ***tenfold*** by its overthrow (even if only in a single country) and whose strength lies not only in the power of international capital, in the strength and durability of the international connections of the bourgeoisie, but also in the ***force of habit***, in the strength of ***small-scale production***. Unfortunately, small-scale production is still very widespread in the world, and small-scale production continuously ***engenders*** capitalism and the bourgeoisie, daily, hourly, spontaneously and on a mass scale. For all these reasons the dictatorship of the proletariat is a necessity, the victory (of the proletariat; auth.) over the bourgeoisie is impossible without a long, persistent and desperate life-and-death struggle – a struggle that calls for self-control, discipline, firmness, resoluteness and unity of will. […]
>
> The dictatorship of the proletariat is a persistent struggle – bloody and bloodless, violent and peaceful, military and economic, educational and administrative – against the forces and traditions of the old society. The force of habit of many millions upon millions is a most formidable force (Lenin, 1920, pp.5-6 and 25-26).
>
> [It would be] extremely stupid and absurdly utopian to assume that the transition from capitalism to Socialism is possible without coercion and without dictatorship. [...]
>
> If we are not anarchists, we must accept that the state, i.e. ***coercion***, is a necessity for the transition from capitalism to Socialism. The form of coercion is determined by the degree of development of the given revolutionary class, and also by special circumstances such as, for example, the legacy of a long and reactionary war, and the forms of resistance put up by the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie (Lenin, 1918b, pp.42, 50).
>
> The dictatorship of the proletariat is the class struggle of the proletariat conducted using state power as a weapon, a class struggle one of whose tasks is to demonstrate to the non-proletarian sections of the toiling people, by means of their long experience and a whole series of practical examples that it is more to their advantage to side with the dictatorship of the proletariat than with the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, and that there can be no third course (Lenin, [1919] 1920d, p.20).

> Dictatorship means leadership, the gathering together of the fragmented, scattered toiling masses into a single, closely-knit unit in order to defeat the capitalists (Lenin, [1920], 1930d, p.71).

The dictatorship of proletarian democracy, i.e. revolutionary force organised as the state, is capable of tremendous things, but not as an end in itself and only for as long as it operates on the ***proletarian*** class line. 'Force can play an enormous revolutionary role, but only under one condition – that it is subordinated to true class politics (Trotzki, 1927, p.11).

The proletarian dictatorship ultimately finds its historical justification in that it builds up a society that is organised in a way that is in every respect superior to the capitalist organisation of society.

> The dictatorship of the proletariat is […] the use of force against the exploiters, and not even mainly the use of force. The economic foundation of this use of revolutionary force, the guarantee of its effectiveness and success is the fact that the proletariat creates and realises a higher type of social organisation of labour compared to capitalism. This is the essential thing, therein lies the source of its strength and the guarantee that the ultimate triumph of Communism is inevitable (Lenin, [1919] 1920a, p.14).

The anarchists deny the necessity of the proletarian dictatorship, because they reject the proletarian state and reject on principle every state.

> The ***difference between Marxists and the anarchists*** (in relation to the state; auth.) is this: (1) Marxists, who set themselves the goal of the complete abolition of the state, only consider this feasible after the abolition of classes by the socialist revolution, as a result of the establishment of Socialism, which leads to the withering away of the state; the anarchists want to abolish the state completely overnight without understanding the conditions under which it is feasible to abolish the state. (2) Marxists deem it necessary that after seizing political power the proletariat must completely destroy the old state machine, in order to replace it by a new organisation of armed workers, an organisation of the type created by the Commune. The anarchists, who advocate the destruction of the state machinery, are completely unclear ***what*** the proletariat will put in its place and ***how*** it will use its revolutionary power; the anarchists even reject the utilisation of state power by the revolutionary proletariat and its revolutionary dictatorship. (3) Marxists demand the preparation of the proletariat for the revolution by using the present-day state; the anarchists reject this (Lenin, [1918] 1933a, p.75).

Of course, one must very carefully distinguish anarchist theory and anarchist palaver from the actual actions of the anarchists. Where and when during the course of history there is a serious sharpening in the revolutionary class struggle, the anarchist organisations in practice do precisely the opposite of what they have preached for decades: they side with the capitalist state and even enter capitalist government, against the proletarian revolution, against the dictatorship of proletarian democracy. See, for example, the anarchist trade unions in 1936-39,

which sat in the 'People's' Front government along with left-capitalists, the Stalinist Party and Social Democracy, and betrayed the Spanish revolution, co-led it into catastrophe.

The proletarian state apparatus

It is a major task of the victorious proletarian revolution,

> to shatter, smash to pieces, wipe off the face of the earth the bourgeois, even the bourgeois-republican state machine – the standing army, the police and the bureaucracy – and to replace it by a *more democratic* state machine, but a state machine nevertheless, which has been formed by the armed worker masses and amounts to a militia encompassing the entire population (Lenin, [1918] 1933a, p.65).
>
> Only the forcible overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the seizure of its property, the destruction of the entire bourgeois state apparatus from top to bottom – parliamentary, judicial, military, bureaucratic, administrative, municipal apparatus, etc. – up to and including completely driving out or interning the most dangerous and most stubborn exploiters – and strict surveillance over them so as to combat their inevitable attempts to resist and restore capitalist slavery – only these kind of measures are capable of ensuring the real submission of the entire class of exploiters (Kommunistische Internationale, 1920, p.12).
>
> In reality, they (the ***communist institutions***; auth.) are similar apparatuses to the state machine of the bourgeoisie, which must be destroyed by the revolutionary proletariat and replaced by local soviets of workers' deputies (Kommunistische Internationale, 1920, p.43).
>
> The workers, after seizing political power, will smash the old bureaucratic apparatus, shatter it to its very foundations and raze it to the ground; they will replace it by a new one, consisting of the very same ***workers***, including the ***white-collar workers*** (namely out of the same revolutionary workers, including the white-collar workers, who have led the proletarian revolution to victory; auth.) (Lenin, [1918], 1933a, p.72).

The theses of the founding congress of the CI demanded

> not capitalist bureaucracy, but organs of administration created by the masses themselves, with real participation of the masses in the administration of the country and in the activity of socialist construction (Kommunistische Internationale, 1919, p.4).
>
> ***Errors*** in the new work of the organisational building up of the state by the people themselves are at first unavoidable, but it is better to make mistakes and nevertheless make progress, than to *wait* until the professors and lawyers assembled by Mr. Lvov draft laws for the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, for the perpetuation of the parliamentary bourgeois republic and the strangling of the Soviets [...] (Lenin, [1917] 1925, p.391).

> We are not utopians. We know that an unskilled worker or a cook cannot immediately take over the job of state administration [...]. However, […] we demand that ***training*** in the work of state administration is conducted by advanced workers and soldiers and that this training begins without delay, i.e. a ***beginning*** is made at once in training all the toiling people, all the poor, for this work (Lenin, [1917] 1921, p.38).
>
> Let all sceptics learn from this example from history. Let all those who say: 'We have no apparatus to replace the old one, which inevitably gravitates towards the defence of the bourgeoisie', be ashamed of themselves. For this apparatus *exists*. The ***Soviets*** embody this. Do not be afraid of the initiative and independence of the masses, have confidence in their revolutionary mass organisations – and you will see the same strength in ***all*** spheres of state affairs, the same dignity and invincibility that the workers and peasants showed in their unity and their enthusiastic counter-attack against the Kornilov putsch! (Lenin, [1917] 1921e, p.29).
>
> Comrades, non-party workers and toiling peasants, join the Party! We promise you no advantages from joining; we are calling you to undertake difficult work, the work of building up the state. If you are sincere supporters of Communism, set about this work boldly, do not fear its novelty nor the difficulties it entails, do not be put off by the old prejudice that only those who have received formal training are capable of this work.
>
> That is not true. The work of building Socialism can and must be directed by ordinary workers and toiling peasants in ever-growing numbers (Lenin, [1919] 1933b, p.15).
>
> We in Russia have made thousands of mistakes, we have suffered thousands of reverses, losses, etc. owing to the inefficiency of novices and the incompetent people in the co-operatives, municipalities, trade unions, etc. [...] Notwithstanding these mistakes we have achieved our main goal, i.e. the seizure of power by the proletariat. Moreover, we have maintained this power for three years (Lenin, [1920] 1925b, p.575).
>
> The dictatorship of the proletariat will require the ***appointment of such inexperienced workers*** to the most responsible posts in the state, otherwise the workers government will be impotent and will not have the support of the masses (Kommunistische Internationale, 1920, p.16).

Utilising suitable, usable elements of the destroyed capitalist state machine in the construction of the proletarian state apparatus is not excluded; however, they will in every case be torn completely from their former structure and integrated into the completely new context of the proletarian state apparatus.

The proletarian state apparatus differs from the capitalist state machine above all in that its class composition is strictly proletarian and, in consequence of this, that its activities – conscious and unconscious – are consistently on the proletarian class line. On the other hand, its organisational structure exhibits many similarities, however, there are also many significant

differences. Proletarian democracy demands a state apparatus that is above all very closely connected with the working class, but also with the petty-bourgeois and small-peasant/small-farmer masses, serves them and is continuously and effectively controlled by them, whereas the state machine of the bourgeoisie is built up in such a way that it stands above the masses, is not connected with them, not controlled by them, but, on the contrary, rules them. For this reason, the proletarian state builds up the Red Army, the ***army of the proletarian revolution***, not along the lines of the barracked standing army of the capitalist state that is cut off from the masses as much as possible, but as a ***people's militia***, i.e. as an army that is very closely connected above all with the working class, but also with the poorest, poor peasants/farmers and petty bourgeois. The proletarian state cannot conjure up overnight the commanders that the Red Army needs in the requisite number and quality, it must, therefore, to a certain degree use officers of the former capitalist state machine. In order to safeguard itself, it creates ***soldiers' councils and political commissars*** in the army. They are indispensably necessary revolutionary organs, but they are only of a ***transient*** nature. Once a commandant cadre of a sufficient size has been built up on which the ***international proletarian revolution*** can completely rely, the function of the soldiers' councils and political commissars becomes superfluous, indeed militarily a hindrance. Liquidating the political commissars, because the reliability of the officers with regard to Soviet Russia in a purely ***national*** sense is established, is only a further step by the Stalinist reaction in the service of the capitalist counter-revolution. The Stalinist bureaucracy has completely abolished the militia character of the Red Army and, in particular, by means of turning the commandants into an officers corps, it has raised it socially above the ranks, separated it from the ranks, and turned it into a standing army quartered in barracks, in order to be able to use it against the masses – completely along the lines of capitalist armies that are directed against the masses. One can only speak of a Red Army if it is in actual fact an instrument of the proletarian world revolution; if in it the workers are dominant, above all in terms of its commandants and sub-commandants, and its composition; if the working class in every respect in actual fact exercises lasting, effective control over the army and, finally, if the head of the working class, the head of the proletarian state, i.e. the Party built up on a healthy democratic basis, has the political leadership of the army unconditionally and enduringly firmly in its hand; in a word, if the army is the instrument of the dictatorship of proletarian democracy. There is not the slightest trace of all this in Stalin's '***Red Army*' *in China***; it is composed of armed insurgent peasants, who have not the slightest connection with the workers of the towns in China, where as a result of the Stalinist politics of bankruptcy a communist party has no longer existed at all since December 1927. The Stalinist bureaucracy is continuously working at undermining the Russian Red Army in class terms – it is coercing this army into being an instrument of pure Russian-nationalist politics that works against the world revolution; it is deliberately rearing a military aristocracy that is elevated above the masses, and is elevating itself ever higher above the masses; by completely depriving the Russian working class of its political rights, by abolishing party democracy, by turning the party of the working class into a party of the Stalinist bureaucracy against the working class, it has abolished any control over the army by the Russian proletariat; in a word, the Stalinist bureaucracy is coercing the army of the Soviet Union into becoming more and more an instrument opposed to proletarian democracy.

The proletarian state machine comprises the following: the workers' and small peasants'/farmers' councils; the Red Army, Red Police, Red Gendarmerie, the Red Secret

Service, the Red Judiciary, the Red Administrative Apparatus, both of the state and the state economy. In order to fulfil its task, the proletarian-democratic state apparatus must be built up on a strictly centralised basis, with the greatest possible autonomy at the local, district, area, etc. level, for the lower and intermediate workers' councils within the overall centralist framework.

The underlying causes of the bureaucratic degeneration in Soviet Russia had their origins in Russia's backwardness and, after a short upswing, the decline of the world revolution that set in – first and foremost due to the monstrous betrayal perpetrated by Social Democracy, which in all countries joined forces with the bourgeoisie in the struggle against the proletarian revolution. This enabled the Stalinist betrayal that – hand in hand with Social Democracy, the Labour Party, etc. – deepened, and is continuing to deepen, the decline of the world revolution. In the advanced capitalist countries too – even with the progressive upswing of the world revolution – the ***danger of bureaucratism*** must, to a certain extent, be taken into account. Proletarian democracy must spare no effort to have at its disposal as quickly as possible a state apparatus with a proletarian class composition that after the victory of the revolution inevitably leads to almost all active, capable elements in the proletarian party and in the proletarian mass organisations, like the trade unions, co-operatives, etc., indeed the working class more generally, being turned into proletarian officials, into officials of the proletarian state – or state economic apparatus. This drawback of the absolute necessity of building up the proletarian democratic apparatus on a class basis cannot be circumvented by some kind of sleight of hand. Earlier in this work, we have already pointed out the conditions for the complete, final liquidation of the bureaucratic danger and the conditions for abolishing any bureaucracy altogether. Let us repeat them using Lenin's words:

> The possibility of this abolition (of bureaucratism; auth.) is secured by the fact that Socialism will shorten the ***working day***, will raise the ***masses*** to a new life and create conditions for the ***majority*** of the population that will enable ***everyone*** without exception to perform 'state functions', and this leads to the ***complete withering away*** of every form of state altogether (Lenin, [1918] 1933a, p.78).

During the lengthy period of transition till then, it is in practical terms a case of proletarian democracy from the outset putting in place and constantly maintaining safeguards that always hold the bureaucratic danger down at a bearable level and keep it in check. Let us listen to Marx, Engels and Lenin on this.

> From the members of the Commune down, ***public service*** had to be carried out ***at a workers' wage*** (Marx, [1871] 1891, p.46).

> From the outset the Commune was compelled to recognise that the working class, once it had come to power, could not continue to manage with the old state machine; that in order not to forfeit again its only just conquered supremacy, this working class had to, on the one hand, do away with all the old repressive machinery that had previously been used against it itself, and, on the other hand ***had to safeguard itself against its own deputies and officials***, by declaring them all, without exception, to be ***subject to recall at any time*** [...]

To counter this transformation of the state and the organs of the state from servants of society into masters of society – an inevitable transformation in all previous states – the Commune made use of two unerring expedients. Firstly, it filled all posts – administrative, judicial, and educational – by election on the basis of universal suffrage of all concerned, with the same electors having the right to recall their delegate at any time. And, secondly, all officials, high or low, were paid only the wages received by other workers. The highest salary paid by the Commune to anyone was 6000 Francs. In this way an effective barrier to place-hunting and careerism was set up, even without the binding mandates for delegates to representative bodies, which were also added on top of all this (Engels, 1891a, p.12,13).

Abolition of the standing army and its replacement by the arming of the whole people. Abolition of the police and the bureaucracy. The salaries of all officials, all of whom are elective and displaceable at any time, not to exceed the average wage a of skilled worker (*guter Arbeiter*) (Lenin, [1917] 1921a, p.60).

The replacement of the police and the army, which are institutions divorced from the people and set against the people, by the direct arming of the entire people; order in the state is thereby safeguarded by the armed workers and peasants ***themselves***, by the armed people ***themselves***; officialdom and the bureaucracy are either replaced by the direct rule of the people themselves or at least placed under special control; they are turned into bodies that are not only elective, but are ***subject to recall*** at the people's first demand; they simply become representatives; from being a privileged layer holding well-paid positions remunerated on a high, bourgeois scale, they become workers of a special 'arm of the service', whose remuneration ***does not exceed*** the average wage of a skilled worker (*guter Arbeiter)* (Lenin, [1917] 1925b, p.362).

All officials, without exception, elected and subject to recall ***at any time***, their salaries reduced to the level of ordinary 'workers' wages' – these simple and 'self-evident' democratic measures completely link the interests of the workers with those of the majority of the peasants, and at the same time serve as a bridge that leads from capitalism to Socialism. […]

The workers […] will replace the old bureaucratic apparatus by a new apparatus formed out of the very same workers and other employees, […] whereby the measures discussed in detail by Marx and Engels ***against*** their transformation into bureaucrats will be introduced immediately: 1. not only ***elected***, but ***recallable at any time***; 2. Pay that does not exceed a ***workers' wage***; 3. immediate transition of the functions of control and supervision being performed by ***all***, so all become 'bureaucrats' for a while, so that, therefore, as a result ***nobody*** can become a 'bureaucrat' (Lenin, [1918] 1933a, pp.28, 72).

Why these safeguards did not suffice in backward Russia – in consequence of the fact that a further upswing failed to materialise, and in consequence of the decline of the world revolution – we will take from Trotsky's excellent analysis elsewhere. What is certain, is that after the experiences with the Stalinist bureaucracy, the safeguards against bureaucratism even in the

advanced capitalist countries will have to be strengthened over and above the extent demanded by Marx, Engels and Lenin. We will come back to this again at different points. Here we will content ourselves with once again underlining that from this very point of view the ongoing education of the workers (male and female), and especially the party members, to ***think and judge in an independent revolutionary manner*** must be placed with increased determination at the centre of the whole activity of the party. What must, above all, be prevented is the bureaucratisation of the party apparatus and the bureaucratic degeneration of the Party; if the head of the working class, if the head of proletarian democracy remains healthy, i.e. the proletarian class party, the proletarian-revolutionary party, then the main weapon in the struggle against the bureaucratic danger in all other spheres remains intact. Over and above this, we will have to examine whether and to what extent ***arming the workers***, over and above its actual purpose of being the last line of defence against the capitalist counter-revolution, can be built up in such a way that workers' democracy in the workplace, in the trade unions, in the co-operatives, indeed in all proletarian mass organisations, soviet democracy and party democracy, in a word proletarian democracy, provides a better safeguard against the bureaucratic danger too, against selfish, power greedy, usurpatory, sponging bureaucrats, who are longing to hoist themselves up from being servants of the masses to become their masters and fill their pockets at the expense of the masses.

Class dictatorship – party dictatorship

The dictatorship of proletarian democracy is in reality a dictatorship of the Communist Party, is a Party dictatorship, not a class dictatorship, screech the SP, LP and such like, in order to confuse the workers.

In its struggle the working class needs the leadership of the best, most advanced, class-conscious elements and of their organisation, i.e. the proletarian class party. The dictatorship of proletarian democracy is the main lever of the working class in its struggle against both the capitalists at home and against the world bourgeoisie; the proletarian state therefore needs the same leadership. There is a fundamental difference between leading and commanding or dictating. The revolutionary party ***leads*** the working class, the workers' and small-peasants'/small-farmers' council and the proletarian-democratic state, but it does not dictate or command, it works exclusively by means of ***convincing***. On the other hand, proletarian democracy that has been victorious by means of revolution ***dictates*** to the vanquished capitalist robbers by virtue of the revolutionary sovereignty of the victorious masses. And in the proletarian-revolutionary army, for example, ***commands*** are given, commands must be given, but this commanding, dictating is based on quite specific laws passed by proletarian democracy, on quite specific authority granted by proletarian democracy, on proletarian-democratic resolutions and on proletarian-democratic control.

Only when party democracy, trade union democracy, workplace democracy, democracy in the co-operatives, soviet democracy, etc. are in actual fact abolished, only then is leading and convincing replaced by command, by the diktat of the bureaucratically degenerated party, by the ***bureaucratic dictatorship*** – which is not an instrument of the working class against capitalism and for world revolution, Socialism and Communism, but a tool of the degenerated, parasitic bureaucracy against the working class, against the proletarian revolution in and outside Russia, for the newly developing capitalist elements in Russia, for the world bourgeoisie; it is a tool of the petty-bourgeoisified bureaucracy for collaboration with the bourgeoisie against the

proletariat, a tool for maintaining, strengthening and consolidating the usurped positions of power and privilege of the bureaucratic parasites, who seize the bulk of the fruits of collective proletarian work and call this 'socialism' in one country. This 'socialism', which is so lucrative for the pockets of the Stalinist bureaucracy, together with the fact that this 'socialism' holds down, commands and tramples on the workers according to the whim and greed of the bureaucrats, is very much to the liking of the Social-Democratic and Labour bureaucrats – they are enthusiastic about this kind of dictatorship, they would also like to introduce and exercise it.

Proletarian dictatorship – bourgeois revolution, socialist revolution

The dictatorship of proletarian democracy is the form of proletarian rule not only for the age of the socialist revolution, but also – under certain conditions: namely in backward countries, once the indigenous bourgeoisie has begun to turn away from the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution – for the phase of finishing, completing the bourgeois revolution.

> ***A government based directly upon the proletariat, and through it upon the revolutionary peasantry, does not yet signify the socialist dictatorship***. […] It may be that the proletariat is destined to fall, as did the Jacobin democracy, in order to clear the road for the rule of the bourgeoisie. […] If the revolutionary movement in our country (in Russia; auth.), as Plekhanov predicted, triumphs as a workers' movement, then the victory of the revolution is only possible as the revolutionary victory of the proletariat – otherwise it is altogether impossible (Trotzki, 1930b, pp.99-100).
>
> What then does Lenin's ***'growing-over of the democratic into the socialist revolution'*** signify? […]
>
> The dictatorship of the proletariat does not at all coincide mechanically with the concept of the socialist revolution… The seizure of power by the working class takes place in a specific, national milieu and in a specific period, for the solution of specific tasks. In ***backward nations*** such immediate tasks are – tasks of a (bourgeois; auth.) democratic character: national liberation from the imperialist yoke, and agrarian revolution, as in China; agrarian revolution and the liberation of oppressed nationalities, as in Russia. We are now seeing the same thing in Spain, even though in a different combination. Lenin even said that the Russian proletariat came to power in October 1917 above all as ***agent of the bourgeois-democratic revolution***. The victorious proletariat began with the solution of democratic tasks and only gradually through the logic of its rule, did it tackle the socialist tasks: it only took up the collectivisation of agriculture seriously in the twelfth year of its rule. This is precisely what Lenin called the growing-over of the democratic revolution into the socialist. It is not bourgeois power that grows into workers' and peasants' power and subsequently into proletarian power; no, the power of one class does not grow over into the power of another class, but is torn from it, weapon in hand. But after the working class has seized power, the democratic tasks of the proletarian regime grow over inevitably into socialist ones. The ***evolutionary***, organic transition from democracy to Socialism is conceivable ***only*** under the ***dictatorship of the proletariat*** (Trotzki, 1931d, p.11).

C. The international character of the proletarian state

The proletarian state is an instrument of the proletarian world revolution; it is the starting point for both fighting for and establishing a world federation of soviet republics encompassing the whole world, it is the active ***focal point*** in the struggle for the ***world soviet republic***. It must consider itself as such, it must act as such or it will become disloyal to its proletarian class character, it will begin to lose its proletarian class nature. Stalin's 'socialism' in one country wants on principle to have nothing to do with this basic revolutionary task. Its primary goal is the power and material interests of the Stalinist bureaucracy, and he seeks to fulfil these interests by pursuing his purely Russian nationally-restricted politics. In this way he is damaging the Soviet state in terms of its proletarian class character more and more; he is prolonging the life of the Stalinist bureaucracy at the expense of the proletarian state and the world proletariat, without saving it from its ultimate fate.

Lenin's theses on the national and colonial question demand the transformation of the dictatorship of the proletariat from a ***'national dictatorship*** (i.e. one that exists in only ***one*** country and is incapable of playing a leading role in world politics) into an ***international dictatorship*** (i.e. a dictatorship of the proletariat ***in at least several advanced countries*** that is capable of exercising a ***decisive influence upon world politics as a whole)***' and it goes without saying: a decisive influence in the direction of the proletarian class interests, in the direction of the proletarian world revolution. And in the same theses he emphasises: 'proletarian internationalism demands: firstly, the subordination of the interests of the proletarian struggle of any one country to the interests of this struggle on a world-wide scale; and, secondly, that a nation which is achieving victory over the bourgeoisie should be able and willing to make the greatest national sacrifices for the overthrow of international capitalism' (Lenin, [1920] 1925b, pp.566-567).

This international character of the dictatorship of proletarian democracy ensues from the proletarian state purpose, and in the last analysis stems from the proletarian class interests. These demand imperatively the creation of the world soviet state, because only within it and by means of it can the preconditions for a fully communist society be completely realised, namely for the complete, final liquidation of all classes, states and parties, totally, across the entire globe.

This does not exclude, but on the contrary includes, making compromises, and even forming alliances with capitalist states. The Herculean path to the world soviet republic cannot be covered in one bound, in one move. Fundamentally, the proletarian state stands in irreconcilable class antagonism to the entire world bourgeoisie. However, the very process of turning this fundamental orientation of the struggle into reality requires – depending on the concrete circumstances of the struggle (*Kampflage*) – here and there, now and then agreeing a temporary cease-fire, making a compromise, indeed even forming an alliance with some capitalist state or other, in order to make use of the antagonisms within the world bourgeoisie in the interests of the proletarian state, the world proletariat and the world revolution. In certain circumstances – it goes without saying: within the framework of the proletarian revolutionary principles! – a *modus vivendi*, a kind of cease-fire, i.e. a compromise, can, for a period of time, be appropriate, indeed necessary, with all capitalist states, with the entire world bourgeoisie.

VIII. Supposed Transitional Stages from the Capitalist to the Proletarian State

Are there forms of the state that in any way at all constitute a transition from the capitalist to the proletarian state? The opportunists and their parties maintain that this is so or at least seek to give this impression – indeed they use these supposedly transitional stages of the state more and more as a calculated deception, in order to mislead the masses. All these dictatorships based on deception give themselves extremely revolutionary sounding names – they call themselves a 'workers' government' and in certain instances even a 'socialist government', a 'socialist-communist government', a 'communist government', etc. – outwardly they brag in an extremely revolutionary manner and combine this with phrase-mongering and with relatively minor concessions, but leave the exploiters' property in the decisive means of production and the exploiters' state machine essentially untouched in terms of its class composition; they are therefore in reality dictatorships for the benefit of the exploiters' class, they are ***capitalist*** dictatorships, forms of the bourgeois state – no matter what class or stratum exercises the state power in terms of its outward form.

The ***democratic dictatorship*** (more correctly: the bourgeois-democratic dictatorship), the ***dictatorship of democracy*** (more correctly: the dictatorship of capitalist democracy) is a bourgeois dictatorship based on the bourgeois-democratic state, on its capitalist state apparatus and on capitalist property and is 'legalised' formally or in actual fact through bourgeois democracy, and is, therefore, in no way a dictatorship that hovers above the classes – in the way the bourgeoisie and its accomplices seek to present it, in order to mislead the masses. The bourgeois parliament, by means of its parliamentary majority, gives a bourgeois-democratic government dictatorial powers, or in actual fact permits openly dictatorial actions to be carried out and tolerates them. It is a form of dictatorship that the democratic bourgeoisie resorts to in order to bloodily crush the insurgent workers.

> We know perfectly well from history that the dictatorship of the democratic bourgeoisie means nothing but the suppression of the insurgent workers. That has been the case ever since 1848 – at any rate no later – but isolated examples may be found even earlier (Lenin, [1919] 1925b, p.526).
>
> The '*democratic dictatorship*' is in essence the ***dictatorship of the bourgeoisie over the proletariat***; only the dictatorship of the proletariat can take the place of such a 'democratic dictatorship'. Whoever invents intermediate middle-of-the-road formulas, is either a wretched illusionist or a charlatan. This is the conclusion Lenin drew from the living experience of the February and October Revolutions (Trotzki, 1931d, p.11).

Even if the 'democratic dictatorship' is not exercised directly by the bourgeoisie itself, but by the petty bourgeoisie, by a petty-bourgeois stratum, for example by the petty-bourgeoisified workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy, by the Social Democratic Party (Labour Party) or the Stalinist party or by both of them together – whereby for instance centrists, anarchists and such like can join in too – this in no way changes the ***capitalist*** character of the ***petty-bourgeois-democratic dictatorship***, because in essence the capitalist state apparatus and the property of the capitalist class in the decisive means of production still continue to exist; we

have already demonstrated elsewhere that under somewhat developed capitalist conditions the petty bourgeoisie, or any petty-bourgeois stratum, is incapable of playing an independent power role.

The bourgeoisie permits such a regime, tolerates it, indeed in certain circumstances installs one itself, in order, in some situations that are dangerous for it, to delude as broad sections of the masses as possible and to let them be deluded into thinking that they are already on a sure road to gaining complete power on a purely evolutionary basis, and that to achieve this no longer requires revolutionary exertions, revolutionary struggles and sacrifice. In this way the bourgeoisie divides and disintegrates the revolutionary camp, by means of the parties of betrayal, gains time and thus increases its chances of bloodily crushing the revolutionary workers. In certain circumstances the capitalist class resorts to forms of the petty-bourgeois-democratic dictatorship as a preventative measure.

What is ***Kerenskyism***? It is a regime that arises when the bourgeoisie is no longer victorious, or no longer hopes to emerge as victor in an open civil war, and therefore makes the most extreme and most risky concessions, handing over the power to the 'most radical' elements among bourgeois democracy. It is a regime, which arises when the apparatus of repression has de facto slipped or has already slipped from the hands of the bourgeoisie. It is clear that the Kerensky regime cannot be a protracted state of affairs for society. It must end either in the victory of the Kornilovists (in European terminology the fascists), or in the victory of the Communists (Trotzki, [1924] 1926a, p.18).

If it sees a dangerous situation approaching, then in certain circumstances the bourgeoisie entrusts a petty-bourgeois ‘workers’ party with forming a government on its own (‘one party government’). Because this government will not in essence touch either the capitalist state apparatus or in essence the property of the capitalist class in the means of production, it cannot seriously help the masses and must therefore inevitably suffer (political; trans.) bankruptcy. If at the same time the proletarian party is paralysed by a deadly cancerous disease, like Stalinism, for example, and is not in a position to make use of this situation, then the masses will become so confused and disintegrated by the capitalist manoeuvre that the bourgeoisie will be able to easily overcome the dangerous currents and afterwards stand there even stronger than before, without having risked that much. This was the case with MacDonald’s ***liberal (workers’) government*** (the first Labour government in Britain in 1924; Ed.). A ***Social Democratic (workers’) government***, a Social Democratic–Stalinist (workers’) government, a Stalinist (workers’) government and such like serve the same purpose, regardless of whether the bourgeoisie then formally and openly grants them dictatorial rights or not; because from the start the capitalist class has tacitly granted them full powers to proceed with all means, of whatever kind, against the revolutionary proletariat, and indeed with the full support of the capitalist state machine and the capitalist coffers; they make full use of this against the proletarian revolution, against the proletarian state and against the working class – this is the source of ‘their’ power against the Left.

The parties of betrayal sometimes dress up their struggle for the (petty-bourgeois-democratic, in truth bourgeois-democratic) dictatorship as the struggle for the ***revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants/farmers***, especially in the backward countries, like China, India, etc., whereby they seek to cover up their betrayal by ‘invoking Lenin’. In actual fact Lenin did use this slogan for many years up until the February Revolution

of 1917, but this was under the following conditions in class terms: the bourgeoisie – out of fear of the revolutionary proletariat – had turned away from the consistent struggle for bourgeois democracy and was more and more inclined to come to a compromise with feudal landed property and its regime; only by means of a coalition of the workers with the entire peasant masses against Tsarism and against the bourgeoisie, which was inclined to compromise with it, could the bourgeois-democratic revolution be completed; but how this relationship between the working class and the peasantry would probably turn out could not yet at that time be gauged with complete certainty – for this reason Lenin contented himself at first, for a period of time with the general formula 'revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants'. The victorious February Revolution of 1917 proved beyond doubt that the bourgeois-democratic revolution, in particular the agrarian revolution, could only be finished by means of struggle against the bourgeoisie, and what is more only by means of the ***dictatorship of the proletariat***, based on the peasantry as a ***whole***; the February Revolution proved with total certainty that the peasantry was not capable of an independent power role, that it had to choose between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat and had to decide in favour of the proletariat, because the proletariat fought for the agrarian revolution, whereas the bourgeoisie fought against it. Secondly, it proved that in order to secure and consolidate its victory, the working class had to progressively go over to the socialist revolution and for this reason to the dictatorship of the proletariat with the support of the ***poor*** peasant masses, ***once the class antagonism had also opened up in the countryside.*** Instead of the Stalinist alliance with the bourgeoisie in the Kuomintang, whereby the Chinese CP had to submit to the discipline of this capitalist national party, the slogan of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants could still have been usefully applied in revolutionary China up to and including the Spring of 1926.

The struggle of the Chinese CP under this slogan would have fulfilled two important aims: it would have initiated, and finally set in motion, the revolutionary alliance of the Chinese workers with the ***poor*** peasant masses of China, but under the leadership of the autonomous, independent Chinese CP, because being village usurers the rich peasants of China went along, go along with urban bank capital, with the capitalist class; and, at the same time, by means of the pressure it exerted, this would perhaps have driven the Chinese bourgeoisie, whose bourgeois-revolutionary phase was already coming to an end and who was already beginning to sway towards compromise with the feudal lords, another bit along the path of the bourgeois revolution. However, the first counter-revolutionary thrust by Chiang Kai-shek in March 1926 proved that the Chinese bourgeoisie had finally turned its back on the bourgeois-democratic revolution, and indeed that it had turned against it. From then on, the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in China could and can only be realised through the dictatorship of the proletariat and additionally with the support of the ***poor*** peasantry. The class-based conditions for the application of this slogan of Lenin's, which had its conditional justification in the period 1905 to February 1917 in Russia, no longer exist anywhere today, because capitalist development since then has created complete clarity as far as every country is concerned, including the most backward ones, in relation to the following: firstly, that the bourgeois-democratic revolution everywhere can only be completed through struggle against the bourgeoisie and that for this to succeed the alliance of the working class with the peasants/farmers as a whole – as long as the class antagonism in the countryside has not yet surfaced – under the leadership of the proletariat, i.e. the ***proletarian dictatorship*** with the support of the peasant masses as a whole, is indispensably necessary; and, secondly, it is

essential that the working class, in order to secure and develop the results that have been achieved in this way, must go over to the socialist revolution, i.e. to the dictatorship of the ***proletariat*** based on the ***poor*** peasant/farmer masses, once the class antagonism has surfaced in the countryside as well.

Let us hear what Trotsky has to say about this – he investigated and clarified this very question in his work: *The Permanent Revolution*, 1930.

> The great historical significance of Lenin's formula lay in the fact that, under the conditions of a new historical epoch, it had probed to the end one of the most important theoretical and political questions of the day, namely the question of the degree of political independence attainable by the various petty-bourgeois groupings, above all the peasantry. As a result of its completeness, the Bolshevik experience of 1905-17 firmly bolted the door against the 'democratic dictatorship'. With his own hand, Lenin wrote the inscription over this door: No Entrance, No Exit. He formulated it in these words: ***The peasant goes either with the bourgeois or with the worker***. […]
>
> There is almost no estate of landlords in China, the landowners are much more closely bound up with the capitalists than in Tsarist Russia, and the specific weight of the agrarian question in China is for this reason much less than in Tsarist Russia; but on the other hand, the question of national liberation looms large. Accordingly, the capacity of the Chinese peasantry for ***independent*** revolutionary-political struggle for the democratic renewal of the country can in no way be bigger than that of the Russian peasantry… All this taken together proves that for China, which has already left behind it the experience of 1925-1927, the formula of the democratic dictatorship presents a much more dangerous reactionary trap than in Russia after the February Revolution. […]
>
> When and under what conditions a colonial country will become ripe for the real revolutionary solution of its agrarian question and national question cannot be predicted. But in any case, we can today state with complete certainty, that not only ***China***, but also ***India*****,** will only attain real people's democracy, i.e. workers' and peasants' democracy, through the dictatorship of the proletariat. On that road there may still be many stages, steps and phases. Under the pressure from the masses the bourgeoisie will still take some steps to the left, in order then to turn all the more mercilessly against the people. Periods of dual rule are possible and probable. ***But what there will not be, cannot be is a real democratic dictatorship, that is not the dictatorship of the proletariat***. An 'independent' democratic dictatorship can only be of the Kuomintang type, i.e. one that is directed entirely ***against*** the workers and peasants. […]
>
> Stalin and Bukharin preached that, thanks to the yoke of imperialism, the bourgeoisie could carry out the national revolution in China. The attempt was made. With what result? The proletariat was sent to be slaughtered (*ans Messer geliefert*). Then it was said: it is the turn of the democratic dictatorship. The petty-bourgeois dictatorship proved to be a masked dictatorship of capital. By chance? No. 'The peasant follows either the worker or the bourgeois' (Lenin; auth.). In the

first case, the dictatorship of the proletariat comes into being, in the other the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. […]

The 'democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry', in ***contrast*** to the dictatorship of the proletariat, which leads the peasantry and realises the programme of democracy, is a fiction, a self-deception, or what is worse still – *Kerenskyism* or Kuomintang-adventurism.

Between the regime of Kerensky and Chiang Kai-shek, on the one hand, and the dictatorship of the proletariat on the other, there is no transitional revolutionary regime and there can be no such thing. Whoever asserts something else, is shamefully deceiving the workers of the East and is preparing new catastrophes.

The Opposition says to the workers of the East: […] On the one hand you are being weakened in the face of the naked bourgeois dictatorship, by being forbidden to develop the struggle for (bourgeois; auth.) democracy further; on the other hand a panorama of some sort of ***non-proletarian*** dictatorship for your salvation is being painted for you that facilitates a further reincarnation of the Kuomintang in the future, i.e. further defeats for the workers' and peasants' revolution. […]

Assessed historically, the old slogan of Bolshevism – 'the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry' – is an expression of the above-characterised relationship between the proletariat, the peasantry and the liberal bourgeoisie. The experience of October has confirmed this: … The peasant follows either the worker or the bourgeois. This means that the 'democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry' is conceivable only as the ***dictatorship of the proletariat that leads the peasant masses*** (Trotzki, 1930b, pp. 120, 129, 139-140, 157, 159).

The First World Congress of the CI emphasises explicitly 'that in capitalist society, whenever there is a certain sharpening of the class struggle intrinsic to that society, there can be ***no intermediate thing between the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and the dictatorship of the proletariat***. Dreams of some kind of third way are a reactionary petty-bourgeois lamentation' (see Lenin, 1925b, p.519). Lenin stresses the following: 'Those whom even the course of the Russian Revolution of 1917-18 has not taught that a ***middle course*** is ***impossible***, must be given up for lost' (Lenin,1918b, p.43). And again:

> Anyone who has read Marx and has failed to understand that in capitalist society, at every critical moment, in every serious clash of the classes, the alternative is either the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie or the dictatorship of the proletariat, has grasped nothing of either the economic or the political teachings of Marx (Lenin, [1919] 1925b, p.550).

The Chinese Revolution has once again underlined this in blood:

> When in 1919 Lenin, especially in connection with the organisation of the Communist International, unified the conclusions of the period that had gone by

and gave them an ever more finished theoretical formulation, he explained the experience of Kerenskyism and the October as follows: In a bourgeois society with already developed class antagonisms, there can only be either a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, overt or veiled, or the dictatorship of the proletariat. There can be no question of a transitional regime. Every democracy, every 'dictatorship of democracy' (the ironical quotation marks are Lenin's) is only a veil for the rule of the bourgeoisie, as the experience of the most backward European country, Russia, has shown in the epoch of its bourgeois revolution, i.e. the epoch most favourable for the 'dictatorship of democracy'. Lenin took this conclusion as the basis for his theses on democracy, which arose only as the sum of the experiences of the February and October Revolutions. [...]

The 'democratic dictatorship' can only be the masked rule of the bourgeoisie during the revolution. This is both the experience of our 'dual power' of 1917, as well as what the experience of the Kuomintang in China teaches us. [...]

Is the petty bourgeoisie[28] today, under the conditions of the world domination of imperialism, capable of playing a leading revolutionary role in capitalist countries, even when it is a question of backward countries, which are still confronted with the solution of their (bourgeois; auth.) democratic tasks? […]

The fundamental conclusion fully confirms and consolidates the lessons of October, namely that ***the petty bourgeoisie, including the peasantry is incapable of playing the role of leader in a modern, even if backward, bourgeois society, both in revolutionary and in reactionary epochs. The peasantry can either support the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie or furnish cover for the dictatorship of the proletariat. Transitional forms are only veils for a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, which has begun to teeter or is getting back on its feet after a convulsion… The peasantry can follow either the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. But when the proletariat tries to march at any price with the peasantry, when it is not yet following it, then the proletariat inevitably proves to be in the tow of finance capital***: the workers as defenders of the fatherland in Russia in 1917; the workers, including the communists too, in the Kuomintang in China; the workers, and also communists to some extent, in the PPS[29] in Poland in 1926, etc. […]

The following was repeated more than once by Lenin after 1918:

> 'The whole of political economy […], the whole history of revolution, the whole history of political development during the nineteenth century teaches us that the peasant follows either the worker or the bourgeois… If

[28] The original German source uses the term *Kleinbourgeoisie*. Melt changed this to *Kleinbürgertum* in order to leave no doubt in the mind of the reader that it refers to the petty bourgeoisie and not the small capitalists (trans.)

[29] PPS = Polish Socialist Party (Daschinski & Co.) (Footnote in original; trans.)

> you do not know this […] then consider the development of any of the great revolutions of the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries, the political history of any country in the nineteenth century. It will tell you why. ***The economy of capitalist society is such, that the ruling power can only be either capital or the proletariat which has overthrown it. There are no other forces in the economic structure of this society***' **(**Lenin, Vol. XVI, p.217[30]).

It is not a question here of modern Britain or Germany. On the basis of the lessons of any one of the great revolutions of the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries, i.e. the bourgeois ***revolutions*** in ***backward*** countries, Lenin comes to the conclusion that only the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie or the dictatorship of the proletariat is possible. There cannot be a 'democratic', i.e. an intermediate dictatorship […]

The politics of the epigones in China […] is the continuation and further development of the Menshevik masquerade of 1917. The fact that the Communist Party remained in the Kuomintang was defended, not only by Stalin, but also by Radek, with the same reference to the necessity of the alliance of the workers and peasants. But when it was 'accidentally' revealed that the Kuomintang was a bourgeois party, the attempt was repeated with the 'Left' Kuomintang – with the same results. Thereupon, the abstraction of the democratic dictatorship, in contradistinction to the dictatorship of the proletariat, was elevated above this sorry reality, which had not fulfilled the high hopes – a fresh repetition of what we had already had. […]

A democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, as a regime that is distinguished by its class content from the dictatorship of the proletariat might be realised only in a case where an ***independent*** revolutionary party could be constituted as the expression of the interests of the peasantry and in general of petty-bourgeois democracy, i.e. a party that, with the support of the proletariat, would be capable of seizing power and determining its revolutionary programme. As the entire experience of modern history, and especially the experience of the last quarter of a century in Russia, proves that an insurmountable obstacle to creating a peasants' party is the lack of economic and political independence of the petty bourgeoisie and its deep internal differentiation. For this reason, the upper strata of the petty bourgeoisie (of the peasantry) in all decisive cases, especially in war and revolution, go along with the big bourgeoisie, whereas the lower strata of the petty bourgeoisie go along with the proletariat; thus the intermediate strata are compelled to choose between the two extreme poles. Between *Kerenskyism* and Bolshevik power, between the Kuomintang and the dictatorship of the proletariat there is not and cannot be an intermediate stage, i.e. no democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants.

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[30] Trotsky is referring to Lenin's Collected Works (*Sobranie Sochinenii*). The quotation is from his article: 'The Deception of the People by Slogans of Freedom and Equality', May 1919 (Ed.).

> The Comintern's endeavour to force upon the countries of the East today, the slogan of the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, a slogan that finally and long ago became obsolete, can only have a reactionary effect. Insofar as this slogan is counterposed to the slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat, it contributes politically to the dissolution of the proletariat in the petty-bourgeois masses and thereby creates the most favourable conditions for the hegemony of the national bourgeoisie, and consequently also for the fiasco of the democratic revolution. The introduction of this slogan into the programme of the Comintern is a direct betrayal of Marxism and of the October traditions of Bolshevism (Trotzki, 1930b, pp.131, 132-133, 134, 135, 142, 159-160).

An especially favourite form used by the parties of betrayal, and indeed by opportunists of all kinds, seeking to rope in the proletariat for their (petty-bourgeois-democratic) dictatorship, is the formula ***'workers' and peasants'/farmers' government'***. On their lips, it is only a crafty designation for the same humbug that they formerly gave out to the workers as 'dictatorship of democracy' or '(petty-bourgeois) democratic dictatorship' or as '(revolutionary) democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants/farmers', a designation that conceals nothing other than an especially cunning form of the ***capitalist*** dictatorship that they pretend to the workers is a form of peaceful, evolutionary transition to complete power of the proletariat.

> The formula, 'workers' and peasants' government' […] after the October Revolution (1917; auth), […] represented nothing other than the ***popular designation for the already established dictatorship of the proletariat*** [...] it underscored the idea of an ***alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry***, upon which Soviet power rests. [...].
>
> The Comintern of the epigones […] gave the formula 'workers' and peasants' government' a completely different, purely 'democratic', i.e. ***bourgeois*** content, by ***counterposing*** it to the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Bolshevik-Leninists resolutely rejected the slogan, 'workers' and peasants' government' in its bourgeois-democratic interpretation. They maintained and maintain, that in as far as the party of the proletariat refuses to step beyond the limits of bourgeois democracy, its alliance with the peasantry simply turns into a support for capital, as was the case with the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries in 1917 and with the Chinese Comparty (CP; auth.) in 1925-27, and as is now the case with the 'People's Front' in Spain, France and other countries. [...]
>
> We use the slogan 'workers' and peasants' government' only in the sense it had in 1917 for the Bolsheviks, i.e. as an anti-bourgeois, anti-imperialist slogan, but in no case in that 'democratic' sense which later the epigones gave it. [...]
>
> Of all parties and organisations which base themselves on the workers and peasants and speak in their name, we demand that they ***break politically with the bourgeoisie and take the road of struggle for workers' and peasants' power. On this road we promise them our full support against the capitalist reaction***. At the same time, we will untiringly develop our agitation for the transitional slogans, which in our opinion should form the programme of the 'workers' and peasants' government'.

> Is the formation of such a government by the traditional[31] workers' organisations possible? Past experience shows [...] that this is to say the least highly improbable. However, one must not exclude in advance the theoretical possibility that, under the influence of a quite exceptional set of circumstances (war, defeat, financial crash, revolutionary pressure from the masses (*Massensturm*), etc.), the petty-bourgeois parties, including the Stalinists, may go further than they wish along the road to breaking with the bourgeoisie. In any case one thing is beyond doubt: even if this improbable variant were to become a reality somewhere at some time, and the 'workers' and peasants' government' in the above stated sense is established in fact, it would merely represent a short episode on the road to the genuine dictatorship of the proletariat (namely against the will of the Social Democratic, Labour and Stalinist traitors; in any case this 'workers' and farmers' government' of the parties of betrayal would also only be a form of ***capitalist*** dictatorship, because it would let the capitalist state apparatus, capitalist property continue to exist in their essentials; auth.).
>
> However, it is useless to indulge in guesswork. Agitation around the slogan of a workers' and peasants' government retains under all conditions a great educational significance. And this is no accident. This generalised slogan proceeds entirely on the line of the political development of our epoch (the bankruptcy and disintegration of the old bourgeois parties, the collapse of democracy, the growth of fascism, the accelerated drive of the toiling masses toward active and aggressive politics). Each of our transitional demands must, therefore, lead to one and the same political conclusion: ***the workers must break with all the traditional parties of the bourgeoisie, in order, jointly with the (small;*** auth***.) peasants/farmers, to establish their own power*** (Trotzki, 1938, pp.16-18).

The slogan 'workers' and peasants' government' on the lips of proletarian revolutionaries and the proletarian-revolutionary party, therefore, means something completely different and precisely the opposite to that on the lips of the SP, LP and StP and the Brandlerians, the SAP and other centrists. One and the same slogan is used simultaneously by revolutionaries and opportunists with a fundamentally different and completely opposite meaning. This obviously does not contribute to the clarification of the workers, but to their confusion. The parties of betrayal and their helpers benefit from this, because the duller the proletarian consciousness, the better they can operate in the muddied waters. On the other hand, the proletarian-revolutionary party is at a far greater disadvantage, it is fundamentally interested in the workers having as much clarity as possible; the proletarian-revolutionary party always subordinates its entire politics to raising the revolutionary consciousness of the workers. The temporary use of the slogan by revolutionaries would be permissible to a certain degree for the same reasons that in his time Engels had acknowledged a certain justification for using the (opportunist) slogan 'people's state' ('*Volksstaat*'); namely in so far as the slogan of the democratic republic was indicated in the formula 'people's state' and as a result of the capitalist persecutions in that era legal agitation was not possible in another form (see Engels, [1882] 1907, p.49 and Lenin,

[31] This term was used by Trotsky to denote the SPs, LPs, CPs, trade unions etc.; trans.

[1918] 1933a, p.12). However, the great disadvantage of the confusing double meaning of the formula remains its misuse by the opportunists. This all the more so the more the population in the countryside becomes differentiated. A coalition with the ***big peasants***, big farmers is entirely on the line of the parties of betrayal and their helpers. But it is not the task of the proletarian revolutionaries to make it easier for them to practise this deception of parading the big ***capitalist*** farmers in front of the workers as ordinary farmers, as 'farmers' per se, whereby their exploitative class nature is blurred; on the contrary, it is the duty of proletarian revolutionaries to make this deception more difficult, to frustrate it. For this reason it is advisable to replace the (revolutionary) formula of workers' and peasants' government or workers' and farmers' government by the formula: government of the workers and ***poor*** peasants, government of the workers and ***poor*** farmers or still more succinctly: workers' and ***small*** peasants' government or workers' and ***small*** farmers' government. This formula clearly expresses that it is a question of the establishment of ***proletarian*** class power based on the workers and the non-exploiting, ***exploited*** peasant/farmer strata, who are oppressed by capital, and, to be precise about it, that this is under the leadership of the proletariat, and that what is at stake therefore is the establishment of the state power of ***proletarian*** democracy, which only takes place on the path of proletarian revolution and never ever on the path of capitalist democracy.

IX. How the State Changes

Every state is a living organism that is constantly changing. For practical domestic and foreign politics, it is not sufficient to consider the general, fundamental, abstract aspects of a specific state, one must, within the basic framework of the state, always at the same time take into consideration the specific, concrete aspects of each state as accurately as possible. For example, the prevailing situation as regards the organisation, size, equipment and deployment of its army; the state of its communications network (railways, shipping, air traffic, car and bus transport, roads, radio, telephones, the telegraph and postal service) and changes in this; the situation as regards a state's finances (taxes, customs duties, state monopolies, state undertakings, state property in general and state debts) and changes to these; the situation as regards its industry, agriculture, its trade etc. and changes to these; the composition of its government, its parliament and important changes in its bureaucracy, in matters relating to its press, its news agencies, etc., etc.

X. The Coming into Being and Passing Away of the State

There were times when there was no state. Primitive communist society, through the hundreds of thousands of years of its existence, did not need a state and did not have one, did not know one; there were no classes, there was nothing to oppress; there was a ***community*** (*Gemeinwesen*), but there was no machine of oppression, no state. The division of labour that arose in ancient society led organically (*naturwüchsig*) to the leading functions being associated more and more – at first purely in actual fact, but ultimately on a hereditary basis – with certain families, who were accumulating experience in administration and leadership. This facilitated the formation of the state; however, the state only came into being with the coming into being of classes, of private property in the means of production, above all human beings, slaves. Only then did a permanent, organised, armed authority, power, rule, machine of oppression become indispensably necessary, in order to hold down the growing slave masses and compel them to work continuously.

> The state, therefore, has not existed from all eternity. There have been societies which have managed without it, which had no notion of the state or state power. At a certain stage of economic development, which was necessarily linked to the cleavage of society into classes, the state became a necessity because of this cleavage (Engels, [1884] 1922, p.182).
>
> Without a permanent apparatus of coercion, it is impossible to compel one part of society, the overwhelming part of society, to work systematically for the other part. As long as there were no classes, there was also no apparatus of this sort (Lenin, [1918] 1938, p.385).

As long as there are classes, and as long as not all classes are liquidated completely, the state is a necessity; because classes will continue to exist for a long period of time after the establishment of proletarian state power too, the proletarian state is thus an unavoidable necessity for a long period of time.

> The essence of Marx's theory of the state has been mastered only by those who understand that the dictatorship of ***a single*** class is not only necessary for every class society in general, not only for the ***proletariat***, which has overthrown the bourgeoisie, but also ***for the entire historical period***, which separates capitalism from 'classless society', from Communism (Lenin, [1918] 1933a, p.22).

During the transitional period from capitalism to Communism, there is rule (of the toiling masses) and suppression (of the capitalist exploiters), but a fundamental change already ***begins*** with the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

> During the ***transition*** from capitalism to Communism, suppression is ***still*** necessary, but it is now the ***suppression*** of the ***exploiting minority*** by the ***exploited majority***. A special apparatus, a special machine for suppression, the 'state', is ***still*** necessary, but this is now a ***transitional state***. It is no longer a state in the actual sense of the word; for the holding down of the minority of exploiters by the majority of wage slaves ***of yesterday*** is a comparatively so easy, simple and natural a task, that it will entail far less bloodshed, than the

suppression of the insurrection of the slaves, serfs or wage-workers, and it will cost humanity much less (ibid., pp.58-59).

It is still necessary to suppress the bourgeoisie and crush its resistance. […] But the organ of suppression here, however, is the ***majority*** of the population and not a minority, as was always hitherto the case. [...] And since the majority of the people ***itself*** suppresses its oppressors, a special force for suppression is ***no longer necessary*****.** In this sense the state ***begins to wither away*****.** In place of the special institutions of a privileged minority (privileged officialdom, the chiefs of the standing army), the majority itself can directly fulfil all these functions, and the more the functions of state power are performed by the entire population, the less need there is for the existence of this power (ibid., p.27).

Soviet power or proletarian democracy […] ***begins*** at once ***to prepare*** for the complete withering away of any kind of state by drawing the mass organisations of the toiling people into enduring and unrestricted participation in state administration (Lenin, [1919] 1925b, p.522).

From the moment when all members of society, or at least the vast majority, have learnt to administer the state ***themselves***, have taken this work into their ***own*** hands, have 'put in place' the control over the tiny minority of capitalists, over the gentry who would like to preserve their capitalist airs and graces, and over the workers, who have often been thoroughly corrupted by capitalism; from this moment, the need for government of any kind ***begins*** to disappear altogether. The more complete the democracy, the closer the moment when it becomes superfluous. ***The more democratic the 'state' which is composed of armed workers*** and which is 'no longer a state in the proper sense of the word', the more rapidly every form of state ***begins*** to wither away.

For when ***all*** have learned to administer, and in actual fact administer social production ***independently***, independently keep accounts and exercise control over the parasites, the sons of the wealthy, the swindlers and other 'guardians of capitalist traditions', then circumventing this accounting and control carried out by everyone will inevitably become so incredibly difficult and such a rare exception […], that the ***necessity*** for observing the simple, fundamental rules for everyone to live together whatever the conditions will very soon become a ***habit***. Then the door for the transition from the first phase of communist society to its higher phase will be thrown wide open, and with it to the ***complete*** withering away of the state (Lenin, [1918] 1933a, p.67).

The withering away of the state therefore progresses in the same measure as socialist construction, as the liquidation of classes ***actually*** progresses.

The abolition of private property in the means of production removes the principal task of the state, as it arose historically: the protection of the property rights of the minority against the overwhelming majority.

The withering away of the state then begins, according to Lenin, on the very day after the expropriation of the expropriators, that is even before the new

> regime has been able to tackle its economic and cultural tasks. Every advance on the way to the solution of these tasks therefore signifies a new stage in the liquidation of the state, its dissolution in the socialist society. The degree of this dissolution is the best index for the depth and the success of socialist construction (Trotzki, 1936a, p.106).

What therefore are the ***prerequisites*** for the withering away of the state?

> When, in the course of development, class differences have disappeared, and all production has been concentrated in the hands of an association of individuals (*assoziierten Individuen*), then public power (*Gewalt*) will lose its political character. Political power in the actual meaning of the term is the organised power of one class for oppressing/suppressing another. If the proletariat, in its struggle against the bourgeoisie, is compelled by the force of circumstances to unite as a class, if by means of a revolution it makes itself the ruling class, and, as such sweeps away by force the old relationships of production, then it will, along with these relationships, have swept away the conditions for the existence of class antagonisms and of classes altogether, and will thereby have abolished its own supremacy as a class.
>
> In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, there will be an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all (*Das Kommunistische Manifest*, [1848] 1891, p.24).

The state then turns itself into a 'mere superintendence of production' (ibid., p.30).

> As soon as there is ***no longer any social class to be held in subjection***; as soon as there is no class rule, and the ***individual struggle for existence*** based upon the anarchy of production that has existed up till now, together with the collisions and excesses arising from this are ***abolished***, there is no longer anything to repress, and a special repressive force, a state, is no longer necessary. […]
>
> The intervention of state power in social relations becomes superfluous in one sphere after another and then dies out of itself. The government of persons is replaced by the administration of things and the management of the processes of production. The state is not 'abolished', ***it withers away*** […]
>
> In the same measure as anarchy in social production disappears, the political authority of the state also dies out. Human beings, at last masters of their own form of social organisation, become at the same time masters of nature, their own masters – free (Engels, [1852] 1907, pp.49, 53).
>
> We are now rapidly approaching a stage in the development of production, in which the existence of these classes has not only ceased to be a necessity but becomes a positive hindrance to production. They will fall as inevitably as they once arose. The state will inevitably fall along with them. Society, which organises production anew on the basis of a free and equal association of

producers, will put the whole state machine where it will then belong – into the museum of antiquities, beside the spinning wheel and the bronze axe (Engels, [1884] 1922, p.182).

Let us hear what Lenin has to say:

> In order to abolish the state, it is necessary to convert the functions of the civil service (*Staatsdienst*) into operations of control and recording that are so simple that the vast majority of the population, and subsequently every single individual, is able to carry them out. […]
>
> We set ourselves the ultimate goal of abolishing the state, i.e. all organised and systematic force, all use of coercion against people in general… In striving for Socialism, we are convinced that it will grow into Communism and, therefore, that the need for force against people in general, for the ***subordination*** of one human being to another, and of one section of the population to another, will vanish since human beings will become ***accustomed*** to observing the elementary rules of social life ***without force*** and ***without subordination***. […]
>
> Only in communist society, when the resistance of the capitalists has finally been broken, when the capitalists have disappeared, when there are no longer any classes (i.e. when there are no longer differences between the members of society with regard to their relationship to the social means of production) ***only then*** 'does the state…cease to exist' and '***it becomes possible to speak of freedom***'. Only then will democracy become possible, only then will it be possible to implement a truly complete democracy, a true democracy without any exceptions. And ***only then will democracy begin to wither away***, for the simple reason that, freed from capitalist slavery, from the untold horrors, brutalities, absurdities and infamies of capitalist exploitation, people will gradually become ***accustomed*** to observing the most elementary rules of social intercourse that have been known from ancient times and repeated for thousands of years in all rulebooks. They will become accustomed to observing them without force, without coercion, without subordination, ***without the special apparatus*** of coercion, called the state. […]
>
> Ultimately only Communism creates the conditions under which the state becomes completely unnecessary, for there is ***nobody*** to be held down, 'nobody' in the sense of a ***class***. […]
>
> The ***economic*** basis for the complete withering away of the state is such a high level of development of Communism, at which the antithesis between mental and physical labour disappears, and consequently one of the most important sources of present-day ***social*** inequality is abolished, a source indeed that can ***in no way*** be removed ***at one go*** by the mere conversion of the means of production into social property, by the mere expropriation of the capitalists.
>
> This expropriation ***will make*** it possible for the productive forces to develop to a tremendous extent... But how rapidly this development will proceed, how soon it will lead to the abolition of the division of labour, to doing away with the

> antithesis between mental and physical labour and transforming labour into 'the foremost requirement of life', we do not know and ***cannot know***. [...]
>
> The state will be able to wither away completely, when society has realised the principle '***from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs***', i.e. when people have become so ***accustomed*** to observing the fundamental rules of social co-existence and their labour will has become so productive, that they will work voluntarily according to their ability (see Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, 1875; auth.). [...]
>
> Until the 'higher' phase of Communism arrives, the socialists demand the ***strictest*** control by society and by the state over the ***measure of labour*** and the ***measure of consumption***; but this control must ***begin*** with the expropriation of the capitalists, with workers' control over the capitalists, and must be exercised not by a state of bureaucrats, but by a state of the armed workers. […]
>
> The possibility of this destruction (namely of bureaucratism; *auth.*) is guaranteed by the fact that Socialism will ***shorten the working day***, will raise the ***masses*** to a new life, will create conditions for the ***majority*** of the population that will enable ***everyone*** without exception to perform 'state functions', and this will lead to the complete withering away of every form of the state altogether (Lenin, [1918] 1933a, pp. 50, 53, 58, 59, 62, 63, 78).
>
> In order for the state to disappear, 'class rule ***and*** the… ***struggle for individual existence***' must disappear... But the trouble is that the socialisation of the means of production does not yet automatically remove the 'struggle for individual existence' (Trotzki, 1936a, p.55).

The prerequisites, therefore, for the withering away of the state are: the establishment of the dictatorship of proletarian democracy; the expropriation of the capitalists; the actual building up of Socialism with the continuous active participation of all the toiling people in the process of control and managing the proletarian state and the proletarian state economy; the enduring elevation of the masses materially – the 'struggle for individual existence' must be removed – and mentally, which entails, in particular, the systematic shortening of their labour time; their education increased systematically, in such a way that every single person masters several types of work well and can change from one to the other without much ado – from industrial to agricultural work, from physical to mental work, from scientific work to administrative work in the state apparatus. In this way class differences, class antagonisms and classes are systematically, gradually overcome, so that class society finally goes over into a classless society, and, with this too, into a stateless one.

By the state withering away, democracy, which is after all only a form of rule, withers away as well. In fully developed Communism there is no democracy because there is no state, no rule, no oppression, nor any oppression of the minority by the majority.

> Engels speaks of the state 'withering away' and – even more graphically and colourfully of its 'passing away' (*Einschlafen*) quite clearly and definitely with reference to the epoch ***after*** 'the state has taken possession of the means of production in the name of society', i.e. ***after*** the socialist revolution. We all know

> that the political form of the ‘state’ during this time is the most complete democracy. But it never enters the heads of the opportunists that here for Engels it is consequently a matter of ***democracy*** ‘going to sleep’ and ‘withering away’... But this only remains ‘incomprehensible’ to those who have not thought about democracy ***also*** being a state and, consequently, that democracy will also disappear once the state disappears. Only revolution can ‘abolish’ the bourgeois state. The state in general, i.e. the most complete democracy, can only ‘wither away’ (Lenin, [1918] 1933a, p.11).

All class differences, class antagonisms and classes without exception must disappear, in order that all states wither away, i.e. all class differences, class antagonisms and classes throughout the ***entire*** world must disappear. From this it follows that the full and final withering away of the state and the emergence of a stateless society can ***only*** be realised ***internationally***, singly and solely on a ***world scale***.

BOOKLET 3:

THE PARTY

THE PARTY

The proletariat is the only class that is consistently revolutionary to the end; only the class interests of the proletariat express the interests of all the exploited and oppressed without exception, including the exploited and oppressed peoples; in waging its struggle only the proletariat fights at the same time for the interests of the exploited and oppressed masses, for the interests of the exploited and oppressed peoples; that is why only the proletariat is able to lead the struggle of all of the multi-billioned masses of exploited and oppressed for their emancipation from any kind of exploitation and oppression: it is only under the guidance and leadership of the proletariat, it is only under the ***hegemony of the proletariat*** that this struggle – by being led consistently on the line of the class interests of the workers, i.e. the proletarian class line – will lead to ultimate victory.

As long as the proletariat is not conscious of its class interests, as long as it only acts in a spontaneous manner, it is able to fight for a particular day-to-day interest or for a particular partial interest; even if here and there, now and again the proletariat's struggle is successful, the mechanism of the capitalist economy and the capitalist state only permits any such success to be temporary, transitory; the successes attained in the struggle for day-to-day interests and partial interests are, one way or another, in essence again and again ultimately liquidated by the bourgeoisie. As long as the proletariat is not class-conscious, it in reality fights as a follower or servant or helper of other classes and pulls the chestnuts out of the fire for them. Under favourable conditions it can be victorious in a spontaneous insurrection, but it will not be victorious for ***itself***, nor for the exploited and oppressed, but only ***for others***, and in the last analysis for the exploiters and oppressors. This was the case, for example, in March 1848 in Germany and Austria. The working class is only able to act for itself, in its own class interests, for all the exploited and oppressed, if it acts ***class-consciously***.

Under capitalist conditions of life – long hours of labour, intensive labour, altogether unhealthy working conditions, lassitude, exhaustion, a wretched subsistence, a lack of education, the continuous worry about their job and earnings, unemployment, the continuous pressure of the uncertainty created by capital and all the conditions of a workers' life, the systematic misleading of the masses by the bourgeoisie and its helpers of all kinds – only a small ***minority*** of the proletariat is able to develop, to unfold class consciousness.

> It would be unrealistic sentimentality […], to think that almost the entire class or indeed the entire class could ever rise, under capitalism, to the level of consciousness and activity of its vanguard, the Social Democratic Party (Lenin, [1904] 1924b, p.66).
>
> No one can seriously think that under capitalism it is possible to organise the majority of the proletariat (Lenin, [1916] 1925b, p.340).

Only a very far-advanced dictatorship of proletarian democracy will – by means of a very considerable shortening of working time and a massive increase in the material and intellectual level of the entire working class – create conditions that will make it possible to emancipate all workers, male and female, without exception from the weaknesses handed down over many thousands of years of slavery and imbue them with proletarian class consciousness. The mass

of the proletariat will be able to attain class consciousness only if the class-conscious elements within the proletariat join together to form an organisation and only by means of the systematic, persevering activity of the organised class-conscious minority of the proletariat. The organisation of the class-conscious minority of the working class is the ***proletarian class party***, the ***Party*** for short. It is the 'conscious part', the 'vanguard', the '*avantgarde*' of the proletariat (Lenin).

> The class taken by itself is merely material for exploitation. The proletariat assumes an independent role only at that moment when from a social class ***in itself*** it becomes a political class ***for itself***. This cannot take place otherwise than through the medium of a Party. The Party is the historical organ by means of which the class attains ***class consciousness***. [...]
>
> In reality, the correctly understood interests of the class are identical with the correctly formulated tasks of the Party (Trotzki, 1932c, pp.24, 25).

Imbuing the entire working class with consciousness of its class interests is the fundamental task of the proletarian class party – all its other tasks whatever they may be, must without fail and under all circumstances be subordinated to this task and be integrated into it; any 'success' or 'victory', however big, that is achieved at the expense of the consciousness of the mass of the proletarian class, by confusing and dulling the consciousness of the workers is, in the last analysis, in reality a failure, a defeat. Only if it keeps itself at the level of proletarian class consciousness – something that can only be achieved by continuous, persevering, unremitting, untiring, never-flagging, intensified work on itself – is the Party able to make the mass of the proletarian class class-conscious and keep it class-conscious. That is why absolute loyalty to the proletarian class principles in each and every action is the fundamental requirement, the fundamental characteristic of the Party, without which it ceases to be the party of the working class, the class party of the proletariat. 'Unless *the revolutionary section* of the proletariat has been thoroughly prepared in every way for eradicating and suppressing opportunism, it would be ludicrous to even think about the dictatorship of the proletariat (Lenin, [1919] 1920d, p.8); and in doing so we must keep in mind that not only right opportunism, but also 'left' opportunism, ultra'radicalism' belongs to this opportunism.

By themselves the worker masses are not able to make the proletarian class interests the fundamental guiding principle for all their actions. Only the organised class-conscious minority is able to make the actions of the mass of the proletariat in reality follow its class interests and to guide, steer and lead these actions towards them. ***THE PROLETARIAN CLASS PARTY, THE PARTY, IS THE ORGANISATION OF THE CLASS-CONSCIOUS SECTION OF THE PROLETARIAT FOR STEERING, GUIDING AND LEADING THE ACTIONS OF THE MASS OF THE WORKING CLASS IN THEIR ENTIRETY ON THE FUNDAMENTAL LINE OF THE PROLETARIAN CLASS INTERESTS***. The ***principle that the Party has the leadership role*** flows from the principle of the class struggle and the necessities of the class struggle: without the goal-conscious guiding, steering and leading of the proletarian struggle, the working class cannot be victorious nor can it maintain this victory in the struggle between the classes.

> The Communist Party is a part of the working class, and moreover its most advanced, most class-conscious and therefore its most revolutionary part. The Communist Party is formed by a process of natural selection of the most class-

> conscious, the most self-sacrificing and the most far-sighted workers. The Communist Party has no interests that differ from those of the working class as a whole. The Communist Party differs from the entire mass of the workers because it has an overall view of the entire historic road of the working class in its totality and, at every turn in this road, strives to defend not just the interests of individual groups or individual occupations, but the interests of the working class in its totality. The Communist Party is the organisational and political lever with whose help the most advanced part of the working class can steer the entire mass of the proletariat and the semi-proletariat on to the correct road (Kommunistische Internationale, 1920, p.31).
>
> They [the Communists] have the advantage over the great mass of the proletariat with regard to theory, by understanding the conditions, the line of march and the general results of the proletarian movement (*Das Kommunistische Manifest*, [1848] 1891, p.18).
>
> The *revolutionary party of the proletariat* [is] the *highest* form of proletarian class organisation (Lenin, 1920b, p.31).

Because the struggle for the proletarian class interests and the proletarian principles can only be led to victory by means of proletarian revolution and because the proletarian revolution can only be victorious and maintain its victory permanently under the leadership of the Party, we therefore also call the proletarian class party, the ***proletarian-revolutionary party*** – and because the proletarian class interests can only be realised by means of Communism, and Communism can only be realised by the proletariat under the leadership of its Party, we therefore also call it the ***Communist Party***. This name has been so defiled, dishonoured, discredited, compromised and prostituted by the Stalinist degeneration and the treachery of the Stalinist bureaucracy that the proletarian party can only adopt it, bear it again once the Stalinist crimes have been expiated, the Stalinist filth removed and the Stalinist demoralisation overcome.

It is only under the leadership of the proletarian class party that the working class is able to undertake and fulfil its leadership role, its hegemony in the struggle of human society for its emancipation from all exploitation and oppression of whatever kind.

I. Party and Class, Party and Mass

The Party is the organised consciousness of the class, but without the mass of the proletarian class the Party would be powerless, and even though it knows the road to victory, it would still not be able to lead the proletariat to victory on the basis of its class interests. The Party can, should and must – to a certain extent – take the place of the class consciousness that is lacking in the masses as a result of the conditions under which they live in capitalism; it is only able to do this by continuously working at raising the level of consciousness of the proletarian masses. But the Party can never ever replace the class itself, nor the mass of the class, nor the fighting power of the class. The ***sectarians*** overlook this and endeavour to build up a Party without connecting it to the masses and indeed, on the contrary, do all they can to push the masses away from the Party, to keep the Party at a distance from the masses. The ***putschists*** overlook this and want to establish proletarian power – without the masses. It is only if the ***Party*** connects itself very closely to the masses – by winning their trust and also by connecting itself, organisationally too, to the masses as closely and as firmly as possible – does it gain in ***class strength*** – and it is only by connecting themselves very closely to the proletarian class party, namely by gaining confidence in it and also by connecting themselves organisationally as closely as possible with the Party, that the ***worker masses*** more and more gain in ***class consciousness***. It is only by means of repeated and continuous verification by the masses in the course of the struggle that trust in the proletarian-revolutionary party becomes rooted in the masses, and it is only through and during action that the Party wins the trust of the masses.

> If the minority (the advanced minority of the British working class; auth.) does not understand how to lead the masses and establish close links with them, then it is not a party and is completely worthless, even if it calls itself a party or a National Shop Stewards' Committee (Lenin,1937, p.209).

Figuratively speaking, the relationship between the Party and the class is the same as that of the relationship between ***the head and the body***. The head is the part of the body that has the task of directing, guiding and leading all the actions of the body. It was precisely for this purpose that the body in its struggle for existence over the course of millions of years, developed, evolved and brought forth cells with consciousness, namely brain cells, head cells to direct, guide and lead the entire body in its struggle for existence. Certainly, the cells in the body do not have any consciousness, whereas the 'cells' in the mass of the proletariat, in the individual workers, have a consciousness that enables them to work their way up, to rise to the level of class consciousness; but this consciousness is kept at a low level by the class of capitalist exploiters and oppressors using means of compulsion and is mere mass consciousness, not yet class consciousness. With regard to the class struggle, therefore, the relationship between the Party and the class is in essence exactly the same as the relationship between the head and the body. Just as the body can only act in a goal-conscious manner in its own interests by means of the head, the class can act in a goal-conscious manner ***in its own interests,*** i.e. in a class-conscious manner, only by means of the Party. This is precisely why the monopoly bourgeoisie seeks, by means of its fascist dictatorship, to above all 'decapitate' the working class – first and foremost it seeks to physically destroy as far as possible all proletarian class-conscious elements; using all available means, it seeks to prevent the mass of the workers from bringing forth new class-conscious elements from within its ranks, to prevent them from gaining contact with each other and organising themselves, and to prevent them from becoming

connected to the mass and the mass to them; it is precisely by doing this that the monopoly bourgeoisie seeks to make the working class permanently incapable of acting in accordance with its proletarian class interests, in order by doing this to perpetuate the rule of the capitalist exploiters and their economy, despite the general crisis of capitalism.

At a certain level in the development of society the mass of the workers again and again spontaneously brings forth advanced elements from within its ranks, elements who are capable of developing, and ultimately do in fact develop, into class-conscious elements, 'head' elements (it also again and again draws to itself these kind of elements from other classes and strata) – however, the class-conscious elements are never ever able to reproduce the mass from within their ranks. The body develops the head from within itself – but the head is never ever able to develop the body from within itself. The mass constitutes the starting basis, the enduring living foundation, for the development and unfolding of the subjective revolutionary factor in the process of social revolution in general. The class-conscious elements, the 'head' elements of the class only emerge from the conditions of life experienced by the masses and the spontaneous struggle of the masses as the enduring, living basis for this. But it is only by means of these 'head' elements and their organisation, the proletarian class party, that the mass of the workers is able to raise itself above the low level of its spontaneous consciousness – which is at best trade union consciousness – to the level of class consciousness and consistently act accordingly, that the mass of the workers is able to increase its mass-strength to ultimately achieve revolutionary victory. Neither the spontaneous consciousness of the masses, nor the spontaneous struggle of the masses suffices to achieve victory for the mass of the workers, for the working class. The lack of clarity with regard to the reciprocal relationship between the Party and the mass, between the mass and the Party, underrating the leadership role of the Party, together with the party-political and political consequences that resulted from this, was a weakness of the German Lefts, led by the great revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg, prior to and during the First World War. In the last analysis this was the main reason why the proletarian-revolutionary party came into being so late in Germany, with all the consequences that this had.

> When the crisis broke out, the German workers still lacked a genuine revolutionary party, owing to the ***delay in the split*** and owing to the burden of the accursed tradition of 'unity' with capital's corrupt (Scheidemanns, Legiens, Davids & Co.) and spineless (Kautskys, Hilferdings & Co.) gang of lackeys. In every honest, class-conscious worker who accepted the Basle Manifesto of 1912 (against imperialist war; auth.) at face value and not as a subterfuge on the part of the scoundrels of the 'Second' and the 'Two-and-a-half' types, there arose incredibly bitter hatred for the opportunism of the old German Social Democracy, and this hatred – the greatest and noblest sentiment of the best people among the oppressed and exploited mass – blinded them and prevented them from thinking calmly and working out a correct strategy with which to reply to the excellent strategy of the capitalists who were armed and organised and had learnt from the 'Russian experience' and were supported by France, Britain and America. This hatred drove them to ***premature*** insurrections (Lenin, 1937, p.284).

II. A Class without a Head

The decapitation of the proletariat that the capitalist class, led by the monopoly bourgeoisie, carries out from the right by means of fascism, is taken care of from the 'left' by the anarchists 'with the best of intentions'. They reject the party altogether, the proletarian class party too. They demand the ***immediate*** liquidation of all parties, and therefore the proletarian-revolutionary party too; they demand that there should immediately be no parties at all, i.e. no party for the workers either. The fact that it is necessary to have a whole era of proletarian-democratic dictatorship in order – by means of enormous toil, exertions and struggles – to create the preconditions so that the workers, so that all human beings without exception, can do without a party – this the anarchists 'overlook'; they do not want to hear or know anything about this 'trifle'. Even when anarchism sets out with the best of intentions, it is in actual fact working to make the workers in effect incapable of acting, namely incapable of acting in their own class interests.

Because the proletarian class is not able to act on the line of the class interests of the workers without a proletarian-revolutionary party, the anarchist denial of the need for the proletarian state is also therefore at the same time already embedded in the anarchist rejection of any party altogether.

Modern anarchism does in a disguised way what the old anarchism did openly in a naive, brutal way; modern anarchism is for the directing, guiding and leading of the proletarian struggle, but – by the (anarchist) ***trade unions***. Yet the essence of a trade union consists precisely in the fact that it is not an organisation of the class-conscious minority, but an organisation that, as far as possible, embraces all workers – i.e. the non-class-conscious mass of the workers too – in short, it is a ***mass organisation***. A proletarian mass organisation ***as such***, on its own, and without receiving any guidance or leadership in the last analysis from a proletarian class party, is incapable of waging the struggle of the workers on the line of the proletarian class interests, because the huge predominance of the non-class-conscious members keeps the level of consciousness of the mass organisation below that of class consciousness. ***Revolutionary syndicalism*** therefore means – in a more modern and craftier form – denying the need for a party. Where and when the class struggle assumes the very sharpest forms, the anarchist trade unions and the revolutionary syndicalists are compelled to intervene in politics; their trade unions must then in actual fact take over the role of the Party, a task that – as mass organisations – they are, even with the best will in the world, not and cannot be equal to. The inevitable result of this each time is the (political) bankruptcy of the anarchist trade unions, of revolutionary syndicalism, for which the proletariat pays dearly with very serious defeats. This was most recently proved by the Spanish experience of 1936-39, when the anarchist trade union leaders even entered the 'People's' Front government and – in alliance with the left-bourgeoisie, the StP and the SP – brought about the Spanish catastrophe. At the same time, however, there is one thing we must not forget: where and when the anarchists and the revolutionary syndicalists succeed in catching hold of the masses more widely using their bankrupt teachings, this mostly occurs in consequence of the treachery committed beforehand by petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties such as the SP and the StP, whose workers-bureaucratic, workers-aristocratic, petty-bourgeoisified upper stratum – which is only concerned with its egotistical power and material advantages – has very badly shaken the confidence of the

masses in the of a party altogether and their confidence in the political struggle in general; this applies not only to the past, but also to the future.

Ultra-‘radicalism’ of all gradations works in actual fact in the direction of anarchism. It shifts the leadership role onto the masses (like, for example, the KAPD did after 1918 in the following way: ‘For the workers’ council – but against its leadership by the Communist Party’); but the right opportunists also shift the leadership role onto the masses, using an ultra-‘left’ ruse, namely when they want to evade or withdraw from an action that is absolutely necessary in the interests of the masses, an action that would necessitate a serious struggle against the bourgeoisie, and to save face in front of the masses – or ultra-‘radicalism’ in actual fact prevents the Party from fulfilling its leadership role (by means of politics that deprives the Party of the possibility of winning the trust and support of the masses – in organisational terms, for example, by negating party discipline, by having unlimited freedom of discussion, by demanding factional freedom even for a healthy revolutionary party, etc.). All such ultra-‘left’ deviations are tantamount to disarming the proletariat to the benefit of the bourgeoisie, because the proletarian class party is the weapon of all weapons, it is the main weapon of the working class. In this instance too ‘left’ doctrinarism, ultra-‘radicalism’ turns out to be a refined version of anarchism.

Without a head, without a Party, the proletariat cannot be victorious.

> If the revolution was not victorious at the end of the war, it was only because there was no Bolshevik party. This conclusion applies to Europe as a whole. [...]
>
> Without a party, outside a party, by circumventing a party or with a substitute for a party, the proletarian revolution cannot be victorious. This is the principal lesson of the past decade (Trotzki, 1925, p.44).

Without a head, without a party the strength of the masses does not work to their benefit, but serves the class enemy or dissipates, and in doing so also serves the class enemy. ‘Without an organisation that leads, the energy of the masses would evaporate like steam not enclosed in a piston box. But nevertheless, what moves things is neither the box nor the piston, but the steam’ (Trotzki, 1931a, p.11).

III. A Class with an Alien Head

When the consciousness of the worker masses is undeveloped or little-developed, this enables the class enemy or its henchmen to rope in more or less large sections of the proletarian masses into its parties to exploit them politically, to sponge on them politically and to make them subservient. Thus, for example, the German bourgeoisie drew the German workers into the (bourgeois) Democratic Party; detaching the German workers from the (bourgeois) Democratic Party and building up an organisationally independent workers party was Lasalle's, Wilhelm Liebknecht's and Bebel's great historical achievement. Thus, for example, even today we still see the upper stratum of the American workers (the AFL, as well as the bureaucracy in the CIO and the UMW) doing this in party terms within, and in the service of, the (capitalist) Republican Party or the (capitalist) Democratic Party, which by means of this upper stratum, draw nearly the entire multi-millioned mass of American workers behind them, lead them in the interests of the capitalist class, i.e. make use of them in the interests of the bourgeoisie – against the proletarian interests.

At a certain stage in the development of class relationships, when the workers have already become more clear-sighted and when the bourgeoisie is therefore no longer in a position to be able to sponge on the workers by means of a party ***directly*** itself, the accomplices of the capitalist class take over this role. Organised as (petty-bourgeois) 'workers' parties, the capitalist agents within the workers' movement adopt socialist, social-revolutionary, revolutionary-socialist or communist names; they brandish socialist, communist or revolutionary phrases as the occasion demands; they cite or 'base' themselves on Marx and Lenin who are in their graves and are as little able to defend themselves against the distortion of their teachings into their exact opposite as Jesus was able to defend himself against the falsification of his teachings into their exact opposite by the Church.

Workers who are trapped in a bourgeois party or in a party of the petty-bourgeois henchmen of the bourgeoisie in actual fact serve the interests of another class, interests that are hostile to the class interests of the workers. In critical situations, when the masses are pressing more and more vigorously for serious action against the bourgeoisie, the Social Democratic, Labour, Stalinist and other such Judas parties and the mass organisations that they lead resort to the trick of instigating actions that lead in a direction that is harmless to the capitalist class – in short, in order to ***dissipate*** the fighting strength of the masses. The class enemy is well served by this, because the dissipation of the energy of the masses has the effect, and is bound to have the effect, of weakening, of disintegrating the fighting strength of the masses. Using countless such dissipative actions (*Verpuffungsaktionen*), the SP, the StP, their auxiliary organisations and the proletarian mass organisations misled and misused by them, prepared the ground for the fascist dictatorship in Germany and Austria.

A class with an alien head is even worse off than a class without a head at all. For, under the blows of the continuous capitalist offensive that weighs heavily on them (wage-robbery, lengthening of labour time, intensification of labour, increasing taxes, prices and rents, job cuts, unemployment, etc.) it begins to dawn relatively soon, at first on the most advanced workers, and through them on the worker masses too, that they need the consistent leadership of the workers' struggle by a workers party. On the other hand, a class with a false head thinks that it already possesses a head of its own. Once it begins to sense that the head is not functioning in

the way that it needs it to and in the way that it would like it to and sees its task as one of improving, reforming the head, it strives to cure the head and make it fit for purpose for the working class. It takes a long time until – on the basis of bitter experience – a small minority and a very long time until the entire mass of the class – which in this case is being politically exploited, made use of and sponged upon in the interests of another class – realises that the alien head, namely the Judas party, cannot be reformed or cured and that the workers need neither a capitalist head nor a petty-bourgeois head, a Judas head, but their own head, the proletarian class head, namely the proletarian class party.

IV. The Composition of the Party

The Party is the organisation of the class-conscious minority for the purpose of leading the struggle of the entire mass of the working class. The non-class-conscious mass does not belong in the Party. We must not forget, says Lenin

> that the Party must be merely the vanguard, the leader of the enormous mass of the working class, the whole (or nearly the whole) of which works 'under the control and direction' of the Party organisations, but the whole of which does not and ***should not belong*** to the Party (Lenin, 1925b, p.81).

In order to position the actions of the worker masses on the line of the proletarian class interests and be able to keep them on this line, the Party must tie itself very closely to the masses, – both directly as a Party using all its resources, and indirectly by means of the proletarian mass organisations that in the last analysis are to be guided by the Party – it must be a ***revolutionary mass party***. This in no way means that the non-class-conscious masses would be incorporated into the Party; quite the contrary, because it is precisely in these circumstances that the class-conscious worker elements would become incapable of actually leading the actions of the entire class on the line of the proletarian class interests and of leading the mass of the workers upwards to the level of class consciousness. 'Lenin, therefore, demanded: […] the separation of the Party from the backward masses, in order then to free these masses from their backwardness' (Trotzki, 1931a, p.309). It is for this very reason that the ***petty-bourgeois mass parties*** draw the non-class-conscious worker masses into the party organisation, because in doing so they want to fetter, neutralise and paralyse the class-conscious, revolutionary worker-elements and because they do not want to guide and lead the actions of the workers on the proletarian class line, but on a line that is that of another class, a line that is parasitic, anti-proletarian and treacherous, as in the case of the SP, the LP and the StP. While systematically destroying, murdering and assassinating the proletarian-revolutionary elements, the Stalinist bureaucracy also systematically draws non-class-conscious elements into the Stalinist party by means of its '***Stalin levy***', in order to lower the consciousness of the party more and more below the level of revolutionary consciousness and ultimately to reposition it with treacherous petty-bourgeois consciousness as its basis.

The fact that the non-class-conscious ***mass*** does not belong in the Party does not mean to say that proletarian elements with still insufficiently developed consciousness should perhaps be kept away from the Party ***altogether***. It goes without saying that the Party does not admit ***backward*** elements, but it seeks out ***advanced*** worker elements and draws them into its ranks. These are worker elements who have not yet worked their way through to full class consciousness, but have within themselves the prerequisites to do this: those who are not permeated with selfishness, but are imbued with class solidarity and do not seek to benefit at the expense of other workers, but only act in accordance with the interests of all workers; those who are beginning to see through the essential characteristics of capital, of the bourgeoisie, of its petty-bourgeois lackeys and are filled with a deep urge to work their way through to full class consciousness, to a full understanding of the proletarian class struggle and to fight alongside in this struggle fighting steadfastly, courageously and perseveringly as a member of the proletarian vanguard and willing to make sacrifices. The Party should and must seek out such worker elements within the masses, pick them out and select them from among the masses, because it

can raise these elements to the level of class consciousness within a foreseeable future – but, even in their case too, not in unlimited numbers. It can only admit as many advanced workers as it is actually capable of 'digesting' in any given situation. How many depends above all on the moral, mental and political qualities of the class-conscious nucleus, its organisational firmness and its numerical strength. In periods of rising revolutionary momentum the Party will be able to act more generously than in periods of revolutionary decline, because under the conditions of revolutionary ascent it can align the advanced worker elements to party consciousness more easily and more quickly than would otherwise be the case.

Should the Party admit ***individuals from another class***? Rejecting them ***altogether*** is a crude anarchist view. Historical experience teaches us that every revolutionary movement was very considerably enriched by ***individuals*** from other classes, the proletarian-revolutionary movement too. Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky are the most prominent examples of this. The proletarian party should not on principle reject elements who are not from the working class but other classes. It can admit them if they position themselves consciously on the proletarian class line and adhere resolutely and faithfully to this position and prove this by their actions; such exceptions have occurred, occur and will occur again and again. But the Party should only admit them in a quantity that in actual fact is in keeping with the inner strength of the Party and the political and organisational firmness of its class-conscious nucleus and its proletarian membership as a whole. The worker element in the Party, above all in its class-conscious nucleus, must ***at all times*** be and continue to be the axis of the Party – not only must the overwhelming majority of the Party members always be the best worker elements, but also the overwhelming majority of all the key positions and nodal points in the Party, its auxiliary organisations and the proletarian mass organisations it leads, must always be filled by the best working-class elements who are conscious, clear and firm. Individuals from another class must fulfil higher conditions – they must undergo a stiffer test than the working-class candidates and are subject to stricter control by the Party as a whole.

> I flatly deny that the socialist workers party of any country is charged with the task of taking into its fold – in addition to the rural proletarians and the small peasants – the middle and big peasants as well, or even tenant farmers renting big estates, the capitalist cattle breeders and other capitalist exploiters of the country. To all of them, the feudality of landownership may appear to be a common foe and in certain questions we may make common cause with them and be able to fight side by side with them for a period of time for certain aims. We can, admittedly, use in our Party ***individuals*** from every class of society, but have no use whatever for capitalist, or middle-bourgeois or middle-peasant ***interest groups***. [...]
>
> It is not, however, in our interests to win the peasant overnight, only to lose him again on the morrow, if we cannot keep our promises. We have ***no*** more use for a peasant ***as a Party member***, if he expects us to perpetuate his property in his small holding, than for a small handicraftsman who wants to be perpetuated as a master. These people belong to the anti-Semites. Let them go to the anti-Semites and obtain from them the promise to salvage their small enterprises. Once they learn what these glittering phrases really amount to [...], they will

> realise in ever-increasing measure that we, who promise less and look for salvation in an entirely different direction are after all more reliable people. [...]
>
> Firstly, the French programme is absolutely correct in stating that we foresee the inevitable decline of the small peasant, but that it is not our job to hasten it by any interference on our part. Secondly, it is just as evident that when we are in possession of the state power, we shall not even think of forcibly expropriating the small peasants (regardless of whether it is with or without compensation), as we shall have to do in the case of the big landowners. Our task with regard to the small peasant consists, in the first place, in effecting a transition of his private enterprise and private property to a cooperative one, not forcibly, but by means of example and by offering social assistance for this purpose (Engels, 1931, pp.143-144, 147, 147-148).

The most important practical example is the penetration of ***petty-bourgeois*** elements into the Party. The fact that the SP threw open its doors to the middle masses, indeed even to small and medium-sized entrepreneurs, contributed very considerably to the petty-bourgeoisification of the SP in particular. It wanted to become a '***People's Party***' and became one by recruiting the middle ***masses*** as well. This accelerated its degeneration into a petty-bourgeois party. An alliance with the genuine, exploited middle strata in town and country under the leadership of the proletariat is indispensably necessary, but under the leadership of the working class. This alliance, however, must never ever be realised ***within*** the Party, because if the Party were to be inundated with elements from the middle strata, it would inevitably begin to waver and therefore would ***not*** be able to provide ***firm*** leadership, indeed it will no longer be able to ***provide proletarian-revolutionary leadership.***

An alliance with the middle strata within the Party inevitably takes effect as an alliance with the petty bourgeois on a ***petty-bourgeois*** line and under petty-bourgeois leadership! The proletarian party can and must bring about this alliance, but it must be ***under the leadership of the working class*** and for this very reason must not admit petty-bourgeois ***masses***, but only small-peasant/small-farmer or petty-bourgeois ***individuals***, who position themselves consciously and in actual fact on the line of the proletarian class interests; indeed the Party must only admit them in numbers that it can tolerate and 'digest' at any given time, whereby the vast majority of all the important posts in the Party, its auxiliary organisations and the proletarian mass organisations it leads must be and remain in the hands of the conscious worker elements.

> Social Democracy has fought and is quite rightly fighting against the bourgeois-democratic misuse of the word 'people'. It demands that this word shall not be used to cover up a failure to understand the class antagonisms within the people. It insists on the ***ABSOLUTE NECESSITY FOR COMPLETE CLASS INDEPENDENCE FOR THE PARTY OF THE PROLETARIAT***. But it divides the 'people' into 'classes', not in order that the class that constitutes the vanguard, shuts itself off from the other classes, [...] and paralyses its activity for fear that the economic rulers of the world will turn away, but in order that the most advanced class***, unhampered by the halfheartedness, vacillation and indecision of the intermediate classes***, and therefore with all the more energy and enthusiasm may ***fight for the cause of the whole of the people, at the head of the whole of the people*****!** (Lenin, 1934c, pp.102-103).

> After we have seized power, we need a Communist party, which, in its composition, is a workers party and ***does not admit petty-bourgeois elements***. It can form temporary political alliances with the latter, but ***not within the party***; it cannot admit petty-bourgeois elements and form an alliance with them within the party (Kommunistische Internationale, 1921, p.74)

– it goes without saying that this is equally valid in the period prior to establishing proletarian power.

The penetration of individuals from other classes, in particular petty-bourgeois elements, into the Party can also take place ***from within*** the Party, by means of degeneration through workers-bureaucratic, workers-aristocratic elements gradually adopting petty-bourgeois consciousness and ultimately petty-bourgeois material interests too, thus becoming petty bourgeois. The long-term betrayal by the LP, the gigantic betrayal by the SP and the even more gigantic betrayal by the StP enjoins the proletarian party to constantly pay the highest degree of attention to all manifestations of degeneration and all processes of class change within the Party. It must counter them right from the outset! This is part of the effective struggle against bureaucratism. From time to time the Party must resort to the method of ***purging*** and cleansing the ***Party*** – not a ***Stalinist purging***, which drives, pushes the revolutionary elements out of the Party, but a Leninist purging, which cleanses the Party of degenerated and degenerating elements who are becoming alienated from the working class, are seeking to raise themselves above the working class, are above all concerned about their own egotistical interests, who want to suppress party democracy and seek to cloud and lower the party consciousness by using dirty methods, poisonous methods and by systematically keeping silent about certain matters, or twisting, distorting, and falsifying them.

The penetration by the class enemy into the Party from the outside can also take place ***in a masked form*** and in various ways. When this occurs the Party must not let itself be deceived by über-'radical' activity and gestures. The history of all revolutions teaches us that internal and external enemies of the revolutionary class allow their secret agents (spies, provocateurs, etc.) to appear within the revolutionary party in an ultra-'radical' disguise too, as cover for their consciously treacherous role. At the same time historical experience shows us that it is precisely the most thoroughly honest ultra-'lefts', who are mostly also the most inexperienced elements, that fall most easily for this trick and in good faith seek to cover and protect these dangerous crooks. It goes without saying that the class enemy makes use of elements who are especially cunning, including demoralised worker elements for such services.

> The emissary to Germany [...] has everywhere recruited only the most reliable people into the League (namely into its secret organisation; auth.) and left the expansion of the League to their greater local knowledge. It will depend on local conditions, whether the convinced revolutionaries can be enlisted into the League. Where this is not possible, a second class of League members must be created for those people who are reliable and make useful revolutionaries, but

> who do not yet understand the full communist implications[32] of the present movement. This second class, to whom the association must be portrayed as a merely local or regional affair, must remain under the continuous leadership of the actual League members and committees. With the help of these further contacts, the League's influence, especially on the peasants' clubs and sports clubs, can be very firmly organised (Marx, 1885, p.87).

When Marx wrote this nearly 100 years ago, after the defeat of the 1848 Revolution, the issue was one of building up a ***secret*** revolutionary organisation under counter-revolutionary conditions. Today the proletarian revolutionaries are to a greater or lesser extent faced with the task of building up their organisation under the most severe counter-revolutionary conditions, and in doing this they must bear in mind that even after conditions improve, setbacks can occur and indeed will certainly occur, setbacks which the organisation must be equal to. With regard to the composition of the Party a consistently strict standard must nowadays be applied whatever the conditions.

In principle, it is not impermissible that even ***capitalists*** could be members of the proletarian class party provided they – wholeheartedly – position themselves on a proletarian-revolutionary line, support the proletarian-revolutionary party with all their strength, never expect the Party to espouse their capitalist interests, but on the contrary, consistently take part in its struggle against capitalism, against capitalist property in the means of production, against the capitalist class, against the capitalist state – doing this will as a rule only be possible for them in secret – only then are they proletarian revolutionaries, and can be full members of the proletarian-revolutionary party. Such instances will occur extremely rarely but cannot be completely ruled out.

[32] In the original version of Melt's work the word *Konsequenzen* was replaced by *Grundsätze* (principles). It is unclear whether this was a typographical error or an amendment by Melt in the interests of clarity; trans.

V. Autonomy and Independence of the Party Under All Circumstances – Organisationally and Politically

In order to fulfil its leadership role, the proletarian class party must be and remain autonomous and independent under all circumstances – organisationally and politically. If it is a part of another party, if it is tied to another party's discipline – politically or organisationally – then it loses its freedom to act on a ***proletarian-revolutionary*** line and in essence can only act to the advantage of some other class line.

Umbrella organisations do not affect the organisational and political autonomy and independence of the participant organisations. An umbrella organisation is not a party organisation, but a confederation, a united front organisation of autonomous, independent parties. For example, the British Labour Party was one such organisation up until 1925. The formal 'unity party' of the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks from 1906-1912 was in actual fact an umbrella organisation, in which both the Bolshevik Party and the Menshevik Party – in the form of illegal party factions – *effectively* acted organisationally and politically as autonomous, independent party structures.

> Under certain circumstances the workers party can very well use other parties and party factions for its own purposes, but ***it must not subordinate itself to any other party*** (*Marx*, 1885, p.85).
>
> In order for the proletariat to be strong enough to be victorious on the crucial day, it is essential – and Marx and I have been advocating this ever since 1847 – for it to constitute a party in its own right, separate from and opposed to all the rest, a class-conscious class party (Engels, 1934, p.28).
>
> He [the Social Democrat] will never forget the need for a separate and independent class organisation of the proletariat that fights for Socialism (Lenin, 1925b, p.136).
>
> If Social Democracy were to neglect, even for a moment, its independent aims and the need (in all political situations and exigencies, in all political twists and turns) to give paramount importance to the development of the class consciousness of the proletariat and its independent political organisation – then participation in the provisional revolutionary government would be extremely dangerous. But then, we repeat, any other political step would be equally dangerous (ibid., p.149).
>
> ***PRESERVING THE IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE OF THE PARTY OF THE PROLETARIAT IS THE CONSTANT, IMMUTABLE, AND ABSOLUTE DUTY OF SOCIALISTS***. Whoever fails to fulfil this duty ceases in ***reality*** to be a socialist, however sincere their 'socialist' (in words socialist) convictions may be (ibid., p.180).
>
> ***THE EXISTENCE OF INDEPENDENT COMMUNIST PARTIES AND THEIR COMPLETE FREEDOM OF ACTION WITH RESPECT TO THE BOURGEOISIE AND COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY SOCIAL DEMOCRACY IS THE MOST IMPORTANT HISTORICAL ACHIEVEMENT OF THE PROLETARIAT, AND***

> ***ONE THAT THE COMMUNISTS WILL NOT RELINQUISH UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.*** Only the Communist parties fight for the interests of the proletariat ***as a whole*** (Kommunistische Internationale*,* 1923, p.14).
>
> Without assuring the complete theoretical, political and organisational independence of the Communist party, all talk about 'two paths' is a mockery of Bolshevism[33] (Trotsky, [1927] 1932b, p.41).

'In the bourgeois revolution, the proletariat must absolutely ensure the independence of its own party – at any price, cost what it may' (Trotsky, [1927] 1932b, p.95) – by which Trotsky is in no way meaning to say that the same thing might not be valid in the proletarian revolution – indeed, quite the contrary.

> The Communist Party cannot fulfil its mission except by preserving, completely and unconditionally, its political and organisational independence in relation to the other parties and organisations, both within the working class and outside it. ***TRANSGRESSING THIS FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE OF MARXIST POLITICS IS TO COMMIT THE MOST HEINOUS OF CRIMES AGAINST THE INTERESTS OF THE PROLETARIAT AS A CLASS.*** The Chinese Revolution of 1925-1927 perished precisely because the Comintern, under the leadership of Stalin and Bukharin, forced the Chinese Communist Party to enter into the Kuomintang, the party of the Chinese bourgeoisie, and to submit to its discipline. [...]
>
> The struggle of the Left Opposition for the maintainance of the complete and absolute independence of the Communist Party and its policies under each and every historical condition, and ***at every stage of the development of the proletariat***, led to sharpened relations between the Opposition and Stalin's faction during the period of Stalin's bloc with Chiang Kai-shek, Wang Chin-wei, Purcell, LaFollette, Radić, etc. […]
>
> Complete organisational and political independence of the Communist Party ***at all times and under all conditions*** (Trotzki, 1932c, pp.24, 25, 114).

Not only a Party that is already fully developed, but also its proletarian-revolutionary nucleus must without fail safeguard its organisational and political autonomy and independence once it has ceased to be a party faction, once it has made itself independent and once it has openly, in front of the masses, taken upon itself the task of forming a proletarian class party.

> The Communist International must temporarily make common cause, indeed even form an alliance with the revolutionary movement in the colonies and the backward countries, but it must not unite with it; on the contrary, it must ***without fail*** maintain the independent character of the proletarian movement – ***even when it is in its embryonic form*** (Kommunistische Internationale, 1920, p.65).

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[33] This quotation and subsequent quotations from this source were translated into German by Melt for his original 1944 (German) edition of this work. In this English edition the translators have used Trotsky's original English text; trans.

It is imperative that the proletarian class party safeguards its organisational and political autonomy and independence, not only in relation to every other party, but also with regard to every other organisation, including the capitalist state too, no matter what form it assumes and no matter who takes part in exercising capitalist state power or leads it. Regardless of whether the capitalist dictatorship operates with a democratic cloak or openly, or whether it is exercised directly or indirectly by the bourgeoisie – be it by its fascist robber servants or be it by its Social Democratic, Labour or Stalinist robber lackeys and the like – it is imperative that the proletarian class party safeguards its organisational and political autonomy and independence in relation to them and their orders, rules, regulations and 'laws', even if they pretend that these are issued 'in the name of the people'. In view of the fact that the capitalist bandits, their torturers and their lackeys do their utmost to tie the hands of the proletarian class party by means of subterfuge and force, to paralyse it and force it to pursue a policy that is in the interests of the bourgeoisie, its servants and lackeys and is against the interests of the proletarian revolution, the working class and the proletarian state, the proletarian party is ***duty bound*** – in order to fulfil its leadership role – to build up and keep alive a party organisation that leads the struggle of the masses, in spite of the continuous counter-exertions of the capitalist class, its torturers and its lackeys, counter-exertions carried out using all available means. As long as the bourgeoisie is not irrevocably defeated, as long as the dictatorship of proletarian democracy is not rock-solid and unshakable, the proletarian party must under all circumstances and at all times have, safeguard and build up its ***illegal organisation***, without letting itself be deceived by temporarily 'better' times, apparent backing down or cunning tactical turns on the part of the class enemy and its torturers and lackeys. At the same time the proletarian party makes use in an appropriate manner of all legal opportunities that are to the advantage of the proletarian-revolutionary movement. For this purpose, it creates legal organs, a legal organisation in one form or another that is, and continues to be, in actual fact politically and organisationally subordinated to the illegal party organisation. It goes without saying that, as both an illegal and a legal organisation, the proletarian party takes into consideration tactically all obstacles, restrictions and exertions directed against it by the class enemy and its servants and lackeys – just like in its actions an army in combat takes into consideration the exertions of the enemy and its servants and lackeys and the obstacles and restrictions they create on the ground, without even for one moment giving up the unconditional, comprehensive autonomy and independence of its organisation of struggle.

VI. The Need for Leadership of the Party Itself

In order that the Party can fulfil its leadership role, it itself requires to be an organisation with correspondingly good leadership and good ***leaders***. Disputing the need for leadership by the Party and the need to have good leaders is tantamount to the anarchist rejection of the any party at all. Sometimes this incorrect view is couched in such formulations as leadership by the Party 'from below' or leadership 'by the masses themselves' and the like. We need to understand

> that without the 'dozen' tried and talented leaders (and talented people are not born by the hundreds), professionally trained, schooled by long experience and working in perfect harmony, no class in modern society can wage a determined struggle (Lenin, [1902] 1925b, pp.73-74).
>
> that politics is a science and an art that does not fall from the skies or come gratis, and that, if it wants to defeat the bourgeoisie, the proletariat must produce its *own* proletarian 'class politicians', of a kind that are in no way inferior to bourgeois politicians (Lenin, 1920b, p.59).
>
> From the extraordinary significance which Lenin's arrival received (in Petrograd, at the beginning of April 1917; auth.), it should only be inferred that leaders do not arise by chance, that their selection and training requires decades, that they cannot be arbitrarily replaced, that their mechanical exclusion from the struggle inflicts an open wound on the Party and in certain circumstances may paralyse it for a long period of time (Trotzki: 1931a, p.319).

It is for this very reason that the class enemy seeks to get rid of the proletarian-revolutionary leaders, in order to paralyse the proletarian class party and by doing this paralyse the working class; see, for example, the murder of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht. Nothing highlights the class-hostile role of Stalin and his bureaucracy so glaringly as his systematic murdering of the proletarian-revolutionary leaders, above all Trotsky.

VII. What does Revolutionary Leadership Mean?

1. Revolutionary leadership means: looking ahead!

In the first instance leadership means ***looking ahead***. We expect a mountain guide to know the way well, and also that they are capable of assessing correctly and in good time foreseeable changes that can occur during a mountain climb. This also applies to political leadership. The Party must know the course of development, its fundamental driving forces and tendencies; on this basis it must continuously work out a picture that is as correct as possible in terms of the concrete form that the historical process will assume in the foreseeable future in terms of its important turns from stage to stage. 'The task of a Marxist prognosis is to help in orientating in the general direction of developments and to be forearmed against 'surprises'' (Trotzki, 1931d, p.2).

The Party cannot foresee everything.

> We cannot know, at what speed and how successfully the various historical movements in a given epoch will develop, but we can and do know ***which class*** is at the hub of one epoch or another, determining its essential content, the main direction of its development, the most important characteristics of the historical situation in that epoch, etc. (Lenin, 1929, p.135).
>
> Clearly any attempt at making forecasts of this sort about future developments can only be of a conditional and orientating nature. But without such attempts we would be doomed to wander in the dark (Trotzki,1926b, p.82).
>
> In reality, however, the February Revolution led to a bourgeois government, in which the power of the propertied classes was restricted by the not yet fully realised power of the workers' and soldiers' soviets. […] Instead of a revolutionary dictatorship […] a shaky regime of dual power was established, […]. Nobody had foreseen this regime. And indeed, one cannot demand from a prognosis that it shows not only the fundamental tendencies but also their episodic conjunctures (Trotzki, 1931a, pp.304-305).
>
> Every critical situation has sources of uncertainty. Moods, views and forces, hostile and friendly, are only formed in the very process of the crisis. They cannot be calculated mathematically in advance. They must be measured in the process of the struggle, through struggle and, on the basis of these living assessments, necessary corrections must be made to our own politics (Trotzki, 1930c, p.11).

We must ***TAKE UP THE STRUGGLE AND IN THE COURSE OF THE STRUGGLE, ON THE BASIS OF EXPERIENCE GAINED IN THE STRUGGLE, CORRECT OUR ANALYSIS AND MAKE IT MORE PRECISE*** (see Trotzki, 1936c, p.35).

> It is impossible in advance to foresee what concrete stages the revolutionary mobilisation of the masses will pass through. The sections of the Fourth International must critically orientate themselves for each new stage and advance slogans that will further the striving of the workers for independent politics, deepen the class character of these politics, destroy reformist and

> pacifist illusions, strengthen the connection between the vanguard and the masses and prepare the revolutionary seizure of power (Trotzki, 1938, p.18).
>
> In our epoch of ***abrupt turns*** the greatest difficulty for a revolutionary leadership [lies] in being able to feel the pulse of political events at the moment concerned, so as to catch any sharp change in direction and turn the helm ***in time*** (Trotzki, 1929, p.87).
>
> To lead means, at least to some degree, looking ahead. Stalin's faction has not in the slightest foreseen the inevitable results of developments, which went over its head every time. It reacted to this with administrative reflexes. Stalin's faction created the theory for each of its turns after the fact, without being bothered about what it was teaching yesterday (Trotzki, 1936a, p.87).
>
> The real development of ideas knew also, before the emergence of the 'General Line', the ***METHOD OF SUCCESSIVE APPROXIMATIONS TO THE TRUTH***. Even in simple division in arithmetic it is necessary to experiment in the selection of digits by either beginning with the large digits or with the small ones and then reject all but one in the process of testing. In ranging the target in artillery fire the method of successive approximations is known as 'bracketing'. There is absolutely no avoiding the method of approximation in politics either. The whole point is to understand ***in a timely fashion*** that a miss is a miss and make the necessary corrections without delay (Trotzki, 1930b, p.120).

More or less big mistakes in looking ahead are, to a certain degree, inevitable; however, they must not be too big and must be recognised as soon as possible and be corrected as quickly as possible. If this happens, then it is precisely from such mistakes that the Party and the working class learn most quickly. 'A large class, like a great nation, never learns more quickly than by undergoing the consequences of its own mistakes' (Engels, 1931, p.131). Mistakes only become a real and serious danger if they are very big and persist, or if they develop into a whole ***chain*** of mistakes, become a mistaken, incorrect ***line***.

For the art of revolutionary foresight, it is especially important to foresee the ***changes in the consciousness of the masses*** as correctly as possible. 'A revolutionary party bases its tactics upon a calculation of the changes in the consciousness of the masses. The historic course of Bolshevism demonstrates that such a calculation is possible, at least in its rough outlines. [...] The art of revolutionary leadership, in its most critical moments, consists nine-tenths in ***being able to listen to the masses***, […]'. Trotsky condemns the lacklustre and pretentious intelligentsia 'burning with desire to teach the masses, to be their guardian and benefactor, but completely incapable of listening to them, understanding them, and ***learning from them***. And without learning from the masses there can be no revolutionary politics' (Trotzki, 1931a, pp.11, 124, 228).

> Revolutions take place according to certain laws. This does not mean that the masses in action take account clearly of the laws of revolution; but it does mean that the changes in the mass consciousness are not accidental but are subject to an objective necessity that is capable of theoretical explanation and thus creates a basis for both foresight and leadership. [...]

> For Bolshevism the aristocratic scorn for the ***independent experience of the masses*** was completely alien. On the contrary, the Bolsheviks took this as their point of departure and built upon it. Therein lay one of their great merits (Trotzki, 1933a, pp.xii, 283).

For Marxists, for Leninists ***agitation*** *is always* ***a dialogue with the masses***.

> But in order that this dialogue produces the necessary results, the Party must correctly assess the general situation within the country and outline the general course of the coming struggle. By means of agitation and ***probing the masses***, the Party must make the necessary corrections and adjustments to its standpoint, particularly with regard to the ***tempo of movement and the dates for major actions*** (Trotzki, 1936c, p.51).

> During a transitional epoch, the workers' movement does not have a systematic and well-balanced character, but a feverish and explosive one. Slogans and organisational forms must be subordinated to this character of the movement. Avoiding routine like the plague, the leadership ***must respond sensitively to the initiative of the masses*** (Trotzki, 1938, p.7).

Lenin repeatedly emphasised that the leadership must learn ***from the masses*** – for example:

> Under no circumstances does Marxism confine itself to those forms of struggle that are feasible and are in existence at only the given moment, but on the contrary recognises that new ***forms of struggle, unknown*** to the participants of the given ***period inevitably*** arise as the given social situation changes. In this respect Marxism ***learns*** [...] from the ***practical activity of the masses*** (Lenin, 1925b, p.191).

2. Revolutionary leadership means: <u>acting</u>!

Without looking ahead there can be no leadership; but looking ahead on its own does not suffice. Leadership means ***acting***, means looking ahead ***and*** acting, means ***acting with foresight***. The ***revolutionary will to act***, the revolutionary will to fight is the basic prerequisite for revolutionary leadership; the greatest skill in looking ahead is not worth a damn if it is not borne by a will to act, by a resolute will to fight. By means of revolutionary foresight, the revolutionary will to fight is turned into a specific decision to fight, into a decision to carry out specific actions in the struggle, into action, into guiding the masses towards specific actions and into leading the masses towards and during specific actions in the struggle. 'A revolutionary conception without a revolutionary will is like a watch with a broken spring: [...] But the absence of a broad political conception condemns the most strong-willed politician to indecisiveness when big and complicated events take place' (Trotzki, 1931a, p.280). The first refers to Kamenev, the second to Stalin, but it can be applied universally.

Inaction is the biggest mistake of all in revolutionary politics. Inaction means supporting those who have the power and rule, that is to say the exploiters and oppressors. Even someone who does not act, is leading, but is leading with dead certainty into defeat. This also applies to someone who, with the 'best of intentions', does not act in order to avoid committing errors,

making mistakes. Someone who acts cannot avoid errors and mistakes but learns from the mistakes in order to do things better in future; the leaders, the Party and the masses learn from their mistakes.

> In appraising a situation, he [Lenin] always conceived the Party as an active force operating at the centre of the situation. He viewed with particular hostility – or more accurately, disgust – the Austro-Marxism of Otto Bauer, Hilferding and others for whom theoretical analysis consists merely of learned commentaries of ***passivity***. Prudence is a brake, not a motive force. Nobody has ever made a journey on brakes, and nobody has ever created anything great out of prudence. But at the same time the Bolsheviks knew well that the struggle demands a calculation of forces – that one must be ***prudent*** to win the right to be ***bold*** (Trotzki, 1933a, p.289).

Revolutionary leadership must not content itself with the role of a learned observer who simply explains the social process, but rather it must go beyond this and actively intervene in this process in order to change the social conditions; it must guide the masses towards action in order to influence, further and accelerate the process of social development and to develop and unfold the social contradictions of this process in the direction of the proletarian class interests until the complete victory of the international proletarian revolution is achieved. 'It is not enough to call ourselves the 'vanguard', the advanced contingent. We must also ***act in such a way*** that *all* the other contingents recognise and are obliged to admit that we ***are marching at their head***' (Lenin, 1925b, p.53).

Inaction in decisive questions is synonymous with ***capitulation***. As a result of their policy of inaction, as a result of their policy of capitulation, the SP and the StP have made it possible for the monopoly bourgeoisie to establish its fascist dictatorship; the fact that they concealed their inaction with regard to the power question by means of action in subsidiary questions and by means of sham actions disguised by demagogy, does not alter the fact that their conduct amounted to capitulation, and is only one more proof of their gigantic betrayal. The SP's and the StP's policy of capitulation has led militant, but completely inexperienced workers to the incorrect point of view that what matters is ***activism per se***. Some of them who, in consequence of their inexperience, did not see through the 'socialist' demagogy of the Nazis, were led astray by the activism of the Nazis. Neither the working class nor the proletarian revolution is helped by ***actions per se***; only goal-conscious actions, only actions on the proletarian class line, only actions on the basis of revolutionary foresight constitutes ***revolutionary leadership***.

Revolutionary leadership demands revolutionary action, i.e. action directed ***against the class enemy of the workers***, against the capitalist class, against the basic roots of its power, against its ownership of the decisive means of production and against the capitalist state.

It is not the case that the SP, the LP, the StP and the degenerated bureaucracy of the trade unions and the cooperatives are not prepared to act at all; on the contrary they are extremely active, and do act, but they do not act or lead in a revolutionary manner, they do not act to the advantage of the world revolution and the world proletariat (including the proletarian state), but act and lead in an ***anti-revolutionary manner*** – against the international proletarian revolution,

against the world working class (including the proletarian state), against Socialism and Communism; they act in effect to the advantage of world capitalism and the world bourgeoisie.

3. Revolutionary leadership means: <u>convincing</u> the masses!

Revolutionary leadership means acting, but acting ***against the enemy***, against its torturers and lackeys, and not against the workers, not against the masses. Revolutionary leadership means guiding the worker masses, indeed all the exploited and oppressed masses towards and during the struggle against the exploiters and oppressors. ***Revolutionary*** leadership must not and can not become a reality through action, through deeds or coercion against the masses, but singly and solely by ***convincing*** the workers, the exploited and the oppressed. This does not rule out coercion ***altogether***; on the contrary coercion is permitted, but ***only*** if it is based on a ***free*** and honest voluntary decision, on honest democracy in the Party, the workplace, the trade unions, the cooperatives and the soviets, and ***only*** when the coercion flows from the ***unforced,*** conscious, voluntary, freely made decision of workers' democracy, of proletarian democracy that after all encompasses democracy for all toiling people. The leaders, the leadership must not develop into large or small dictators along the lines of the 'great' Stalin, or the Stalinist bureaucrats generally, nor the more skillfully 'democratically', disguised party bureaucracy, trade union bureaucracy, co-operatives' bureaucracy, etc. of the SP, the LP, the AFL, the CIO, the MWU, etc. Revolutionary leadership presupposes a ***correct long-term relationship with the masses***, a ***relationship of trust*** between the masses and the leadership, and between the leadership and the masses, that is based on clear conviction and on the never-ceasing work of the leadership to convince the masses again and again in every single specific case; ***and*** this must at the same time go hand in hand with the honest, consistent efforts of the leadership to raise the masses it is leading higher and higher to ***independent revolutionary thinking and judging***, that is to say to raise their consciousness, to raise the consciousness of the masses more and more to the level of party consciousness, to the level of class consciousness. If the Party repels the masses or keeps itself at a distance from the masses or does not connect with the masses (***sectarianism***), or if it acts in place of the masses (***putschism***), then it is not leading them, cannot lead them. The revolutionary party must lead or it is not a revolutionary party; it can only lead if it connects with the masses and binds itself to them; it leads the masses only through convincing them.

VIII. The Qualities Necessary for Revolutionary Leadership

The Party has the task of leading the entire struggle of the working class and must work at itself perseveringly so that it learns to understand, to master ***all forms, aspects, means, methods and kinds of struggle***. In order to accomplish its tasks, the revolutionary class must know how to

> master all forms or aspects of social activity without exception (and after the conquest of political power, completing – often at great risk and with very great danger – what it did not complete before the conquest of power); [...]
>
> In politics it is even harder to know in advance which methods of struggle will be applicable and to our advantage in one set of circumstances or another. Unless we master all the methods of struggle, we may suffer a grave and often even a decisive defeat, if changes beyond our control in the position of the other classes bring about the need to apply a form of struggle in which we are weak. If we master all the methods of struggle then victory will be certain, if we represent the interests of the truly advanced, truly revolutionary class, even if circumstances do not permit us to make use of the weapon that is the most dangerous to the enemy, the weapon that deals the swiftest mortal blow. [...]
>
> [Lenin demands that the Communist Party acquires the ability] to become masters of every sphere, every branch and every variety of political and cultural work.[...]
>
> We must learn and master every sphere of work and activity without exception, to overcome all difficulties and eradicate all bourgeois habits, traditions and methods. Any other way of dealing with this question is not serious, is mere childishness (Lenin, 1920b, pp.73, 73-74, 85, 94).

The Party has the task of guiding the proletariat's entire struggle, which again and again involves new, often very rapid, ***turns***, especially in the epoch of declining capitalist society. The revolutionary class must

> be prepared for the most rapid and unexpected replacement of one form (of social activity; auth.) by another […].
>
> [It is our duty as Communists] 'to master all forms and with the maximum rapidity, supplement one form with another, substitute one form for another and adapt our tactics to any change that has not been brought about by our class or by our exertions' (ibid., pp.73, 80).

This ***clarity*** and ***farsightedness*** only arise from a foundation of ***independent revolutionary thinking and judging***. The Party can never fulfil its revolutionary role with ***blind followers***, with blind executive organs of a higher will. Trotsky rightly reproached the Stalinist system: 'The selection of people takes place in conformity with the political line and the regime. The communist fighters are more and more frequently being replaced by sergeants of Communism' (Trotzki, 1930d, p.8); today, Stalinism has replaced the sergeants of Communism with sergeants of anti-Communism. ***ASSIDUOUS TRAINING OF THE PARTY MEMBERS TO***

ACHIEVE INDEPENDENT, REVOLUTIONARY THINKING AND JUDGING IS A FUNDAMENTAL CONDITION TO ENSURE THAT THE PROLETARIAN CLASS PARTY IS EQUAL TO ITS TASK OF REVOLUTIONARY LEADERSHIP. Being a talented speaker or writer is a very important aid for the art of leading the masses, but it is just an aid; they are only ***revolutionary*** aids in the service of a Party that makes the education of all its Party members without exception to achieve independent revolutionary thinking and judging as the conscious, enduring axis of its entire activity.

The Party must ***not vacillate***; the more clearheaded it is, the less it will do this. 'Whoever wants to ***help*** the waverers must first stop wavering themselves' (Lenin, [1917], 1925b, p.405) 'The latter (the petty-bourgeois revolutionary; auth.) wavers and stumbles at every turn of events' (Lenin, 1918b, p.63); but the party of the proletarian revolutionaries must not waver: 'The only class that can lead the working and exploited masses is the class that unswervingly follows its path without losing courage and without giving way to despair even at the most difficult, arduous and dangerous transitional stages. Hysterical outbursts are of no use to us. What we need is the steady advance of the iron battalions of the proletariat' (ibid., p.64).

At the same time the leadership must be ***flexible*** and resilient, however it must always only be flexible within the framework of the proletarian class interests. 'Flexibility was not, and now too, must not be the main trait of Bolshevism, but rather its *granite* ***hardness***' (Trotzki, 1929, p.129). Hardness means absolute loyalty and devotion to the proletarian class interests, i.e. to the proletarian-revolutionary principles.

The Party must be both ***cautious and clever*** and, on this basis, ***bold***. The Bolsheviks well knew 'that the struggle demanded a calculation of forces and that one must be cautious to win the right to be bold' (Trotzki, 1933a, p.289). The leadership must ***always look reality in the face*** and must not delude itself about anything, it must take account of things as they are; only on this basis can it develop ***revolutionary*** caution and ***revolutionary*** boldness.

The revolutionary party does not need to fear reality, because the fundamental objective tendencies of capitalist motion work in the interests of the proletarian revolution, and the ultimate victory of the working class is assured if the proletarian party fulfils its leadership role perseveringly and without faltering. On the other hand, 'those parties for whom developments have left no way out have never proved capable of looking reality in the face – just as a hopeless invalid is not capable of looking the reality of his illness in the face' (ibid., p.308). Trotsky wrote this about the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries, but it is equally applicable to the SP, LP and StP.

> Face reality squarely, do not seek the line of least resistance, call things by their right names; tell the masses the truth, no matter how bitter it may be; do not fear obstacles, be true and reliable, in little things as in big ones; base your actions on the logic of the class struggle; be bold, when the hour for action has struck – these are the rules of the Fourth International (Trotzki, 1938, p.26).

What matters is ***political*** audacity and, only ***on this basis,*** personal courage. 'Personal courage and political audacity are not always, as is well known, in perfect equilibrium' (Trotzki, 1933a, p.605). We do not accuse the StP, the SP and the LP of a lack of personal courage: it is not their personal cowardice but their ***political*** cowardice that has led to the enormous

catastrophes for the working class, for the whole of humanity – that they have replaced consistent struggle against the bourgeoisie with their own political subordination to the bourgeoisie.

The leadership must not work superficially; it must work thoroughly.

> The founder and teacher of the Party did not tolerate ***any slovenliness*** either in theory or in practical politics. He knew that an incorrect economic formula or an inattentive political observation takes cruel veangance in the hour of action. In defending his fastidiously attentive attitude with regard to every Party text, even the secondary ones, Lenin said more than once: 'this is not a trivial detail; we must have ***accuracy***; our agitators will learn this off by heart and not deviate from the text … We have a good Party', he would add (ibid., p.288).

A good leadership is unthinkable without certain ***moral*** qualities. It must be steadfast and indomitable; it must resist the small and large enticements of the class enemy, who again and again offers power, honours, prestige and advantages at the expense of the masses; and likewise the pressure from the class enemy. It must be faithful and devoted to the class interests of the workers, to the revolutionary principles and to the interests of the international proletarian revolution to the very end. It must always have within itself an active drive and urge for revolutionary action; the lack of this is often rooted in a lack of political clarity. The more revolutionary initiative is coupled with presence of mind, inward calm and cool-headedness throughout all the commotion that the struggle inevitably brings, the more successful it will be. In addition, the ability to be far-sighted, to rapidly gain an overview, and to rapidly orientate itself, the talent for imagination, the power of deduction all stem to a large extent from political clarity. A good leadership must have political intuition, sensitivity and instinct; it must be persevering, patient, tenacious and persistent; it must be cautious and clever and, on this basis, be decisive, active, energetic, brave and bold. Accumulating and raising these leadership qualities must be the direction of travel for the conscious selection and education of the Party.

The leadership, the Party should, must have political ambition, namely the ambition to do their utmost for the working class, for the world revolution, for the whole of human society. Trotsky embodied the utmost political ambition, but this was always, without exception, unconditionally subordinated to the class interests of the workers, to the interests of the proletarian revolution to the very end. Trotsky is thus – like the great example set by Marx, Engels and Lenin before him – forever a shining example to all class-conscious workers, to all proletarian revolutionaries and is enshrined in their hearts for evermore, like Marx, Engels and Lenin.

In contrast, the political ambition of someone like Stalin served and serves primarily themselves - rising to power, holding on to it, whatever the cost, even if the working class, the proletarian class character of the Soviet state and the proletarian revolution are destroyed in doing so – that was and is his true, his sole ultimate goal. Whatever antagonisms exist between them in other respects, he is entirely like ambitious politicians like Laval, Doriot, who on in the context of the capitalist state, passed through the Communist Party and were and are likewise inspired by nothing other than their own miserable ambition. Nor can we deny the greatness of Stalin, Laval, Doriot & Co.; they truly are great scoundrels who suck out as much of the strength of the proletariat as possible in order to gain power, prestige, etc. for themselves in the service

of the world exploiters and oppressors; they are – Stalin at any rate, at least objectively – to a greater or lesser extent big, gigantic parasites in the service of the gigantic capitalist predators, highly valued by them, but despised by all class-conscious workers, by all proletarian revolutionaries.

What all this highlights is that the role of revolutionary leadership incumbent on the proletarian class party is an exceedingly difficult one. Good ***leaders*** increase the striking power, the efficacy of the Party; the better the leaders it has, the better it will master its revolutionary leadership role. But even the best leaders cannot achieve anything revolutionary without the Party or if the Party is only an unconscious, weak-willed, passive tool in their hands. ***EVEN WITH THE VERY BEST LEADERS, REVOLUTIONARY LEADERSHIP CAN BECOME A REALITY SINGLY AND SOLELY THROUGH THE COLLECTIVE WORK OF THE ENTIRE PARTY***! This is precisely why the Party can only accomplish its task of revolutionary leadership successfully if two conditions exist and continue to exist enduringly in the Party: genuine, honest ***party democracy*** – this is the formal aspect – and the persistent guiding and educating of the entire Party membership to ***independent revolutionary thinking and judging***, so that they are in a position to fulfil their role in party democracy and use it with an ever higher level of class consciousness.

> Herein lies, among other things, the significance of party discipline and the party leaders (those who are worthy of the name): to work out – through the prolonged, persistent, varied, comprehensive efforts of ***all*** thinking representatives of a given class, the knowledge, experience and – in addition to knowledge and experience – political instinct necessary to solve complex political problems speedily and correctly (Lenin, 1920b, p.48).

> The Party is a complicated laboratory in which the slogans have been worked out on the basis of collective experience (Trotzki, 1933a, p.261).

But even when there is real collective leadership work, the Party will not operate ***entirely*** without mistakes.

> What applies to individuals also applies – with the necessary modifications – to politics and parties. It is not someone who makes no mistakes that is intelligent – there are no such people, nor can there be. It is someone whose mistakes are not particularly grave and is able to rectify them quickly and easily that is intelligent (Lenin, 1920b, p.17).

Even the most capable political leadership, even the very best proletarian class party cannot perform miracles. It too is subject to ***historical materialism***: it is and remains tied to the ***objective conditions***; political consciousness and political action are, like any kind of consciousness, in the last analysis determined by social existence.

> Correct leadership is […] a powerful lever for success. But that in no way means that the leadership can guarantee victory under all conditions. What is decisive in the last analysis, is the class struggle and the inner shifts taking place within the fighting masses (Trotzki, [1935] 1936b, p.29).

> The ability of the leadership is, of course, far from being a matter of indifference for the outcome of the struggle, but it is not the only factor and in the last analysis is not even the decisive one. […]
>
> On their part the Bolsheviks defeated petty-bourgeois democracy, not by virtue of the personal superiority of its leaders, but by virtue of a new correlation of social forces, namely that the proletariat had at last succeeded in winning the discontented peasantry over and leading it against the bourgeoisie (Trotzki, 1936a, p.88).

Once, however, the objective conditions are ***ripe***, the ultimate victory of the proletarian revolution depends ***decisively*** upon the proletarian-revolutionary party and its leadership. 'Once […] the objective prerequisites have matured, the key to the whole historical process passes into the hands of the subjective factor, i.e. the Party and its revolutionary leadership' (Trotzki, 1929, p.81). However, in these circumstances too, the revolutionary leadership must again and again correctly evaluate the objective conditions and changes, and again and again base its specific actions on this. 'The whole art of revolutionary politics consists in correctly coordinating objective analysis and subjective action' (Trotzki, [1924] 1926a, pp.9-10).

IX. Skipping Over the Leadership Role of the Party

No matter what form this takes, and regardless of whether it is carried out more or less consciously, as in the case of the opportunists, or unconsciously as is sometimes the case even with revolutionaries, in every case it plays into the hands of the class enemy of the workers, its servants and lackeys. Below we give some of the most important manifestations of this, but new ones appear again and again, are invented again and again.

1. Developments are to blame…

Developments, or evolution, are excellent terms that sum up the outcome of many complicated contexts, events, processes and struggles. If this is borne in mind then we can make excellent use of this very abbreviatory term. But one must not fabricate a 'god of developments' out of it, a god who, enthroned somewhere in the heavens above the processes and struggles, determines their outcome. This is exactly what the centrists have a predilection to do – in particular the Austro-'Marxists' and sometimes the Stalinists too – in order, in certain situations, to blur, to disguise their revolutionary passivity, their anti-revolutionary conduct.

Nothing evolves by itself, not in nature, not in society, and certainly not in class society. It is precisely here that 'developments' take place through the struggle between the classes: they are the result of the prevailing class struggles and are the line that links these results. Within the framework of the prevailing objective conditions this result depends on the struggle between the classes, which, on their part, from a certain stage on, are led by parties. Thus, for the proletariat, 'developments' are increasingly determined by its own struggle, the outcome of which is influenced to an ever greater degree by the quality and the strength of its leadership, that is to say its Party. Once the objective conditions for the victory of the working class are ripe – and they have been overripe for more than 20 years! – then 'developments' for the proletariat depend ***decisively*** on its Party. The enormous catastrophes in Italy, Germany and Austria were in the first instance brought about by the betrayal by the Social Democratic Party. Otto Bauer and his associates shifted the blame onto – developments… As far as the mistakes of the newly-formed Communist Party were concerned, these were excusable and were to a greater or lesser extent unavoidable consequences of its period of infancy; later on, however, the Stalinist parties played a crucial role in helping the Social Democratic parties turn 'developments' against the working class, against the proletarian revolution.

Likewise Social Democracy and, later on, the Stalinist bureaucracy too, used '***stabilisation***' as an excuse; in doing so they skipped over the fundamental circumstance that it was precisely the Social Democratic parties and, later on too, the Stalinist parties – through their politics, through their party role – who had enabled the (relative) stabilisation for the bourgeoisie.

Using 'developments' as an excuse sometimes also assumes more specific forms. For example, the Social Democratic leaders seek to conceal the role of their own party by using the argument that 'Lenin miscalculated', that he thought that the world revolution would definitely come, but that it failed to do so…

In reality, the world revolution did come, and indeed it did come in time. The revolutionary insurrections in Central Europe and the revolutionary ferment in Western Europe, 1918-20,

saved Soviet Russia: the imperialist powers could not finish their military intervention against the proletarian state. However, the hoped-for powerful upswing in the world revolution did not take place; on the contrary, it was eventually crushed and thwarted by the world bourgeoisie. Why? Because the Social Democratic Party and the mass organisations which it led, in particular the trade unions, instead of leading the millions upon millions of workers in all capitalist countries into the revolutionary struggle against the capitalist class, against the capitalist state, as was their duty, sprang to the aid of the bourgeoisie, allied themselves with the bourgeoisie against the world revolution; likewise the LP, the AFL, etc.

2. The war is to blame…

'The destruction caused by the war is to blame for your terrible situation!' – this was what Social Democracy told the masses in Germany, Austria, etc. after the First World War – there was nothing that could be done about it, one had to put up with it, one could at best alleviate things here and there somewhat, but in essence one had to make the best of it … With this it skipped over the fact that the world war was waged with the political support of Social Democracy and that it therefore shared the political responsibility for the devastation caused by the war. Secondly, with this it skipped over the fact that the imperialist war had not changed anything at all as regards the decisive facts, namely that the decisive means of production remained as before concentrated in the hands of the bank magnates, the big landowners, the mine owners, the factory owners, etc., in short the capitalists, and that the masses could very well have been helped by the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, and by the transition to a socialist organisation of production – for which the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist class was the indispensable precondition. But this was the very thing that the Social Democratic Party purposely did not want, and wanted, tried to conceal their anti-revolutionary, anti-socialist, anti-proletarian role, conduct by shouting that the war was to blame.

3. The crisis is to blame...

When the great economic crisis of 1929 more and more caused an ever more gigantic increase in the poverty of the masses, the Social Democratic parties cried: the economic crisis is to blame!... However, the crisis is the inevitable consequence of the contradictions of the capitalist system, which on their part are reflected in the day-to-day actions of the capitalists. Capitalist ownership of the means of production, production for market for the purpose of making profit, and the competition arising from this, inevitably has the following consequences: the expansion and boosting of production in accordance with the wishes and the profit interests of the capitalists – a reduction in the purchasing power of the masses relative to increasing production and therefore ultimately again and again relative overproduction, shutting down of workplaces, short-time working, job cuts, wage robbery, etc. The ***capitalist*** actions of the owners of the decisive means of production, the ***actions*** of the capitalist exploiters and oppressors are therefore to blame for the wretched conditions in which the masses live, for mass unemployment, etc.; there is, however, a remedy for this, namely ***revolutionary*** action, the revolutionary ***struggle*** of the working class for the overthrow and expropriation of the bourgeoisie, establishment of the proletarian-democratic state and the transition to organising

socialist production. But this is precisely what the Social Democratic parties and the Labour parties did not want and do not want. In order to blur their anti-revolutionary, anti-proletarian party role and to conceal the fact that they, in reality, support and protect capitalist property and the capitalist state by means of Social Democratic and Labour politics, they operated with the excuse that the crisis and mass unemployment were to blame.

4. The bourgeoisie is to blame…

This excuse is used in two ways.

Abstractly, the SP and the LP use it with the cry: 'Workers! Capitalism and the bourgeoisie are to blame for your miserable, wretched situation'. Is this cry true? It is perfectly true! But ***nowadays*** this constitutes only ***part*** of the truth and therefore ***on its own it is a falsehood***. When it was a matter of awakening, gathering and organising the workers for the very first time for a conscious struggle against the bourgeoisie this battle cry was ***at that time*** adequate. But over the course of many decades full of struggles, the working class, who followed this cry, had created powerful parties, the SP and the LP, and powerful mass organisations – trade unions, etc. led by the SP and the LP. Now, at last, it had the instruments for waging a successful struggle against the serpent tormenting it, against the bourgeoisie, against the capitalist system – and at the same time during these decades the objective conditions for the revolutionary victory of the working class and for maintaining this victory permanently had fully ripened, i.e. for the overthrow and expropriation of the bourgeoisie, the establishment of proletarian-democratic state power and organising socialist production. ***Now*** one could not and cannot any longer be content with the cry that capitalism, the bourgeoisie is to blame – indeed they are – but the SP, the LP, the StP, the degenerated bureaucracy of the trade unions and the cooperatives, etc. are also jointly to blame, because they do not lead the ***revolutionary*** struggle against the bourgeoisie ***at all***, but on the contrary, strive for, carry on their party alliance with the bourgeoisie, and strive for, carry on their collaboration between the trade unions, the cooperatives, etc. and the bourgeoisie, that is to say they act, they fight ***against*** the proletarian revolution, against the working class. The argument of the LP, the SP and the StP that 'the proletarian revolutionaries attack the SP, LP and StP, but not the bourgeoisie' is deliberate demagogy, because it is precisely in order to be able to guide, to lead the masses into the attack ***against*** the bourgeoisie that the proletarian revolutionaries ***must*** release the workers from the arms of the Social Democratic, Labour and Stalinist traitors and lead them over to the proletarian revolutionaries themselves. The fact that the Stalinists, frequently in other forms, in essence also join in the treacherous role played by Social Democracy and the LP (party collaboration with the bourgeoisie against the world revolution and the world proletariat, the proletarian state included) is not a counterargument, because those who argue in this way 'overlook' the trifle that the Stalinists are anything but communists and that in reality the Stalinist bureaucracy are consciously anti-communists, and their blind followers are unconsciously anti-communists.

Specifically, this excuse is used both by the Social Democratic parties and the Labour parties and by the Stalinist parties in order to conceal from the working class and blur the fact that they are to blame for the gigantic catastrophes. For years the Social Democratic leaders, propagandists and agitators have told us that the Italian, German and Austrian bourgeoisie were

to blame for the fact that it came to counter-revolution in Italy, Germany and Austria after the First World War. The blame for the catastrophe of the Chinese Revolution (1925-27) lies with the bourgeoisie of China and the imperialists, screeched the Stalinist bureaucracy. The British, French and American bourgeoisie are to blame for the catastrophe of the Spanish Revolution, cried the Social Democratic Party and the Stalinist Party in perfect harmony. And nowadays the Stalinist parties cry: the British and American bourgeoisie are to blame for the fact that in 1941 the Soviet Union came to be in a catastrophic situation in which it had no alternative but to fight against almost the entire power of Nazi Germany, which – with its back covered – was supported by the gigantic economic apparatus of the whole mainland Europe. Of course, the bourgeoisie helped Horthy, Mussolini, Pilsudski, Chiang Kai-shek, Seipel, Dollfuss, Schuschnigg, Hitler, Franco, etc., just as it helped Kornilov, Kerensky, Kolchak, Wrangel, etc. Without this help they would not have come to power, without this help they could not have maintained this power at all. The bourgeoisie cannot, from its capitalist class standpoint, act in any other way than help the capitalist robbers everywhere in the world against the proletariat. It has always acted in this way, it acts in this way today as well and will always act in this way. A party that, in front of the working class, claims to be a workers party ***must know this from the outset***. ***NEVER DO THE ACTIONS OF THE CAPITALIST CLASS CONSTITUTE AN EXCUSE FOR A WORKERS PARTY'S POLITICS OF DEFEAT. IT MUST NEVER INVOKE THIS TO EXCUSE ITSELF AND ITS POLITICS***.

The Social Democratic Parties, the Labour Party and Stalin's 'Communist' Parties were built up by the workers precisely so that the worker masses fight against, thwart and frustrate these actions of the bourgeoisie that are hostile to the workers! It is precisely for this purpose that the worker masses follow them! ***IT IS FUNDAMENTALLY IMPERMISSIBLE FOR A PARTY THAT CALLS ITSELF A WORKERS PARTY, TO CLAIM THAT 'THE BOURGEOISIE IS TO BLAME' IN THE EVENT OF DEFEATS AND CATASTROPHES. IT CAN, SHOULD AND MUST ACCUSE THE BOURGEOISIE. HOWEVER, WITH REGARD TO THE SUCCESS OF THE ACTIONS OF THE BOURGEOISIE THAT ARE HOSTILE TO THE WORKERS, AND THAT THE BOURGEOISIE WAS ABLE TO INFLICT CATASTROPHIC DEFEATS ON THE WORKING CLASS, AN HONEST, REAL WORKERS PARTY, AN HONEST, TRULY HONEST SOCIALIST OR COMMUNIST PARTY MUST SEEK THE CAUSES IN ITS OWN POLITICS AND ITS OWN ACTIONS.*** It must openly in front of the Party, in front of the working class, point out the main mistakes that have led to these catastrophic defeats, expose the roots of these mistakes and correct these in front of the Party, in front of the working class. The Social Democratic parties, the Stalinist parties, the Labour Party, etc. do the exact opposite; it is for this very reason that they also resort, amongst other things, to the fraudulent trick of writing: 'the bourgeoisie is to blame'.

The bourgeoisie is not here to pursue proletarian-revolutionary politics, to pursue politics that benefit of the world proletariat, the proletarian state, the world revolution, Socialism or Communism. The bourgeoisie cannot pursue any politics at all other than capitalist, anti-proletarian, anti-revolutionary politics, politics against Socialism and Communism, against world revolution, the world proletariat and the proletarian state and it pursues these politics, ***must*** pursue them – even if, for tactical reasons, a section of the bourgeoisie at times works in one form or another with the proletarian state – for example, in relation to the Second (imperialist) World War. To claim that 'capitalism, the bourgeoisie is to blame' ***in this way***, in the way the Social Democratic, the Labour and the Stalinist parties do, means taking the workers for fools,

dulling their minds; it is a demagogic effort to shift the blame for the gigantic proletarian catastrophes away from themselves, to deceive and mislead the workers.

Even after the First World War, the Italian, German and Austrian bourgeoisie could not pursue any politics other than counter-revolutionary politics. It was not the task of the bourgeoisie, but the task of Social Democracy to make use of the severe shock to capitalist rule and the capitalist economy caused by the world war, in order to lead the masses to revolutionary offensive, to revolutionary victory and to prevent or smash the counter-revolution. The Social Democratic parties of all countries had committed themselves to this revolutionary task at the World Congress of the Second International in Stuttgart (1907). However, Social Democracy sabotaged, betrayed the revolution; it did not want the revolution of the working class against the capitalist class; on the contrary, it wanted party collaboration, trade union collaboration, etc. with the capitalist class against the proletarian revolution; it left the capitalist class' property in the decisive means of production; it left the capitalist state apparatus intact in class terms and let the bourgeoisie keep all the sources of its enormous power – it was for this reason and for this reason only that the Italian, German and Austrian bourgeoisie were able to unfold their counter-revolution. ***THE BLAME FOR THE ITALIAN, GERMAN AND AUSTRIAN COUNTER-REVOLUTION LAY AND LIES SOLELY WITH SOCIAL DEMOCRACY (AND THE LABOUR PARTY); ADMITTEDLY, THE DECISIVE PART OF THE JOINT BLAME FOR THE VICTORY OF THE COUNTER-REVOLUTION IN GERMANY AND AUSTRIA LAY WITH THE STALINIST PARTY***.

From 1925 on, when the Chinese workers inevitably began to make their independent proletarian demands increasingly clear, the Chinese bourgeoisie too – like any bourgeoisie – could not pursue any bourgeois politics other than counter-revolutionary bourgeois politics, politics that were against the proletarian revolution, and indeed against the consistent completion of even the bourgeois-democratic revolution, in particular the agrarian revolution. Instead of mobilising and guiding the multi-millioned Chinese masses towards revolution against the Chinese bourgeoisie, the Stalinist bureaucracy formed a party alliance with the Chinese capitalists, an alliance that ***was*** inevitably ***bound to*** work against, and in fact did work against, the proletarian revolution, and indeed against the consistent completion of even the bourgeois-democratic revolution. Because, once the Chinese bourgeoisie had begun to turn its back on the bourgeois-democratic revolution, the national-revolutionary struggle for the liberation of China from imperialism too could and can only be waged successfully to the finish in the course of the revolutionary struggle of the Chinese masses under the leadership of the Chinese proletariat against the Chinese bourgeoisie. ***THE CONDITIONS FOR VICTORY IN CHINA WERE EXTREMELY FAVOURABLE; THE CATASTROPHE WAS BROUGHT ABOUT THROUGH THE ROLE PLAYED BY THE PARTY OF THE STALINIST BUREAUCRACY AND THE STALINIST COMINTERN AND, IN CONSEQUENCE OF THIS, THE CHINESE STALINIST PARTY TOO***.

There have never been more favourable conditions for the victory of the revolution than there were in Spain. The revolution could only have been victorious by fighting ***against*** the bourgeoisie. Instead of doing this the Stalinist/Social Democratic 'united front' formed the 'People's' Front, i.e. entered into a party alliance with the Republican section of the bourgeoisie ***against*** the proletarian revolution, against the working class. Thus, they led the Spanish Revolution into the abyss. The coalition with the Republican capitalists had the following

inevitable outcome: the agrarian revolution had to be prevented – it was bloodily suppressed; the right of national self-determination had to be withheld from the Moors, thus making it possible for Franco to mobilise them against the Spanish Revolution; the big Spanish landowners, including the Church, and the Spanish capitalists were not expropriated, nor was the capitalist state apparatus smashed, because otherwise the Republican capitalists would not have entered into the 'People's' Front. The ***SPANISH CATASTROPHE WAS CAUSED BY THE STALINIST PARTY AND THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY, THE STALINIST INTERNATIONAL AND THE 'SOCIALIST' INTERNATIONAL – AND ONLY BY THEM (EFFECTIVELY WITH THE HELP OF THE LP, AFL, etc***.).

Capitalism, the capitalists of all countries, the world bourgeoisie, is to blame for the World War. ***BUT THAT THE GERMAN, JAPANESE, ITALIAN, FRENCH, BRITISH AND AMERICAN BOURGEOISIE COULD RISK BRINGING ABOUT A TEMPORARY SOLUTION FOR THE CAPITALIST WORLD CRISIS BY MEANS OF A SECOND IMPERIALIST WORLD WAR AND THAT THEY HAVE BEEN ABLE TO WAGE THIS WAR FOR YEARS ON THE BACKS OF THE MASSES WITHOUT IT AS YET COMING TO A REVOLUTION OF THE MASSES AGAINST THE IMPERIALIST WAR, AGAINST THE CAPITALIST CLASS – FOR THIS THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC, LABOUR AND STALINIST PARTIES AND THE DEGENERATED BUREAUCRACY OF THE TRADE UNIONS, THE COOPERATIVES, etc. ARE TO BLAME***; and instead of working for the proletarian revolution to overthrow the bourgeoisie, they in actual fact worked against the proletarian revolution, and are still working against it, strengthened the rule of the world bourgeoisie, and are still strengthening it.

THAT IN 1941 THE SOVIET UNION ULTIMATELY HAD RANGED AGAINST IT NEARLY THE ENTIRE POWER OF NAZI GERMANY WITH THE WHOLE OF [MAINLAND] EUROPE'S ECONOMIC APPARATUS BEHIND IT AND WITH ITS BACK COMPLETELY FREE FROM ATTACK, WITH ALL THE CATASTROPHIC CONSEQUENCES THAT ENSUED FOR SOVIET RUSSIA – FOR THIS STALIN, THE STALINIST BUREAUCRACY, THE STALINIST INTERNATIONAL, THE STALINIST PARTIES AND THEIR POLITICS ARE SINGLY AND SOLELY TO BLAME. As a result of the catastrophe in China (1925-27) that they had brought about, as a result of the catastrophe in Germany (1933) and Austria (1934) that they had caused by being in actual fact in collaboration with the SP, as a result of the Spanish catastrophe (1936-39) for which, openly in alliance with the SP and as a result of their party alliance with the Spanish left-bourgeoisie against the proletarian revolution, they were to blame, as a result of the French catastrophe (1936-39) for which their 'united front' with the SP, for the purpose of forming the 'People's' Front with the French left-bourgeoisie against the proletarian revolution, was to blame – as a result of all this, Stalin, together with his Comintern, together with his parties had made the world proletariat unable to fight, had weakened the international position of the Soviet state to such an extent that it became possible for the British, French and American bourgeoisie to sign the Munich Agreement (disguised as a plan to maintain the 'peace', kick starting Nazi Germany's war against Soviet Russia, with British, French and American imperialism in reserve). Had the Stalinist parties pursued revolutionary politics, then it would not have come to the Nazi dictatorship in Germany, then developments in France and Britain would have been driven leftwards – especially in this case, namely with revolutionary politics, under the influence of a victoriously advancing Spanish Revolution – and it would have never been possible for the British, French and American bourgeoisie to carry through the policy of the Munich Agreement.

Once this situation – a situation for which Stalinism itself was to blame – was a fact, Stalin took the disastrous step of entering into an alliance with the German monopoly bourgeoisie, i.e. with that section of the world bourgeoisie that was, in the situation prevailing at that time, far more dangerous for the world proletariat, the proletarian state included. The catastrophic effects of this gigantic crime, which we will examine more closely in another context later on, made it possible for German imperialism to crush Northern Europe, Western Europe, above all France, and finally the Balkans too with lightning speed. Stalinist politics, the politics of Stalin and the Stalinist parties made this possible for German imperialism. To use the politics of the British, French and American bourgeoisie as an excuse, is wretched demagogy on the part of the Stalinist parties, who to boot still call themselves 'communist' parties. (We will at a later point address the question as to what tactic, positively, the Soviet state – once its international position had been so badly damaged as a result of the entire catastrophic Stalinist politics up till then – should have adopted in this exigency that Stalin himself had brought about.)

Using the bourgeoisie as an excuse is also sometimes dressed up in the following form: 'We' underestimated the bourgeoisie; it turned out to be much stronger than 'we' had assumed. Had the Social Democratic parties acted as the revolutionary parties that they had given themselves out to be to the workers, had they formed an alliance with Soviet power, then the bourgeoisie all over Europe would have been defeated in the years after 1918 and the United Socialist States of Europe would have long since become a reality. But Social Democracy (and the Labour Party) (and the American trade union bureaucracy) in all countries used its influence on vast sections of the working class to harness them to the chariot of the bourgeoisie against the proletarian revolution. ***IT WAS SOCIAL DEMOCRACY ITSELF (AND THE LABOUR PARTY, THE AFL, etc.) WHO GAVE THE BOURGEOISIE THE POWER AND STRENGTH TO ULTIMATELY ROLL BACK THE RISING GIGANTIC REVOLUTIONARY WAVE – SUBSEQUENTLY WITH THE DECISIVE HELP OF THE STALINIST PARTIES.*** Already during the First World War Lenin had written:

> The socialists who, at the outbreak of the war, sided with the bourgeoisie, […] They sang the praises in every key to the strength, vitality and adaptability allegedly revealed by capitalism – ***they*** who had helped the capitalists to 'adapt', tame, mislead and divide the working class of the various countries! (Lenin, 1925b, p.348).

5. The farmers/peasants are to blame…

Namely for the fact that the revolution did not develop in Germany and Austria after the First World War but turned into counter-revolution – an excuse that Otto Bauer and other Social Democratic leaders used among others. In 1918-19 millions of poor peasants/farmers in Germany and Austria expected the SP to act as the revolutionary workers party it had for decades given itself out to be, and that it would, amongst other things, also expropriate the large landed estates of the nobility, the Church, etc. and divide at least some of the land among the peasants/farmers with little or no land. Instead of doing this the Social Democratic parties gave them 'socialist' phrases. Thereupon the poor peasants/farmers turned their backs on the working class; they did what the SP did: they sided with the bourgeoisie; they joined the overall capitalist front against the working class, against the proletarian revolution. ***NO-ONE ELSE***

WAS TO BLAME FOR THE DEFECTION OF THE POOR-PEASANT/POOR-FARMER MASSES AFTER THE FIRST WORLD WAR BUT THE SP ITSELF.

6. The CP is to blame...

This general excuse used by Social Democracy is usually expressed using the following formulation: '***The split is to blame!***' (Or more specifically: '***Bolshevism was to blame for Fascism***!'). In doing so what is passed over in silence is the fact that the SP itself caused the split and causes it again and again through its collaboration with the capitalist class, or sections of it, and through striving for this collaboration.

Because with these politics at best a thin stratum of the workers gains small – and by the way temporary – advantages, and indeed at the expense of the working class as a whole; as a result one stratum of the proletarian masses after another resists this deception: a split in the working class is the inevitable consequence of the policy of coalition; a consequence which, it goes without saying, also ensues when the Stalinist parties engage or jointly engage in an alliance with the capitalist class or sections of it ('social-fascism', 'people's' front).

Right Social Democracy is to blame…

Noske, Scheidemann, Ebert and their associates are to blame... This was a favourite trick of the Austro-'Marxists', whereby in Austria too they calmly pursued and steadfastly continued to pursue what was in essence the politics of Right Social Democracy in Germany, i.e. the politics of coalition. Most recently too, for example, the Swiss Social Democratic centrists are resorting to this shabby subterfuge. The various left Social Democratic groups, which are working at re-establishing and continuing the old bankrupt Social Democratic firm under a new name, also make use of the same trick; they shift the blame onto the old firm, but calmly continue its basic line, namely collaboration with the bourgeoisie or sections of it or strive for this collaboration, especially with the left-bourgeoisie, the non-monopolist capitalists.

After the catastrophe experienced by the Austrian working class (February 1934) for which the Austrian SP was to blame, the offshoots of the Austro-'Marxists', the 'Revolutionary Socialists', gave this excuse a new form: '***Germany is to blame***'... The political and trade union collaboration of the SPD with the bourgeoisie was the root cause of the German catastrophe. Did the Austrian SP even once fight against this basic line? Never. On the contrary, it again and again over the years endorsed this line and encouraged and supported it with all its strength, ideologically and politically. Its multi-year long manoeuvre with the Two-and-a-Half International, which had been organised by the Austro-'Marxists', had the calculated purpose of protecting the basic line of the SPD, this basic line of the Second International from the 'left', against the proletarian revolutionaries. Even after the re-unification of the Two-and-a-Half International with the Second International, the Austrian SP, together with its Austro-'Marxists', always advocated party collaboration with the bourgeoisie; it never even once made an attempt to point out to the workers that under developed capitalist conditions a party alliance with the bourgeoisie or sections of it, would inevitably sooner or later lead to a catastrophe for the working class. Furthermore, the Austrian SP, the Austro-'Marxists' pursued exactly the same basic line in Austria too and again and again defended it against proletarian-revolutionary criticism; today too the 'Revolutionary Socialists' continue with exactly the same basic line: they are currently – in

order, as they say, to ‘save Austria from chaos’, that is to say, in order to prevent proletarian revolution in Austria – already paving the way for party collaboration, trade union collaboration, etc. with the bourgeoisie, with the Christian Social Party, which had bloodily suppressed the *Schutzbund* and the working class in February 1934.

Neither the ‘international situation’ nor the ‘situation in Germany’ was to blame for the proletarian catastrophe either in Germany or in Austria, on the contrary the root cause of these proletarian catastrophes was the party alliance of the SP with the bourgeoisie, its basic line that aimed to form this alliance; it was due to this very same policy that the SP was itself to blame for the fact that what had been such extremely favourable objective conditions for the proletariat in the years 1918-19, had changed more and more to the disadvantage of the working class and to the advantage of the capitalist class.

The SP is to blame...

This is the general excuse used by the Stalinists. There is no doubt that the SP laid the basis for the turn of events that led from the ascent of the world revolution to the catastrophic decline of the world revolution.

However, it was precisely because the proletarian revolutionaries under Lenin’s leadership recognised the incurable petty-bourgeois and treacherous character of the SP that they brought the Communist Parties into being. The mistakes that these parties made in their infancy, in the early years after 1918, were excusable. However, in the meantime, they had grown, they had the proletarian state behind them, they had big resources (newspapers, etc.) at their disposal, they had sufficient time, and the SP was again and again committing enormous acts of betrayal against the working class – the conditions for detaching the worker masses from the SP were for many years the most favourable conditions conceivable; with the correct politics, with Leninist politics, the Communist parties would in fact have been in a position to lead the Social Democratic worker masses over into the camp of the proletarian revolution under the leadership of the Communist Parties. However, they did not pursue Leninist politics, but on the contrary pursued Stalinist politics. ***ONLY STALIN’S BETRAYAL OF PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM, HIS RUSSIAN NATIONALISM***, ***HIS CENTRISM DISGUISED IN A SHAM-REVOLUTIONARY MANNER***, ***ONLY THE STALINIST PARTY’S OWN ROLE AND THAT OF THE STALINIST COMINTERN MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTIES TO CONTINUE THEIR VILE JUDAS POLITICS AND DESPITE THIS KEEP GIGANTIC MASSES OF WORKERS IN TOW BEHIND THEM***, ***I.E. IN TOW BEHIND THE BOURGEOISIE. FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE CLASS-CONSCIOUS WORKERS***, ***EVEN MORE BLAME FALLS TO THE STALINIST PARTY THAN TO THE SP, FOR THEY HAD ALREADY RECOGNISED THE TREACHEROUS CHARACTER OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTIES AND HAD FOR THIS VERY REASON ESTABLISHED THE COMMUNIST PARTIES.***

7. The masses themselves are to blame...

Skipping over their own treacherous role, the Social Democratic, Labour, Stalinist and centrist parties use the ***objective conditions*** as much as possible as an excuse. However, when this

excuse is not possible or is too transparent, they then increasingly use as an excuse – the workers: '***the workers themselves are to blame***', etc....

If you hurt your leg, then neither the leg, nor the cells making up the leg are to blame, but singly and solely your head, which has the task of guiding your entire body. If the working class suffers a catastrophe, then neither the worker ***masses*** nor the ***average worker*** are to blame; on the contrary – the further capitalist development progresses – the more the ***class-conscious*** workers and their organisation, the ***Party***, and its inadequacy, are to blame. However, once the objective conditions for the victory of the proletariat have ripened – and they have been ripe for the revolutionary victory of the working class at least since the end of the First World War – then the blame for the catastrophic defeats of the working class falls ***singly and solely*** on the class-conscious workers and their organisation – the Party. ***Only*** its incorrect politics is to blame for the fact that the proletariat, instead of gaining revolutionary victories, suffers catastrophic defeats. The worker masses, the average worker, the ordinary worker in every situation do the utmost that they are capable of, given the prevailing level of their consciousness. However, once the objective conditions for the revolutionary victory of the working class have ripened historically, then it is in the hands of the Party, the organisation of the class-conscious workers, to steer the ***non-class-conscious*** worker masses onto the line of the proletarian class interests and to lead them forwards on the proletarian class line, to revolutionary advance, to revolutionary victory. However, this can only be done under the basic condition that the Party ***in actual fact*** pursues proletarian-revolutionary politics. If it does not do this, then the working class will be beaten – despite the favourable objective situation; for this the ***Party*** and ***only*** the Party – which after all also leads the proletarian mass organisations and ultimately the proletarian state too – will be to blame.

The ***advanced*** workers too, who have already worked their way up to a level of consciousness that is above that of the average worker but have not yet attained the level of class consciousness, are to a ***certain extent*** to blame. They can, must and should be reproached for not having listened enough or not having paid sufficient attention to the voice of revolution, to the criticisms and suggestions from the class-conscious workers.

However, fundamentally, no political blame for catastrophes must be attributed to the ***average worker***, to the mass of the workers. Such reproaches are also of no use, and only cause harm and make it difficult for the ordinary workers to recognise the true causes of, and the real culprits for, these catastrophes; such reproaches make it easier for the parties of betrayal and their helpers to use the demagogy that allows them to offload their blame; such reproaches make it easier for them to continue their treacherous work. ***WHEN THE MASSES MAKE MISTAKES, WE MUST – AS THE DEVELOPMENT OF CAPITALISM PROGRESSES – INCREASINGLY SEEK THE CAUSE OF THESE MISTAKES IN THE SHORTCOMINGS AND THE MISTAKES OF THE PARTY AND NOT IN THE OBJECTIVE CONDITIONS OR IN THE '*MISTAKES OF THE MASSES*'. THIS APPLIES WITHOUT RESERVATION ONCE THE CONDITIONS FOR THE VICTORY OF THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION HAVE RIPENED.***

Let us take an example. In 1934, when the *Schutzbund* in Austria rose up heroically to fight, it remained isolated; the masses sympathised with it but remained passive. Looked at superficially, this was the cause of the catastrophe. Social Democracy, the Austro-'Marxists', and their replacement, the 'Revolutionary Socialists', rushed offload the blame onto the masses. However, what was the cause of this catastrophe? From 1918 to 1920 the very same masses

were filled with the utmost will to fight and were ready to make any sacrifice. How come did this will to fight and their enormous fighting strength disappear? How come did the bourgeoisie, who were on their knees, get back on their feet again? Instead of establishing proletarian-democratic state power and allying itself with the Soviet Union, the SP allied itself with the bourgeoisie against the proletarian revolution, against the proletarian state, against the working class; it continued with this alliance – in the most diverse forms – throughout all these years. This, together with all its effects, increasingly undermined, hollowed out, shook, wore down and disintegrated the fighting spirit and fighting strength of the masses. Repeatedly, the masses tried initiatively to bring about a turn. On the 1 December 1921[34] they tried by means of a powerful spontaneous mass demonstration to bring the SP onto a different path, away from the policy of collaboration with the bourgeoisie to the policy of struggle against the bourgeoisie. In vain. Then came year after year of fascist murders of workers. The SP continued its line: collaboration with the bourgeoisie 'revolutionary', 'socialist' phrases for the masses and non-action against the enemy of the working class. Once again the worker masses tried to bring the SP onto the revolutionary track: on the 15 July 1927[35] they rose up. Instead of putting itself at the head of the masses, the SP – with both political and real fire hoses – stood against the masses. The economic crisis, mass unemployment was just another excuse for passivity on the part of the SP. It would have had to say to the masses that the struggle against mass unemployment, against the economic crisis could only be successfully waged through the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisie and establishing workers' power; however, even during the economic crisis, it did not dream of fighting against the bourgeoisie, but more than ever of collaborating with it against the proletarian revolution, against the proletarian state, against the working class. It helped itself out with the excuse that 'the crisis is to blame, ***mass unemployment is to blame***' and that this was reducing the strength of the masses; 'responsible' leaders were therefore not permitted to risk a struggle during the crisis (after the February catastrophe[36], for which they were to blame, the Austro-'Marxists' proclaimed hypocritically that the fear the Austrian masses had of unemployment had been greater than their fear of the barricades)... The excuses changed according to the conditions, to the economic situation or the season, but the fundamental, basic class direction of the entire Social Democratic, Austro-'Marxist' and left Social Democratic work remained unchanged, i.e. collaboration with the bourgeoisie or sections of it, or striving for this collaboration, and working against the proletarian revolution, against the proletarian state, against the proletarian class. ***IT WAS THE ROLE OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY ITSELF***, ***INCLUDING THE AUSTRO-'MARXISTS' AND THE 'LEFT' SOCIAL DEMOCRATS – BECAUSE EVEN THE 'MOST LEFT' OF THESE 'LEFTS' DID NOT FUNDAMENTALLY DISSOCIATE THEMSELVES FROM THE BASIC LINE OF COALITION POLITICS – THAT DISINTEGRATED THE FIGHTING SPIRIT OF THE WORKERS AND THEIR CONFIDENCE IN THEMSELVES TO SUCH AN EXTENT THAT IN THE END THE MASSES BECAME INCREASINGLY APATHETIC***, ***RESIGNED***, ***AND INDIFFERENT***. ***THE BLAME FOR THE***

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[34] This refers to a big *Teuerungsdemonstration* (demonstration against the high cost of living) held that day; Ed.

[35] This refers to the *Wiener Justizpalastbrand* (the burning of the Palace of Justice in Vienna); Ed.

[36] Of 1934; trans.

FEBRUARY CATASTROPHE IN AUSTRIA IN 1934 DOES NOT LIE WITH THE MASSES, ***BUT WITH THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY!***

(Given the small size of the Austrian Stalinist party – which with its limited strength did its utmost to facilitate the SP's treacherous work and shares the blame for the defeat of the Austrian workers – it was too difficult for the Austrian SP to use the 'split' as an excuse, although it did play around enough with this subterfuge too.)

Likewise in Germany.

> Both these parties [the SP and the CP], with millions of voters behind them, had already proved to be morally paralysed before the battle and capitulated without a fight. History has recorded no parallel catastrophe. The German proletariat was not defeated by the enemy in battle. It was crushed by the cowardice, baseness and treachery of its own parties. No wonder that it lost its belief in everything in which it had been accustomed to believe for almost three generations (Trotzki,1938, p.21).

Likewise, too, in the Chinese Revolution, the Spanish Revolution, in France, etc. A resolution adopted on 15 December 1942 by the Executive Committee of the International Federation of Trade Unions (IGB, 1942, p.2) contained the following statement:

> Time is passing and there have been no signs of German workers putting up any active resistance (to the Nazi barbarism; auth.) and it will become increasingly difficult to maintain our attitude. Without such evidence of resistance to those outrages it will be impossible for the civilised world, including organised Labour, to acquit them of responsibility for these horrible crimes, for which full retribution will be exacted[37].

THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC-LED TRADE UNIONS AND THEIR INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION, ***THE IFTU***, ***HAVE CONTRIBUTED THEIR FAIR SHARE TO THE VICTORY OF FASCISM IN GERMANY***. ***THE BRITISH TRADE UNIONS IN PARTICULAR***, ***TOGETHER WITH THEIR LABOUR PARTY, HAVE SUPPORTED THE BRITISH, FRENCH AND AMERICAN BOURGEOISIE IN PUTTING HITLER INTO THE SADDLE IN GERMANY***. They were also involved in making it easier for the German monopoly bourgeoisie to crush the German workers, smash their organisations and make them completely defenceless. During the Second (imperialist) World War, the leaders of the IFTU, with the leaders of both the British trade unions and the Labour Party at the forefront, are working together with the British and American imperialists and the Stalinist bureaucrats, the Stalinist parties and the Social Democratic parties to obstruct the German workers' path to proletarian revolution as much as possible (for many years they wanted to send American police to Germany, etc.). That the German workers are so far not putting up any active resistance, for this the 'gentlemen' of the IFTU are likewise to blame; they hypocritically and deceitfully skip over their own treacherous role up to 1933, after 1933 and during the Second (imperialist) World War. ***THEY***

[37] This quotation uses the English language version of this Bulletin, which was published simultaneously in a number of languages, including German and English; trans.

THEMSELVES HAVE JOINED IN HELPING TO BRING THE GERMAN WORKERS INTO THIS SITUATION AND NOW THESE 'GENTLEMEN' ARE SHIFTING THE BLAME FOR THIS ONTO THE GERMAN WORKERS AND PLAYING INTO THE HANDS OF THE AMERICAN AND BRITISH IMPERIALISTS AND THE RUSSIAN STALINIST BUREAUCRATS, ***WHO AIM TO EXACT RETRIBUTION ON THE ENTIRE GERMAN PEOPLE***, ***INCLUDING THE GERMAN WORKERS***, ***AND TO ROB AND PLUNDER THE SOURCES OF LIFE FOR THE ENTIRE GERMAN PEOPLE***, ***INCLUDING THE SOURCES OF LIFE FOR THE GERMAN WORKERS***.

One formulation that the SP often uses runs like this: '***The workers (the masses) are not yet ripe for Socialism***'. This is only a variant of the general formulation: 'The workers (the masses) are themselves to blame'. In reality the question must be posed the other way round: What is the SP doing in order to make the workers (the masses) ripe for Socialism? It is dispensing 'socialist' Sunday sermons, but leaves the power in the hands of the capitalists, leaves the class basis of the capitalist state apparatus intact, leaves the class property of the bourgeoisie in the decisive means of production to continue its existence, allies itself with the exploiters and oppressors or seeks this alliance, and indeed for the very purpose of maintaining capitalist power and capitalist property, and securing them against the proletarian revolution. And at the same time the workers are supposed to become ripe for Socialism!... Through the SP, never – on the contrary only through overcoming the SP in the consciousness of the workers!

Stalin's argument that '***The offensive weapons against the Soviet Union are mainly carried by proletarians***', is an insiduously mendacious, despicable shifting of the blame from the Stalinists onto the masses. Who brought the workers to this point, above all in Germany? Who disintegrated their consciousness and destroyed their confidence? Who delivered them up to the bourgeoisie in China, Germany, Austria, Spain, France, etc.? Who, using 'social-fascism', etc., prepared the way for Hitler? Who, by capitulating, made it possible to establish the Nazi dictatorship? Who, in 1939, made a predatory pact with Nazi Germany? Who else but Stalin, together with his clique and his Stalinist parties!

We are all to blame …

When revolutionary criticism makes things too hot for them and exposes the mendacity of their excuses, the Judases resort to the trick of sharing the blame with the masses. The trick takes the form of 'self-criticism' – whereby they admit tactical mistakes but steadfastly hold firm to the treacherous basic line; these tactical mistakes, however, are merely the inevitable consequence of this treacherous basic line. 'The party has made certain tactical mistakes, but the masses are ***also*** to blame, because they remained passive, because they left the party in the lurch' – in this way the bankrupt treacherous parties sought to continue to keep the masses in tow after a catastrophe, for which these parties themselves were to blame. However, the masses, the average worker are not to blame for the catastrophe, ***not even partly*** – this [position] stems from a correct understanding of the relationship between the Party and the class, between the Party and the mass, between the class-conscious and the non-class-conscious workers, between the head and the body.

The formulation, '***the workers***' ***movement is to blame***' is an especially cunning form of concealing the guilt of the Party and shifting it onto the masses. The Social Democratic and Stalinist leaders use this formulation that does not distinguish between the Party and the mass

when they are examining political responsibility for the catastrophes; on the contrary they consciously make the responsibility vanish in the vague term: the 'workers' movement', whereby the blame then sticks to the workers' movement, i.e. to the workers, to the masses; and by doing this they achieve their aim of whitewashing the party of betrayal by incriminating the workers.

Very exceptionally in revolutionary circles, one comes across formulations that attribute the blame for the catastrophes ***above all*** to the leaders, to the Party, but also to a certain extent to the masses. Thus, for example, in Lenin's case too, there is one such formulation:

> When the proletarians of Europe are accused of treachery, Kautsky writes, it is an accusation levelled at unknown persons.
>
> You are mistaken Mr Kautsky! Look in the mirror and you will see those 'unknown persons', against whom this accusation is levelled. […] This accusation expresses a *clear* appreciation of the fact that the German proletariat betrayed the Russian (and international) revolution, when it strangled Finland, the Ukraine, Latvia and Estonia. This accusation is levelled ***primarily*** and above all, not against the masses, who are always downtrodden, but against those leaders who, like the Scheidemanns and the Kautskys, have failed in their *duty* to carry on revolutionary agitation, revolutionary propaganda and revolutionary work among the masses to overcome their inertness, who in fact have *worked against* the revolutionary instincts and aspirations which are always aglow deep down among the mass of the oppressed class. The Scheidemanns bluntly, basely, cynically and in most cases for selfish motives betrayed the proletariat and deserted to the side of the bourgeoisie. The Kautskyists and Longuetists did the same thing, only vacillatingly and haltingly […].
>
> Kautsky does not even understand that, under the conditions of censorship prevailing in the German 'Reich', this 'accusation' is perhaps the only form in which those German socialists, who have remained true to Socialism – Liebknecht and his friends – *can express their* ***appeal to the German workers*** to shake off the Scheidemanns and the Kautskys […] and rise in revolt ***in spite*** of them, and ***against*** their will, and march over their heads towards revolution!' (Lenin, [1918], 1919, pp.57–58).

And in the *Transitional Programme of the Fourth International* (1938), too, we find by way of exception this kind of formulation:

> The objective prerequisites for the proletarian revolution have not only 'ripened' but have already begun to putrefy. Without a socialist revolution, and indeed within the very next historical period, a catastrophe threatens the whole culture of humanity. Only the proletariat, namely ***first and foremost*** its revolutionary vanguard, bears the blame for the socialist revolution being at a standstill. The historical crisis of humanity comes down to the crisis of revolutionary leadership (Trotzki, 1938, p.1).

As a rule, in the vast majority of cases, Lenin and Trotsky and the (healthy) CI always laid the political blame for the catastrophes of the proletariat on the Party and ***only*** on the Party.

(Incidentally, Marx also did this in his writings about the June Days catastrophe in France in 1848 and the Paris Commune catastrophe in 1871.) Such exceptional formulations arise on the one hand from justified passion and on the other hand from the thoroughly understandable consideration that one had to speak in this manner in order to mobilise the masses for the purpose of changing the mistakes that had brought about the catastrophe and for the resultant fundamental conclusions. If we add to this the conditions of censorship at that time, then such a consideration is all the more understandable (by putting the word 'accusation' in inverted commas, Lenin is indicating that he had no intention of blaming the masses, but only mobilising them in the desired direction by using what was at that time virtually the only possible form of expression). This consideration, which is still permissible with regard to the ***advanced*** elements amongst the worker masses, goes too far with regard to the ***non-class-conscious*** elements that make up the mass of the proletariat; we cannot and must not lay the political blame on them for the catastrophes, not even partly. Rebuking the advanced workers is appropriate, because with their help the class-conscious workers can raise the consciousness of the non-class-conscious proletarians more readily. No matter what historical instance we examine, we will find that the proletarian masses at any point in time have done the utmost of which they were capable, by virtue of their prevailing ***level of consciousness***. Certainly, their level of consciousness could have been higher in this or that instance, but the fact that it was not higher, was not the fault of the worker masses, but – within the limitations of the objective conditions – due to the inadequacy of the ***Party*** that led them into the catastrophe.

The (entire) Party has made (tactical) mistakes...

Especially after the German catastrophe in 1933, the Stalinist parties also resorted more and more to the trick of shifting the blame for the catastrophes onto the masses or to lie in a 'self-critical' manner that 'we are all to blame'. The Stalinist bureaucracy, which had reduced the members of the Communist Parties to mere executive organs of the all-powerful Stalinist bureaucracy, then made use of that Stalinist subterfuge of 'self-criticism' at the party level too. The Stalinist bureaucracy, which in a completely arbitrary manner determines the course the Party takes, declared after every catastrophe – which it itself had brought about – that the (entire) Party made (tactical) mistakes, that the Party did not understand Stalin's 'General Line' well enough or did not carry it out correctly. In doing so two birds are killed with one stone: the blame that falls to the Stalinist bureaucracy is reduced and blurred by the lie that the party members are jointly to blame and at the same time the very one who, in the last analysis, is the main culprit, namely Stalin together with his clique, is absolved of any blame.

In a ***healthy*** Party, namely in a party in which party democracy is alive, and in which the party members control and jointly determine the politics of the party, the party membership too is politically, jointly responsible for the mistakes of the Party. The following statement by Lenin does not contradict this: 'A political leader is responsible not only for the quality of his leadership, but also for the acts of those he leads. He may now and again be unaware of this […], but the responsibility still falls on him' (Lenin, 1925b, p.603). Because the fact that a political leader has the political responsibility for those whom they lead, does not mean that those whom they lead somehow do not have any political responsibility; however, they only have political responsibility in a ***healthy*** party, in which they have the right to jointly make decisions and in actual fact exercise this right; in contrast, in a ***degenerated*** party, in a Stalinist party, in which the members are deliberately and in actual fact excluded from jointly making

decisions about the politics of the Party and are nothing but politically blind executive organs for carrying out the instructions of the Stalinist bureaucracy, there can be – from this angle – no question of the membership bearing political responsibility for the political actions of the party, although they do remain jointly responsible in front of the working class, because either they do not examine the criticism made by the proletarian revolutionaries at all or only do so carelessly, disregarding this revolutionary criticism in an irresponsible manner.

Shifting the blame onto the masses manifests itself in the most varied and in ever new forms. Even the well-known formulation: '***The masses get the government they deserve***', shifts the blame from the class-conscious elements onto the non-class-conscious elements, namely from the Party onto the masses.

8. The '**vulgar**' **theory of collapse**

Capitalism will be destroyed by its inner contradictions – even honest proletarian revolutionaries sometimes talk like this in an ill-considered, superficial manner. If capitalism were heading for certain collapse as a result of its contradictions, then there would be no need for the struggle of the working class nor for this struggle to be led by the Party. Consequently the 'vulgar' theory of collapse leads to political passivity, that is to say to deny the need for the leadership role of the working class in society and the leadership role of the proletarian class party in relation to the proletarian class.

The ***Marxist theory of collapse*** is very different. The contradictions of capitalism do not float in cloud-cuckoo-land, but play out on Earth; they set the classes against each other: the economic contradictions turn into social antagonisms, which are fought out in the class struggle and by means of it. The conditions for revolutionary victory are long since fully ripe; but if the proletariat fails – and it is bound to fail, if its Party, the mass organisations led by its Party fail – then the capitalist class can indeed prevail and will again and again prevail *ad infinitum*: the proletariat, the toiling people will be pressed down deeper and deeper, human society will regress and will sink back deeper and deeper into barbarism. In this situation too the bourgeoisie can only achieve a temporary stabilisation, and indeed on a basis of declining capitalism, a basis that is progressively sinking deeper and deeper; but after every economic crisis, after every imperialist world war – no matter how much they shake the capitalist economy and capitalist society – the bourgeoisie can ***again and again*** enforce a temporary, relative stabilisation – provided and as long as the proletarian revolution, the persistent proletarian-revolutionary activity of the masses under the leadership of the proletarian class party, does not put an end to the rule of the capitalist class and its property and to capitalist exploitation, and – by means of progressively organising production – builds up socialist production undertaken by a world cooperative of the whole of human society self-administering and living in freedom and equality***. IT IS ONLY BECAUSE THE PROLETARIAT IS – ON PAIN OF PROGRESSIVE DECLINE – COMPELLED TO FIGHT***, ***IT IS ONLY AS A RESULT OF THE VICTORIOUS STRUGGLE OF THE WORKING CLASS THAT THE BOURGEOISIE WILL BE OVERTHROWN***, ***THAT THE COLLAPSE OF CAPITALISM WILL BECOME A REALITY***, ***AND IT IS FOR THIS VERY REASON THAT THE LEADERSHIP OF THIS ENTIRE STRUGGLE BY THE PROLETARIAN CLASS PARTY IS INDISPENSIBLY NEEDED***. Nothing

breaks of its own accord, least of all the capitalist economy and capitalist rule – they must be broken, must be smashed!

> To the Marxist it is indisputable that a revolution is impossible without a revolutionary situation, whereby […] not every revolutionary situation gives rise to a revolution; revolution arises only out of a situation in which the above-mentioned objective conditions are accompanied by a subjective one, namely the ability of the revolutionary *class* to take revolutionary mass action *strong* enough to break (or shake) the old government, which never, not even in a period of crisis 'falls', unless it is toppled over (Lenin, 1915, 1921m, p.135).
>
> ***There is no such thing as an absolutely hopeless situation***. The bourgeoisie is behaving like an impudent robber who has lost his head; it is committing folly after folly, thus aggravating the situation and hastening its own demise. All this is true. But nobody can 'prove' that it is absolutely impossible for it to succeed 'once again in pacifying a 'certain section of the 'exploited' by means of concessions or that it would be impossible for it to nip a movement or an insurrection of a certain section of the oppressed and exploited in the bud. […] ***Practice alone*** *can serve as the real 'proof' in this and similar questions* (Lenin, 1920e, p.19).
>
> The question, as to whether capitalism can revive to new life, thus becomes a ***question of the struggle*** of living forces, of classes and parties. If, of the two fundamental classes – the bourgeoisie and the proletariat – the latter were to abandon the revolutionary struggle, the bourgeoisie would doubtless ultimately establish a new capitalist equilibrium, one of material and intellectual decay – through new crises, new wars, further impoverishment of entire countries and death of yet more millions of the toiling masses (*Kommunistische Internationale*, 1921, p.24).
>
> Will the bourgeoisie be able to secure for itself a new epoch of capitalist growth? To fundamentally deny such a possibility and only count on the 'hopeless' position in which capitalism finds itself would merely be revolutionary phrasemongering. 'There is no such thing as an absolutely hopeless situation' (Lenin) (Trotzki, [1928] 1929, p.65).

9. The anarchist theory of immiseration

First things must become much much worse, so that they can get better; things must get much, much worse for the masses so that they come to their senses – this is the way the anarchists talk. They transfer the Party's task of 'bringing the masses to their senses' and imbuing them with the consciousness of their interests and their revolutionary role to – increasing poverty; and because the poverty of the masses is brought about by capitalist exploitation, by the actions of the bourgeoisie, the anarchists in reality ascribe the revolutionary leadership role to – the class enemy of the workers, the capitalist class…

Stalinism has imitated the example of the anarchists. By using 'words of consolation' such as: 'Fascism will teach the masses what they have to do!', the Stalinist bureaucracy has tried to

conceal from its supporters its capitulation to National ‘Socialism’ By doing this the revolutionary leadership role was shifted onto – fascism, the fascist dictatorship, the monopoly bourgeoisie, the bourgeoisie...

Poverty per se does not revolutionise; on the contrary it wears people down, bears down on them, crushes them, because it does not show any way out; at best it drives the most active elements to acts of desperation and makes the overwhelming majority of the masses lacklustre, apathetic and passive. Rather, it is the constant and ever increasing insecurity of existence, the ever sharpening class antagonism that awakens and nourishes the instinctive rebelliousness in the masses. But only the Party, the proletarian class party, is able to mobilise this rebellious instinct to carry out goal-conscious revolutionary action and raise it to the level of revolutionary consciousness, to conscious revolutionary struggle; it is the Party that shows the masses, tormented by poverty, the ***way out***, the ***way out of poverty***.

The Marxist theory of immiseration, which we shall examine in another context, has nothing whatsoever to do with the anarchist theory of immiseration.

10. Tailism (Khvostism)

If the Party waits for what the enemy and its servants and lackeys do or what the masses do on their own initiative and only then orientates its decision to fight, its battle plan and its actions accordingly, then it is running along at the tail of events and making itself politically dependent on the enemy, or its helpers, or on the low level of consciousness of the masses and thus in reality relinquishes its leadership role to all of them.

11. Shifting the leadership role onto the masses

If the opportunists want to sabotage an action against the bourgeoisie, an action that is necessary for the masses and one that the masses urgently demand, then in certain circumstances the opportunists resort to the subterfuge of shifting the leadership role in one form or another onto the masses themselves. Honest ‘left’ doctrinarism shifts the leadership role onto the masses, on principle, so to speak, because, by again and again orientating all its politics exclusively according to the fundamental, abstract, general conditions of struggle and not paying heed to the variable, specific, special, tactical conditions of struggle, it in actual fact again and again transfers the task of leadership to the masses, leaving it to them to find out, work out and determine how to take account of these changing conditions in their political actions. Sometimes even real revolutionaries unconsciously make this mistake. The following are some examples of this kind of skipping over the leadership role of the Party, of this kind of tailism.

a. Lagging behind the masses

The opportunists act in this demagogic way as the occasion demands. For example, they declare that ‘***We do not want to cut ourselves off from the masses***’ or ‘***we want to remain with the masses***’. They cling to the undeveloped level of consciousness of the masses in order to be able to lead and mislead the working class in an opportunist manner.

> Is it not worthier for internationalists at this moment to resist the 'mass' intoxication (*Massentaumel*), rather than 'wishing to remain with the masses', i.e. succumbing to the general mood? Have we not seen how in all the belligerent countries of Europe the chauvinists have tried to justify themselves on the grounds that they wished 'to remain with the masses'? ***MUST WE NOT BE ABLE TO REMAIN FOR A TIME IN THE MINORITY AGAINST MASS INTOXICATION***? Is it not precisely the work of the propagandists at this very moment that constitutes the key point for *disentangling* the proletarian line from the petty-bourgeois and patriotic 'mass' intoxication? (Lenin, [1917] 1925, p.377).

This means: ***IN TERMS OF ITS FUNDAMENTAL LINE***, ***THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY MUST NEVER EVER GIVE WAY TO THE PREVAILING MOOD OF THE MASSES***; ***THIS***, ***OF COURSE***, ***DOES NOT EXCLUDE THAT THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTIONARIES MUST, TAKE THE PREVAILING MOOD OF THE MASSES INTO ACCOUNT IN THEIR TACTICS***, ***QUITE THE OPPOSITE*** – ***IT INCLUDES IT***.

The supporters of ***spontaneity theory*** in particular act in this way. For them it is the spontaneous action of the masses that is decisive. They see the role of the Party as ***waiting to see what the masses do*** and then orientate the actions of the Party accordingly. In these circumstances the Party lags behind the masses. It does not lead the masses, but lets itself be led by the masses, who, however, lack the basic requirement for leadership, namely class consciousness.

It goes without saying that the Party can, should and must again and again listen to and pay heed to the masses, ***learn from the masses***. However, it must, from the heights of class consciousness, check, sift and decide the following: it must discover, find out whatever is new, creatively, and whatever really is in one way or another a step forward in what the masses here and there, now and then have worked out instinctively from their own experiences, and it must clarify, reinforce, generalise this and improve upon it. But on no account must the Party wait for the masses to act, or lag behind them; it must ***look ahead***, it must again and again assess the situation and the prospects and orientate its actions accordingly, whereby it again and again works what it learns again and again from the masses into the Party line and, as appropriate, augments or improves on it, but in all cases enriches it. This is the way the Party ***leads***, and only in this way does it fulfil its revolutionary duty with regard to the masses***.***

b. The emancipation of the workers can only be achieved by the working class itself

Workers, do not expect your emancipation to come from the grace of great monarchs or the insight of the bourgeoisie or its government or well-meaning millionaires, great benefactors, etc., only your own struggle as a ***class*** can achieve this! – this is the meaning of Marx's famous words (in the preamble to the Statutes of the First International, 1864) that are directed against the Utopians and the social quacks, and above all against the opportunists.

In particular it is honest revolutionary-minded workers, who are on the path to fighting their way through from the petty-bourgeois 'workers' party to the proletarian class line, to the proletarian-revolutionary party, who are often delayed by the opportunist argument that it is not the SP, nor the StP, who are to blame for the catastrophes, but that ultimately the emancipation

of the workers can only be achieved by the working class itself, i.e. the workers themselves are to blame...

Of course, only the workers themselves can emancipate themselves by means of their struggle. But the workers can only wage this struggle successfully and victoriously under the leadership of their class party. Workers, create your revolutionary party, strengthen it, rally round it and fight under its leadership! – this is the real meaning of these words of Marx, which some honest workers misunderstand, in a semi-anarchist, ultra-'left' way too, by turning these words against the necessity for revolutionary leaders, against the leadership role of the Party.

c. For the workers' council – but against the CP

For Soviets, but against their leadership by the Communist Party – this was the slogan of the honest 'left'-doctrinaire KAPD. Because the workers' council is altogether the biggest mass organisation, this slogan in reality meant: against the leadership of the masses by Lenin's Communist Party, by the proletarian-revolutionary party, or more clearly still: the workers' council, the masses, should lead themselves... In this case the anarchist core of ultra-'radicalism' manifests itself with particular clarity.

d. Leaving the war tactic up to the masses

The Second World War, too, is an imperialist war and for this reason the war policy of the proletarian revolutionaries must move on exactly the same fundamental line as in the First World War, on Lenin's line. However, in contrast to the First World War, the Second World War in its first big period (up to the overturn in Italy in July 1943) exhibited a number of important special features: the (degenerated) proletarian state was embroiled in it ***and*** in the given situation one group of imperialist powers, namely the one led by the German monopoly bourgeoisie, was far more dangerous for the proletarian state and therefore, too, for the world proletariat and the world revolution. In its first theses[38] on war (1934) the Fourth International did to a certain extent take this specific situation into account by showing, using examples, how, in the bourgeois states allied to the Soviet state, within the framework of the proletarian-revolutionary principles – and while completely rejecting any social-patriotism – to take into consideration the extraordinary situation tactically for the benefit of the proletarian state. However, instead of developing this into tactical guidance for the duration of the big difference in danger – while very strictly adhering to the proletarian-revolutionary principles and within the framework of Lenin's fundamental line that had been worked out for the First World War – the Fourth International, on the contrary, then silently took a step backwards from the admirable step it took in 1934, giving way to the ultra-'left' sentiment of a section of the revolutionaries. From 1939 to 1941 it confined itself to giving the masses the – in itself perfectly correct – principle-based line as guidance for action ('continuation of the revolutionary struggle, in Britain, in the USA, etc., too') and at the same time correctly stating that the group of imperialist powers led by Germany was, under the prevailing conditions, the significantly more dangerous one for the proletarian state – without, however, drawing the necessary tactical consequences for the duration of the big difference in danger; in doing so it would at the same time have had to show how such a revolutionary tactic was possible within the framework of the proletarian class

[38] *Die 4. Internationale und der Krieg* [*War and the Fourth International*], 1934; Ed.

principles, without falling victim to the betrayal of Social Democratic, Labour and Stalinist social-patriotism. The role of revolutionary leadership makes it the duty of the proletarian class party and class International to provide guidance to the proletariat, to the masses, ***not only on the principle-based line***, i.e. not only the line that applies to ***all*** circumstances, but ***at the same time*** to provide them with guidance on how to apply this general line, tactically, to the ***specific*** circumstances, how the masses in their actions should, tactically, take into consideration the ***particularities*** of the situation – constantly in accordance with the proletarian class principles.

The Fourth International confined itself (in the period of the big difference in danger) to giving a ***general*** answer, instead of supplementing it, as would have been necessary, with ***specific*** guidance on the basis of the revolutionary principles. It did not concretise the principal-based line during this singular period of great difference in danger. It left it up to the millions upon millions of workers and soldiers, in what were the temporarily less dangerous capitalist countries, to find the specific answer themselves. In short, it left, it transferred the task of revolutionary leadership in this important tactical question to the masses themselves in these countries.

12. Surrendering the autonomy and independence of the Party

In order to fulfil its revolutionary leadership role, the proletarian party must under all circumstances be completely autonomous and independent, organisationally ***and*** politically, even already in its embryonic form. The so-called 'unity' of the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks from 1906 to 1912 does not contradict this and nor does the entry into the Labour Party that Lenin demanded of the British CP (1920).

> Between 1903 and 1912 there were periods of several years in which we formally united with the Mensheviks in a single Social Democratic Party – ***without*** ever ceasing our ideological and political struggle against them as opportunists and vehicles of bourgeois influence on the proletariat (Lenin, 1920b, p.51).
>
> By that time (in the spring of 1906; auth.), as a consequence of the revolutionary struggles of late 1905 and under the influence of the masses, the staffs of the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks were compelled to unite. [...] In effect the masses two or three times forced the Bolsheviks to reconcile themselves to the Mensheviks. […] A strong movement favouring unification had begun in 1905. In many areas federated committees of Bolsheviks and Mensheviks were formed, and these created evenly constituted joint organisations which jointly led the struggle. This resulted in the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks having to enter into such a federated relationship with the Menshevik Organisational Committee. Subsequently, under the pressure of the masses, a Unification Congress was convened and held in Stockholm in 1906. […]
>
> The Bolsheviks had no alternative but to formally abide by these decisions as they were in the minority and the workers were demanding unity. But in ***practice*** the Unification Congress ***did not unite*** the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks ***in any way*** and we left Stockholm ***in fact as two separate factions***. Several of our comrades were elected to the Central Committee [...]. But at the same time the

Bolsheviks had set up […] their own internal and, for the Party, illegal Central Committee. […] It was a situation where ***two parties*** were seemingly ***operating within the structure of one***. […]

It was clear that this 'forced marriage' with the Mensheviks would not last long. […]

After the 1908 conference, and especially after the 1910 Plenum, we Leninist Bolsheviks decided that we would no longer work together with the liquidator Mensheviks. We were only waiting for a suitable moment to break with them and form an independent organisation based on the rapidly resurgent workers' movement.

At the beginning of 1912 our group decided that such a moment had arrived and convened […] a party conference to re-establish our Party that had been destroyed after 1905. […]

Consequently, since the plenary meeting of 1910 we were no longer working together with the Mensheviks in a joint organisation. […]

The Conference at Prague, which consisted in effect of only a handful of delegates – some 20 to 25 in number – and was led by Comrade Lenin, dared to proclaim themselves to be a Party and to break once and for all with all other groups and sub-groups. […]

While all the Menshevik *émigré*s were against us, the rising generation of revolutionary workers in Russia was *for* us, and the Prague Conference succeeded in building a bridge to the newly resurgent Bolshevik workers' groups and creating a Party in accordance with new principles (Zinoviev, 1923, pp.138-140, 145, 165, 185, 166).

The Communist Party can only join the Labour Party, provided it retains full freedom of criticism and is able to ***pursue its own policies***. […] When the Italian comrades (this is directed at Serrati; auth.) tolerate opportunists like Turati & Co., i.e. bourgeois elements, in their party, this is indeed class collaboration. However, in this case with regard to the Labour Party, it is merely a question of collaboration between the advanced minority of the British workers and the vast majority. The members of the Labour Party are all members of trade unions. This is a very unusual structure that is not found in any other country. This organisation embraces around 6-7 million workers from all the trade unions. ***They are not asked to state their political convictions***. […] The British Socialist Party can quite openly declare that Henderson is a traitor but nonetheless remain in the Labour Party. Here we have the vanguard of the working class collaborating with the backward workers, the rearguard. This collaboration is of such importance for the whole movement that we categorically insist upon the British Communists formng a link between the Party, i.e. the minority of the working class, and the entire remaining mass of the workers (Lenin, [1920] 1937, pp.208-209).

> The Communist Party can be affiliated to the Labour Party, if it has the freedom to criticise and ***pursue its own policies***. […] All members of the trade unions participate in the Labour Party. It is an unusual formation of a kind not found in any other country. It comprises some 6 to 7 million workers from all the trade unions. They are not asked to state their political beliefs. […] This is collaboration between the vanguard of the working class and the backward workers, the rearguard. This is so important for the whole movement that we categorically insist upon the British Communists forming a link between the party, i.e. the minority of the working class, and the remaining mass of the workers (Lenin, [1920] 1921f, pp.89-90).

Accordingly, the Congress decided that:

> At the same time the Second Congress of the Third International must also declare itself in favour of the Communist groups and the groups and organisations in Britain sympathising with Communism joining the Labour Party, although this party belongs to the Second International […] as long as this party allows its constituent organisations their present freedom of criticism and freedom of propaganda and agitation, and organisational activity ***for the dictatorship of the proletariat and Soviet power,*** as long as this party retains its character as a federation of all trade union organisations of the working class (Kommunistische Internationale,1920, p.22).
>
> As a result of unusual conditions, the Labour Party in Britain is a kind of general workers' association for the entire country. It is the task of the British Communists to launch a vigorous campaign for their admittance to the Labour Party (*Kommunistische Internationale*, [1921] 1923, pp.22-23).

Since 1925, the Labour Party has no longer been an umbrella organisation, but a veritable, opportunist, extreme right-wing social-democratic party that is fundamentally a bourgeois left-liberal party. The British Stalinist party does not contradict its essential character at all when it applies for admission to ***this*** Labour Party. The British workers' aristocracy and workers' bureaucracy, for whom the alliance with the British bourgeoisie is paramount, is kicking up a fuss against this admission, because they regard it as endangering this coalition in consequence of the conflict of interest between 'British' nationalism and Stalin's Russian nationalism, which admittedly are at present temporarily fellow travellers; but in the longer term will part company and will indeed come into conflict with each other.

In 1919, the Hungarian CP merged with the Left Social Democrats to form the 'Communist-Socialist Party' and in doing so gave the Social Democrats the opportunity to sabotage the entire workers' CP from within. This mistake was even bigger than the second one that it made, namely not giving land to the Hungarian poor peasants. These were the main causes of the catastrophic end to the proletarian dictatorship in Hungary.

Admittedly, one must not forget that the Hungarian CP had barely been born, and that it was without independent revolutionary experience, before it was confronted by the most difficult task of all; its mistakes are attributable to youthful inexperience and are therefore to a large extent excusable.

It was quite otherwise in China in 1925-27, where the CP was literally compelled by Stalin to enter the bourgeois Kuomintang and to submit, politically and organisationally, to its bourgeois discipline. The main responsibility for this political crime, with all its catastrophic consequences, falls to Stalin, to the Stalinist bureaucracy, because the Second World Congress of the CI in 1920 had indeed declared that it was permissible for the CP to temporarily make common cause or indeed form an alliance with the national-revolutionary movement in the colonies and the backward countries. However, it was explicitly emphasised that the CP must not unite with the national-revolutionary movement, but on the contrary must without fail maintain the independent character of the proletarian movement – even in its embryonic form (see Kommunistische Internationale, 1920, p.65).

> In practice, however, the policy of Menshevism in the revolution consists of retaining the united front (with the bourgeoisie; auth.) at any cost, as long as possible, at the price of (continuously; auth.) adapting its own policy to the policy of the bourgeoisie, at the price of cutting down the slogans and the activity of the masses, and even, as in China, at the price of the organisational subordination of the workers party to the political apparatus of the bourgeoisie. […]
>
> The Chinese Communist Party (CP; auth) [was] in this whole period [...] *in subordination* to the whole Kuomintang, led in reality by the bourgeoisie which had the army and the power in its hands. The Communist Party submitted to the political discipline of Chiang Kai-Shek. The Communist Party signed the obligation not to criticise Sun Yat Senism, a petty-bourgeois theory which is directed not only against imperialism, but also against the class struggle. […]
>
> Its (the Chinese CP; auth.) lack of independence is the source of all the evils and all the mistakes. […]
>
> If, in spite of the workers' mass movement, in spite of the powerful rise of the trade unions, in spite of the revolutionary agrarian movement on the land, the Communist party should remain as before an integral appendage to a bourgeois party, and what is more, should it enter the national government created by this bourgeois party, it would be better to say frankly: the time has not yet come for a Communist party in China. […]
>
> We continued to suppress and conceal from our own Party the first *coup d'état* by Chiang Kai-Shek in March 1926, the shootings of workers and peasants, and in general all the facts that marked the counter-revolutionary character of the Kuomintang leadership. […] We founded no newspaper for it (our party; auth.)[39] (Trotsky, [1927] 1932b, pp.39, 41-42, 43, 45).
>
> The Communist Party was a subordinated part of a party at whose head stood the national liberal bourgeoisie. Last May, the Communist Party obligated itself not to criticise even the teachings of Sun Yat Sen, that is, the petty-bourgeois

[39] A little more of this quotation has been included from the original for the purposes of clarification; trans.

doctrine, which is aimed not only against imperialism but also against the proletarian class struggle (Trotsky, [1927] 1932b, p.94).

Despite the colossal scope of events, the Communist party does not possess its own daily paper to this very day […], although it already has ministers in the National government. […] In a word, the Communist party is really transformed into an annex of the Kuomintang. […]

The political and organisational dependence of the Communist Party of China on the Kuomintang makes it impossible for the party to fulfil its duty either to the working class or the peasantry. […]

The line for the Communist Party remaining in the Kuomintang at any price leads not only to uncritical eulogies of the Kuomintang, not only to cloaking the class struggle in the Kuomintang, not only to the suppression of facts that cry to high heaven about the shooting of workers and peasants and the worsening of the material position of the workers, but also to the direct disorientation of the parties of the Comintern, including also the Communist Party of China (Zinoviev, [1927] 1932, pp.353-354, 354, 363).

But the leadership of the Comintern did not stop there. It compelled the Chinese Communist Party to enter the Kuomintang and submit to its discipline. In special telegrams from Stalin the Chinese Communists were urged to curb the agrarian movement. The insurgent workers and peasants were forbidden to form their own soviets in order not to alienate Chiang Kai-shek, whom Stalin defended against the Oppositionists as a 'reliable ally' at a party meeting in Moscow at the beginning of April 1927, i.e. a few days before the counter-revolutionary *coup d'état* in Shanghai.

The official subordination of the Communist Party to the bourgeois leadership, and the official prohibition of forming soviets […] was a more blatant and more glaring betrayal of Marxism than all the deeds of the Mensheviks in the years 1905-1917.

After Chiang Kai-shek's *coup d'état* in April 1927, a left wing under the leadership of Wang Ching-wei split off temporarily from the Kuomintang. Wang Ching-wei was immediately hailed in '*Pravda'* as a reliable ally. In essence Wang Ching-wei bore the same relation to Chiang Kai-shek as Kerensky to Milyukov, with this difference that in China Milyukov and Kornilov were united in the single person of Chiang Kai-shek.

After April 1927, the Chinese Communist Party (CP; auth.[40]) was ordered to enter the 'Left' Kuomintang and to submit to the discipline of the Chinese Kerensky, instead of preparing open warfare against him. The 'reliable' Wang

[40] Melt consistently uses CP to indicate to the reader that the Stalinist 'Communist' Party was not a real workers party; In some of his writings, Trotsky has used ComParty to indicate the same thing; trans.

> Ching-wei crushed the Communist Party (CP; auth.), and together with it the workers' and peasants' movement, no less brutally than Chiang Kai-shek. […]
>
> The tactics of the Comintern constituted an unconsciously, but all the more reliably, organised ***sabotage of the Chinese Revolution*** (Trotzki, 1930b, pp.34-35, 36–37).
>
> Under Stalinist leadership the policy of the united front was turned into a hunt ***for allies*** (Chiang Kai-shek, trade union bureaucrats, Croat bourgeoisie of the Radić type, etc.; auth.) ***at the cost of sacrificing the independence of the Communist Party*** (CP; auth.). [...] All this was undertaken, of course, with the best of intentions, in order to hasten developments by accomplishing for the masses what the masses were not mature enough to do for themselves. […] Invariably all these experiments and adventures ended ***catastrophically***. The revolutionary movement was flung back for many years (Trotzki, 1932c, pp.43-44).

The entry of several groups of the Fourth International into the Social Democratic Party in their country (a few years prior to the outbreak of the Second World War) was a manoeuvre guided by the best of revolutionary intentions and was completely permissible. However, it was carried out in such a way that it amounted in actual fact to sacrificing the organisational and political autonomy and independence of the organisation of proletarian revolutionaries, i.e. the Party. The groups joined the SP in their ***entirety***. They did indeed retain their organisation and press within the SP, but they were compelled ***to confine themselves politically to a left-Social Democratic line***, i.e. they were at best allowed to sharpen their criticism to positive slogans such as: 'Out with the old leaders – bring on new, revolutionary leaders!' or 'Down with the opportunist line – for the proletarian-revolutionary line!' and the like; however, they were not allowed to tell the Social Democratic workers, or the masses in general, the very thing that mattered, namely that the SP could not be cured by changing the people who were the leaders; that, because of its class character, it could never ever be brought onto the proletarian-revolutionary line; that, on the contrary, the workers had to detach themselves from it and rally round the proletarian-revolutionary nucleus, the Fourth International, and build up their proletarian class party and class International. If only a ***some*** of the proletarian revolutionaries had joined the SP, then the proletarian-revolutionary organisation – even if it had been numerically weakened – would have maintained its organisational and political autonomy and independence: it would have criticised in front of the masses those who had entered the SP and retreated onto the Left-Social Democratic line – a retreat that was required as part of the manoeuvre – and again and again counterposed in positive terms the proletarian-revolutionary line to this centrist line – in this way, in terms of its overall effect, a revolutionary result would have been achieved. However, due to the fact that the entire revolutionary group entered the SP, the organisational and political autonomy and independence in relation to the SP was in fact sacrificed, with all the disintegrating consequences that this deviation to the right were bound to have, and in actual fact did have.

X. One Class – Several Parties

In the USA, the bourgeoisie has the Republican Party and the Democratic Party; in Britain it has the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party. The French capitalist class had a lot of bourgeois parties. During the time of the Second German Empire, for example, the capitalist class had the *Deutschnationale Partei* (German National Party), the *Deutsche Volkspartei* (German People's Party), das *Zentrum* (the *Katholische Volkspartei*) [the Centre (the Catholic People's Party)] and the (bourgeois) *Demokratische Partei* (Democratic Party). The bourgeoisie therefore has in many cases two or more capitalist parties representing different strata of the capitalist class. With regard to both the question of the property of the capitalist class in the means of production and that of the capitalist state apparatus, i.e. with regard to the question of capitalist principles, all the bourgeois parties are as one, are indeed identical; their differences operate on this class basis that they all have in common – and are to do with their share of the profits, property and state power. If the capitalist class interests are endangered, the bourgeois parties come together and, depending on the size of the danger, they join forces as the situation demands or form an organised united front (a bourgeois bloc and the like) or a party of capitalist unity (a fascist party).

Will the proletariat perhaps also set up several parties, all firmly on the proletarian class basis, with differences only in questions of secondary importance, parties that join forces in the event of danger and, depending on the size of the danger, join forces as the situation demands, or join forces to form an organised united front or, in the event of very great danger, join forces to form a unitary proletarian party? The Party is not an end in itself, but a means to an end; it is a means, indeed the main means for the class to achieve its class interests, class aims and class goals. Establishing capitalist power and holding on to it, building up capitalist production and developing it was not, and is not, easy and yet this historical task of the bourgeoisie is child's play in comparison to the gigantic task that the history of human society has set the working class, namely establishing proletarian-democratic state power and holding on to it, building up socialist production and developing it and ultimately achieving a classless, stateless and partyless society, a fraternal world cooperative encompassing the whole of humanity.

Overthrowing feudal rule, replacing feudal exploitation by capitalist exploitation, replacing one form of exploitation by another was a far easier task (*Kampfaufgabe*) than overthrowing capitalist rule, establishing proletarian rule and liquidating exploitation, rule and oppression in whatever form altogether.

In the main, the bourgeoisie was already able to solve its historical task on a ***national*** scale, even in the case of small countries, whereas the proletariat is only able to do this on an ***international*** scale and must be victorious in at least several big, fully-developed capitalist countries, in order to fully make communist society a reality in actual fact.

The sources of external resistance that the proletariat has to defeat, overcome and liquidate are thus far greater. Internally, too, the working class has it much, much more difficult. Bringing the multi-millioned masses together for unified action and keeping them together for this is, in consequence of their ***numbers***, considerably more difficult than it is in the case of ten thousand or a hundred thousand capitalists. This difficulty is enormously increased because the ***consciousness*** of the capitalist exploiters is relatively more highly developed than that of the exploited and oppressed workers.

Only with ***the utmost centralisation of all its powers*** will the working class be able to overcome these enormous difficulties and remain master of them and fully achieve its revolutionary end goal, namely the construction of communist society.

This centralisation, however, can only be achieved by having a ***unified political leadership of the entire class,*** i.e. only by means of a unity party, only by means of a ***single*** class party, and a ***single*** class International. By organising itself on the basis of honest ***party democracy*** and by establishing an honest ***workers' democracy*** in every sphere, it gives all proletarian forces the maximum scope for working actively for their interests under the ***unified political leadership*** that – given the conditions of the proletarian class struggle is foisted on them as an ***indispensable necessity for their victory***, for their enduring victory and for their class aim of achieving Communism.

The capitalist class fought its way upwards to power, stratum by stratum. More correctly: it fought its way upwards under the leadership of capitalist strata that superceded each other, whereby the fruits of each major stage on the road to victory were pocketed above all by the leading stratum of the bourgeoisie at that time. In this way the bourgeoisie developed several bourgeois parties, of which one or more elevate themselves to power while the other party or parties remain in opposition, till it or they succeeded in elevating itself or themselves to the government, to the exclusion or inclusion of other bourgeois parties and so on. Is it not possible, indeed probable, that the rise of the proletariat to power, the exercise of power by the proletariat and the solving of the historical task of the working class will take place in a similar process, whereby the different proletarian strata will supercede each other in the leadership role – and if there is no other way, then, if need be, by means of political revolution, as was often the case with the bourgeoisie, whereby the leading stratum seizes the main benefits for itself – and that therefore the working class will also, like the capitalist class, form several parties? Perhaps in the following way: first of all, proletarian power is exercised by the workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy who are organised on a party basis (regardless of whether this party calls itself a Stalinist party or something else) and who monopolise the main benefits of proletarian power until other strata of the proletariat succeed one way or another – if need be by means of proletarian revolution – in elevating themselves to power and so on? When, for example, in 1830 in France the banking bourgeoisie climbed to power on the back of the July Revolution, it did in fact exercise capitalist class power. It seized the main fruits of the victory for itself, but on the basis of capitalist class principles, on the basis of capitalist class property and on the basis of the capitalist state, which secured and strengthened it against the feudal counter-revolution. In contrast, a workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy like the Stalinist workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy – who usurp the proletarian state power, hollow out, undermine and liquidate proletarian democracy, exclude the working class more and more from state power in the proletarian state and seize the fruits of collectivised production mainly for themselves – begin, in the same measure as they continue, raise and deepen their usurpation, to exercise power in the proletarian state in effect to the benefit of capitalist tendencies, in the interests of the capitalist elements and the world bourgeoisie. It dupes and deceives the working class, masquerades as a workers party or a communist party in order to be able to do this more easily, but is, at any rate objectively, in truth a tool of the capitalist class enemy against the working class, against the workers' state, against the workers' revolution. Certainly, the Stalinist bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy is defending the proletarian state, is defending the collective property of the proletarian state against the bourgeoisie as an object for them to

sponge upon, but it defends this collective property using means and methods that inevitably shift the relationship of forces between the classes more and more to the disadvantage of Socialism and more and more to the advantage of capitalism, namely to the disadvantage of the proletariat and to the advantage of the bourgeoisie; it is undermining more and more the ***socialist*** character of the collective property and the ***proletarian*** character of the Soviet state; it is more and more preparing the way for the capitalist counter-revolution.

The co-existence of a proletarian class party with the StP, the SP, the LP, etc. does not mean the co-existence of several parties of the working ***class***. The Stalinist party, the Social Democratic Party, the Labour Party, etc. are not proletarian parties, are not workers parties, they are petty-bourgeois parties; their fundamental class position is not at all proletarian, but petty-bourgeois; indeed they are objectively, in effect, instruments of the bourgeoisie against the fundamental proletarian class positions, against the proletarian class.

That is why both in the hour of danger as well as at any other time ***A MERGER OF THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY WITH THEM TO FORM A UNITARY PARTY IS EXCLUDED ON PRINCIPLE,*** because such a merger is only permissible on the basis of the proletarian class principles, which are effectively trampled underfoot due to the essential character of the StP, the SP and the LP. A ***proletarian united front*** with them against the bourgeoisie is, admittedly, permissible, is possible and can be imposed upon them by means of escalating pressure from the masses; but a proletarian united front operates on the basis of non-conformity of principles and is intended singly and solely for the struggle for limited partial aims, partial goals and partial tasks, for temporarily common aims.

The co-existence of genuine, honest proletarian parties, i.e. those that actually do operate on the basis of the proletarian class interests and only have differences with regard to issues of secondary importance (not as a more or less short, transient phase, in a way that is again and again entailed in the development of revolutionary groups whose healthy, honest revolutionary sections again and again converge in the mainstream of revolutionary party development by uniting to form a proletarian class party or, if this party already exists, integrating, but working organically alongside one another over a more or less lengthy period of time) would only be at all theoretically conceivable and permissible on principle once proletarian-democratic state power has been consolidated across the whole world, i.e. when the capitalist class is already in actual fact largely liquidated worldwide and there is no longer any danger that it could rise up and develop again. Once, however, the proletariat has carried out its historical task up to this point, then the Party is also already gradually beginning to approach the point where it becomes superfluous and slowly dies out. Even then it will have work in front of it for a long period of time and there will certainly be no lack of differences in opinion within the proletariat; but the broadest proletarian democracy and party democracy – which by then will have been greatly consolidated – will be up to the task of providing the scope for all demands placed upon them for settling all differences of opinion and disagreements again and again within the framework of one, indivisible proletarian class party and class International and the mass organisations that they lead, from the trade unions right up to and including the workers' and small-peasants'/small-farmers' councils.

The proletarian class party differs neither from the proletariat as a whole, nor from any particular proletarian stratum, with regard to the class interests; it only differs from them in terms of consciousness, and only in that it has a greater oversight over the road to realising the

proletarian class interests, a deeper insight into the means and methods with which the advance along this road must be achieved, in order that the advance leads to victory for the proletarian class. **ONE CLASS – SEVERAL PARTIES**: ***THIS APPLIES TO THE EXPLOITERS' CLASS***; ***BUT FOR THE WORKING CLASS WHAT APPLIES AND MUST APPLY IS***: ***ONE CLASS – ONE PARTY***!

Trotsky correctly writes:

> The prohibition of opposition parties was a temporary measure, dictated by conditions of civil war, blockade, intervention and famine. The ruling party, which was at that time still the genuine organisation of the proletarian vanguard, had an active inner life – the struggle of groups and factions to a certain degree replaced the struggle of parties (Trotzki, 1936a, p.258).

But he goes too far in his justification ion for this when he continues:

> In reality classes are heterogeneous; they are torn by inner antagonisms; they are not able to solve their common tasks other than through an inner struggle of tendencies, groupings and parties. It is possible, with certain qualifications, to concede that 'a party is a part of a class'. But since a class has many 'parts' – some looking forward, some looking back – one and the same class may create several parties. […] An example of where only one party corresponding to one class is not to be found in the whole course of political history, provided of course, one does not take the police appearance for the reality (ibid., pp.259-260).

When organising the revolutionary party, we must start out ***primarily*** from the ***needs*** of the ***revolutionary struggle*** – the Party being the main means to achieve victory. The proletariat can only be victorious and maintain victory by means of the utmost concentration of its entire strength, i.e. only under the leadership of a unitary revolutionary party, a ***single*** party! ***THE CO-EXISTENCE OF SEVERAL PARTIES OF THE WORKING CLASS WOULD CONTRADICT THE BASIC REQUIREMENT FOR THE INDISPENSABLE UTMOST CONCENTRATION OF PROLETARIAN STRENGTH***.

The unitary revolutionary party, the proletarian class party and the mass organisations that it leads, from trade unions up to and including workers' councils, must be built up in such a way as to provide sufficient scope for settling differences of opinion, disagreements and antagonisms prevailing within the working class on the basis of the needs of the revolutionary struggle that is designed to lead to success and victory – for this reason there must be a centralised party organised on the basis of honest party democracy; but that means at the same time one party, a ***single*** party! The correct point of view that petty-bourgeois parties – which are based on the worker masses and which sections of the working class still trust and elect to the workers' councils, join and follow (like, for example, the SP, the LP, the StP) – are on principle permitted to exist as ***opposition parties*** on the basis of the proletarian-democratic state and within the framework of its laws – regardless of the fact that the victorious proletariat will call to account those who have given themselves out to be 'representatives of the working class', to be 'revolutionaries, socialists, communists', etc., but have in reality, by means of ***deliberate*** sabotage, betrayal and murder, acted against the proletarian revolution – must not

mislead us into somehow regarding these petty-bourgeois ‘workers’ parties as real workers parties, as parties of the working ***class*** and declaring them or treating them politically as such. Quite the opposite: by permitting them to exist as opposition parties in the proletarian state, we have the revolutionary ***duty*** to tell the working class and make it clear to it that they are not workers parties, that they are not parties of the working ***class***, but parties of the petty-bourgeoisifying, petty-bourgeoisified workers’ bureaucrats and workers’ aristocrats, parties which draw sections of the proletariat behind them in order to make use of them for their egotistical purposes and are therefore in effect working into the hands of the bourgeoisie, that these parties call themselves workers parties in order to deceive the proletariat about the self-seeking nature of the main goal of these parties. Permitting the petty-bourgeois ‘workers’ parties to exist as opposition parties in the proletarian state does not mean that there are two or more parties of the working ***class*** co-existing or working alongside each other; on the contrary, it means that the revolutionary party has the overwhelming majority of the working class behind it – without this, it would not have been able to establish the state power of the working class – but that to a greater or lesser extent considerable sections of the worker masses, who are backward in terms of consciousness, are still under the sway of petty-bourgeois thinking and follow certain petty-bourgeois parties who give themselves out to be ‘socialist’ or ‘communist’ or ‘revolutionary’ ‘workers’ parties; the revolutionary party is convinced that mechanically excluding these parties are from any kind of legal activity would delay the process of clarifying the strata of workers who still follow them; on the contrary, it wants to accelerate this process through the lived experiences of these strata of workers and ***for this very reason*** allows these petty-bourgeois ‘workers’ parties to exist as legal opposition parties within the framework of the laws of the proletarian-democratic state.

XI. One Party – Several Classes

A party can comprise several classes, one of which constitutes the ***head*** of the party corpus and the others its ***tail***; the head class, in particular its head layer, makes use of, exploits the tail whose fire power and fighting strength the class at the head of the party, in particular its head layer, makes use of, politically, for its own ends, whereby it now and again also lets those who are being sponged on have small crumbs, in order to be able to carry on sponging on them even more thoroughly. The party line of a ***multi-class party*** moves on the class line of the head layer which, directly or indirectly, through elements who are loyal to it, holds in its hands what are in class terms the most important posts in the party machine. The reality of this actual state of affairs is concealed from the class strata being made use of and is concealed from the outside world by the use of religious or national labels, ideology, etc., or by the pretence of Socialism, Communism or such like, a purpose that is also served by adopting a name for the party that corresponds to this. The ***REAL CLASS CHARACTER OF A MULTI-CLASS (OR TWO-CLASS) PARTY IS ALWAYS DETERMINED BY THE CLASS NATURE OF THE CLASS AT ITS HEAD, IN PARTICULAR THE HEAD LAYER OF THIS CLASS***.

For example, the *Deutsche Zentrumspartei* (German Centre Party), (this '*Katholische Volkspartei*' ['Catholic People's Party']) sailed under the false flag of religion; it was in reality a ***capitalist*** party, which brought together broad strata of small farmers/peasants, petty bourgeois and even workers that they made use of through the party using every trick in the book in the interests of the capitalist head layer.

This was also the case with the '*Christlichsoziale Partei*' ('Christian Social Party') in Austria. In China, the *Kuomintang*, this 'National People's Party', sailed, and sails today, under the false flag of the nation; it was and is in reality the party of the Chinese ***bourgeoisie*** for making use of the small peasants, petty bourgeois and workers, who had been drawn in to benefit the Chinese capitalists.

Under the name Radical-'Socialist' Party, the French left-bourgeoisie drew small-peasant/small-farmer and petty-bourgeois sections of the masses into the ranks of this party and made use of them in the interests of the left wing of the French capitalist class. Under the same name the Spanish left-bourgeoisie carried on the same parasitical business with regard to the broad small-peasant/small-farmer and petty-bourgeois strata, above all those in Catalonia. The Stalinist Party and Social Democracy, as well as their helpers, like the Brandlerists, the SAP, ILP, POUM, etc., deceitfully presented these ***left-capitalist two-class parties*** to the working class as being petty-bourgeois parties, in order to conceal the fact that the 'People's' Front was an alliance with the left-capitalist exploiters against the working class, against the proletarian revolution. But no matter how big the petty-bourgeois tail of a two-class party is, what determines the class line and the class character of the party is the capitalist class nature of the left-bourgeois class at its head, its head layer.

SOCIAL DEMOCRACY, THE LABOUR PARTY, THE STALINIST PARTY AND THE LIKE ARE PETTY-BOURGEOIS, TWO-CLASS PARTIES SPONGING POLITICALLY ON AS BROAD SECTIONS OF THE WORKING CLASS AS POSSIBLE, FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE EGOTISTICAL INTERESTS OF THE PETTY-BOURGEOIS HEAD LAYER, NAMELY THE PETTY-BOURGEOISIFYING, PETTY-BOURGEOISIFIED WORKERS' BUREAUCRACY AND WORKERS' ARISTOCRACY. This degenerating, degenerated head stratum that determines

the party line in accordance with its egotistical petty-bourgeois interests, seeks to a greater or lesser extent to increase its weight within the party even further by subsequently also drawing in broad ***non-proletarian*** class sections, above all petty-bourgeois ones, indeed drawing in small capitalists and even middle capitalists in relatively substantial numbers into the petty-bourgeois, two-class party. Of these parties, the SPD has declared most openly that it does not want to be a class party, but a ***people's party***; it even set this out in its Heidelberg Programme (1925). This is in fact the direction of development of all petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties, which (like the StP, the SP, etc.) mostly appear under sham-revolutionary, sham-socialist, or sham-communist bogus names, only they do not as a rule express this as openly as the German Noske party did. This also applies to the Russian StP: its petty-bourgeois head stratum (the Russian Stalinist bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy) has made itself even stronger by having a considerable small-peasant/small-farmer, petty-bourgeois sector in the party; in addition, Kulak elements and even neo-capitalist elements – who are developing in and around the Stalinist bureaucracy and are currently at various stages of their well-advanced state of pupation – operate inside the party using all kinds of extremely cunning camouflage. Even in the Stalinist parties outside Russia the number of non-proletarians, above all petty bourgeois making up the party membership has swollen significantly in the years since 1923-24.

The non-proletarian class elements do not join the petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties in order to adopt a proletarian class position, to join the struggle on the proletarian class line (including for their interests too); quite the contrary, they join because they feel, and indeed recognise, that these '***WORKERS' PARTIES ARE PETTY-BOURGEOIS INSTRUMENTS FOR EXPLOITING THE FIGHTING STRENGTH OF THE WORKER MASSES, POLITICALLY, FOR PETTY-BOURGEOIS GOALS***. Petty-bourgeois, small-capitalist, middle-capitalist producers and shopkeepers/traders who joined the Austrian SP could reckon on being more likely to be taken on by the municipality of 'Red' Vienna as municipal suppliers, something that was perfectly understandable from the standpoint of a petty-bourgeois party. From a certain point on in the development of the party, agitation, propaganda, winning members for the party, indeed all the activity of these parties goes over to winning greater numbers of party members, particularly from petty-bourgeois and small capitalist strata and even middle capitalist strata. Above all, however – in certain phases, from a certain point on – not only the petty-bourgeois producers, but also the weaker capitalist producers, shopkeepers/traders, etc., who suffer particularly from the offensive of big capital and monopoly capital, feel themselves – as if drawn by a magnet – attracted more and more by the fundamentally petty-bourgeois line of these 'workers' parties, by their fundamental line of coalition ('people's' front, etc.), just as they are attracted by the nationally orientated line of these parties, their 'struggle for an honest people's community (*Volksgemeinschaft*)', their 'socialism' in one country, etc.

Lenin's party was a ***one-class party***. It ***was based upon two*** classes: 'Our Party ***rests on*** two classes', writes Lenin in his Testament (25.12.1922); (see Trotzki, 1930d, p.48). Trotsky writes: 'A single party may ***rest upon*** parts of different classes' (Trotzki, 1936a, p.259). It rested on ***two*** classes and based itself on them, but in terms of composition it was a one-class party! Does this mean that it was composed only of workers (including white-collar workers and government employees). Not at all. It also had non-proletarian elements, in particular small peasants/farmers and petty bourgeois as Party members. But they were not attracted by party collaboration with the bourgeoisie or sections of it, nor by nationally orientated politics, but by the proletarian class line, the proletarian-revolutionary line, the international line, the world-

revolutionary line of Lenin's party. They joined the Party, not to make use of it for petty-bourgeois purposes, but quite the opposite, in order to take part in the struggle for the proletarian revolution – ***within the framework of the proletarian class principles,*** i.e. ***not at the expense of the working class,*** but ***in harmony with the class interests of the workers***, and in order to satisfy their current and future interests as well. They adopted the proletarian class position and were led into the struggle on this basis and educated on this basis to have an ever clearer, firmer, ***proletarian*** class consciousness; in short, they increasingly shed their petty-bourgeois mindset and thoughts and increasingly became real communists. In backward Russia, where the small size of the proletarian class was far outnumbered by the gigantic mass of the small peasantry, the small-peasant sector of the Leninist party was relatively substantial, but under Lenin's and Trotsky's leadership the nucleus of the Party was qualitatively so strong that it was able to digest even this number; even with this substantial small-peasant section, Lenin's party was a proletarian class party.

In backward countries like China and India, where conditions are similar to those of Russia back then, the Party will probably not be able to get round developing a relatively sizeable small-peasant sector. In these countries we cannot rule out that the party could be a ***proletarian two-class party*** for a certain transitional period. This kind of party would be fundamentally different from the petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties in two respects: 1) the centre of gravity within the party would actually lie with the working class; 2) whereas the petty-bourgeoisified workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy gives out the SP to be a 'socialist' party, the StP to be a 'communist' party and the LP to be a 'workers' party, in order to deceive the worker masses and lure them, draw them into the party, in order to exploit them through the party and sponge on them politically in the egotistical, petty-bourgeois interests of the degenerating, degenerated workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy, the proletarian-revolutionary party, in the backward countries too, again and again tells the small peasants and petty bourgeois the truth: 'There is only a place for you in our Party as proletarian revolutionaries; fight together with us for the proletarian revolution; it is only on the proletarian-revolutionary line that you in reality also fight for your own best interests'. In the backward countries too, the proletarian class party does not aim to draw in small peasants and petty bourgeois per se, but only those amongst them who are serious about the proletarian revolution, want to fight for it, and do fight for it, and seriously want to become proletarian revolutionaries – the Party will then do everything to train them for this purpose. It is above all the consistent proletarian class line of the proletarian-revolutionary party itself that, in the (backward countries too, constitutes the main safeguard that only proletarian-revolutionary elements are selected from the small peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie and never ever small peasants and petty bourgeois per se. Never ever therefore can such elements regard the Party as a tool for petty-bourgeois purposes, but on the contrary only as the main instrument for the proletarian revolution, for the struggle for the proletarian class interests on the proletarian class line – they are only allowed into the Party for this purpose, and it goes without saying that this also involves them fighting for their specific interests in conjunction with joining in the proletarian struggle, within the framework and on the basis of the proletarian-revolutionary line.

In the same measure as the proletarian-revolutionary nucleus grows in strength, above all qualitatively, in the same measure as it deepens the proletarian class consciousness of the non-proletarian elements who have been drawn into the party, this proletarian two-class party will,

after a certain transitional period that is certainly not without its dangers, become a proletarian one-class party.

In the developed capitalist countries, where the proletariat, and its vanguard too, is numerically much stronger and much more advanced in terms of consciousness, the proletarian class party should and must right from the outset be a proletarian one-class party in the above-stated sense.

XII. The Petty-Bourgeois ‘Workers’ Party, the Petty-Bourgeois ‘Workers’ International

1. What party is a workers party?

What matters is not whether a party gives itself out to be a workers party or describes itself as such, but that it really is one. Is a party a real workers party merely due to the mere fact that many, very many workers belong to it as members or that it bases itself on broad worker masses? Not at all! However large, numerically, the politically exploited tail may be in a multi-class or a two-class party – and the number of workers may run to millions – it is nevertheless, in terms of its class character, a capitalist or a petty-bourgeois party – depending on whether a petty-bourgeois or a capitalist ‘head’ class (*Kopfklasse*) or head stratum actually has the party machine in its hands and leads the party on what is in actual fact a capitalist or petty-bourgeois political line. ***A PARTY IS ONLY A REAL WORKERS PARTY WHEN IT COMPLIES WITH THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS***: ***a***) ***IT MUST, IN POLITICAL TERMS, ALWAYS MOVE ON THE PROLETARIAN CLASS LINE, NAMELY ON THE LINE OF THE INTERNATIONAL PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION***; ***b***) ***FOR THIS VERY REASON ITS OVERWHELMING MAJORITY MUST BE MADE UP OF WORKERS AND INDEED ABOVE ALL CLASS-CONSCIOUS WORKERS*** – ***TO A CERTAIN EXTENT ALSO ADVANCED WORKERS*** – ***AND ALL THE ESSENTIAL POSTS IN THE PARTY APPARATUS MUST BE OCCUPIED BY CLASS-CONSCIOUS WORKERS***.

FOR THIS REASON, ONLY THE ORGANISATION OF THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTIONARIES, ***THE PROLETARIAN-REVOLUTIONARY PARTY***, ***THE PROLETARIAN CLASS PARTY***, ***THE PROLETARIAN CLASS INTERNATIONAL IS A REAL WORKERS PARTY***, ***A REAL WORKERS INTERNATIONAL***. ***IN CONTRAST***, ***THE PETTY-BOURGEOIS ‘WORKERS’ PARTIES*** (***THE SP***, ***StP***, ***LP***, ***etc.***) ***ARE PARTIES THAT DO INDEED BASE THEMSELVES ON WORKER MASSES, BUT ONLY IN ORDER TO EXPLOIT THEM POLITICALLY IN THE INTERESTS OF THE PETTY-BOURGEOISIFYING, PETTY-BOURGEOISIFIED WORKERS’ BUREAUCRACY AND WORKERS’ ARISTOCRACY, WHEREBY THEY* – IN EFFECT IN ANY CASE – ***HARNESS THE WORKER MASSES THAT FOLLOW THEM TO THE WAGON OF THE CAPITALIST CLASS, AGAINST THE WORKING CLASS***, ***AGAINST THE PROLETARIAN STATE***, ***AGAINST THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION***, ***AGAINST SOCIALISM***, ***AGAINST COMMUNISM***. They are not real workers parties, even though they give themselves out to be such and even call themselves workers parties, for the very purpose of being able to make it easier for them to carry on and continue sponging politically on the workers following them. One must not call a petty-bourgeois ‘workers’ party simply a workers party; those who, due to their superficiality, do not distinguish it from a real workers party, support the gigantic political deception that the petty-bourgeois party systematically practises on its working-class members and on the workers following it.

> Of course the Labour Party comprises mainly workers; but it does not follow from this that every party composed of workers is politically a workers party. It depends on who leads it and on the content of its actions and its political tactics. Only the latter determines whether we have a real political party of the proletariat in front of us. From this one and only correct standpoint, the Labour Party is, on the contrary, a bourgeois party through and through – despite being composed of

> workers – for it is led by reactionaries […] and is led completely in the spirit of the bourgeoisie (Lenin, [1920] 1923, p.301).
>
> At the same time, however, it is necessary to note that, although there are several workers parties, there is only ***one*** proletarian party. A party can be a workers party in terms of its composition – and yet not be a proletarian party in terms of its orientation, programme and politics (Sinowjew, 1923, p.18).
>
> The Socialist Party is ***not a workers party*** either with regard to its policies or its social composition. It is a party of the new middle stratum (government employees, white-collar workers, etc.) and, in part, of the petty bourgeoisie and the workers' aristocracy (Trotzki, 1936c, p.94).

What Trotsky has stated here about the French SP applies to a greater or lesser extent to all Social Democratic parties without exception; it also applies to the Labour Party and also to all the Stalinist parties without exception, above all to the Russian Stalinist Party. They are not real workers parties; they are petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties.

2. The most important features that **the petty-bourgeois** '**workers**' **parties have in common**

> As in private life one differentiates between what a person thinks and says of themselves and what they really are and do, so in historical struggles one must distinguish still more the empty phrases and fantasies of parties from their real organism and their real interests, their conception of themselves from their reality (Marx, [1852] 1914, pp.34-35).

This must always be kept in mind, especially when determining the essential character of the petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties. They must not be judged merely by what they say, but what they do and don't do, and in the last analysis by the overall effects of their politics as a whole, effects which have been corroborated by the results of more than twenty years, by gigantic proletarian catastrophes.

Depending on whether they operate on the basis of capitalist states, where the bourgeoisie has enormous reserves and gigantic surplus profits at its disposal (the Labour parties) or on the basis of capitalist states, where the bourgeoisie is in a less favourable situation and carries on the business of exploitation to a greater or lesser extent 'merely' with average profits (the Social Democratic parties) or lastly on the basis of the proletarian state that it has degenerated (the Russian Stalinist Party) – whereby the Stalinist affiliates on the basis of bourgeois states constitute a hybrid of the Russian Stalinist and the Social Democratic party types – there are to a greater or lesser extent important ***differences*** between the petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties in terms of the ***form*** that their activity and mindset takes, but in terms of their ***fundamental*** political ***line*** they are essentially the ***same***, just as one rotten egg is the same as another.

What they all have in common is the fact that, fundamentally, they spit on the proletarian-revolutionary principles, that, fundamentally, they trample on the proletarian class principles. They are fundamentally ***opportunist***, they are fundamentally without principles – from the ***proletarian*** class standpoint; in reality they are highly principled – from the ***petty-bourgeois*** class standpoint and defend the ***petty-bourgeois class line*** and petty-bourgeois principles with

the utmost consistency, i.e. ***COLLABORATION WITH THE BOURGEOISIE*** – ***NATIONALLY-ORIENTATED POLITICS***. These are two sides of this same line – it is one and the same fundamentally petty-bourgeois line viewed from two different sides: ***IN CAPITALIST SOCIETY, A SOCIETY THAT IS SPLIT INTO STATES, ANY PARTY COLLABORATION WITH THE BOURGEOISIE IS INEVITABLY NATIONALLY-ORIENTATED POLITICS AND LIKEWISE ANY NATIONALLY-ORIENTATED POLITICS IS PARTY COLLABORATION WITH THE BOURGEOISIE.***

THE WHOLE ACTIVITY OF THE PETTY-BOURGEOIS 'WORKERS' PARTIES CONSISTS OF PARTY COLLABORATION WITH THE BOURGEOISIE OR SECTIONS OF IT OR OF CONSISTENTLY STRIVING TO GAIN THIS COLLABORATION 'THROUGH STRUGGLE', IN TIMES OF WAR AND PEACE, EITHER OPENLY OR COVERTLY – THIS AND ONLY THIS CONSTITUTES THEIR 'CLASS STRUGGLE'. This also fully applies to the StP. Starting in 1923-24, the Stalinist parties pursued this line under the leadership of the *Troika* (Stalin, Zinoviev and Bukharin), at first from the 'left' in the form of an extremely sham-revolutionary course; then, under the leadership of Stalin and Bucharin, in the form of sham-radically camouflaged centrism, which Stalin himself subsequently escalated to 'social fascism', then to capitulation to fascism, till finally from 1935 onwards he openly jumped to social-patriotism, to the 'people's' front, to an overt party alliance with the bourgeoisie. Via the Russian Stalinist party, the Stalinist bureaucracy is, in varying ways, working more and more into the hands of the neo-capitalist elements in Russia; via the Stalinist parties outside Russia, through its entire politics (including its Russian state policies, both domestic and foreign) it is working more and more into the hands of the world bourgeoisie, is always in actual fact in party alliance with the capitalist class.

Under the Social Democratic and Labour slogan, 'we cannot work with the Communists', under the Stalinist slogan, 'there can be no united front on principle with Social Democracy – it is a social-fascist party', both these 'anti-fascist' parties worked harmoniously with each other into the hands of National 'Socialism', in what was in actual fact a united front with the fascist party, this henchman of the German bourgeoisie, led by the monopoly bourgeoisie. The petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties go through thick and thin with the capitalist class. The bourgeoisie knows this very well. But whenever the crisis of the capitalist system compels the bourgeoisie to resort to a fascist dictatorship, it has to exclude the petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties completely, because these parties are reliant on the following of the worker masses and must to a certain extent give way to pressure from the masses and as a consequence of this succumb to vacillations that a fascist dictatorship cannot accept. The petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties would also have participated in a fascist dictatorship and in any wars it waged, if the bourgeoisie had called upon them for this purpose; in this instance it was not because of them that the collaboration came to naught, but singly and solely because of the bourgeoisie, the bourgeoisie as a whole. When, as a result of a particular situation, fascism needs a petty-bourgeois 'workers' party, fascism calls upon it to collaborate, and it goes through fire with fascism, even against the proletarian state: see, for example, the Finnish SP with Messrs Tanner & Co. at its head as faithful lackeys of the Mannerheim fascists. The Social Democratic and Stalinist parties of Germany, Italy, Austria, etc. also stay true to their fundamentally petty-bourgeois line with an iron consistency; at present they are in a party alliance with the American, British, etc. bourgeoisie – the goal of their entire 'struggle' is to establish a collaborationist regime with the left-bourgeoisie, with the non-monopoly bourgeoisie, in Germany, Italy, Austria, etc. At any rate

all petty-bourgeois ‘workers’ parties in every instance without exception work together with the world bourgeoisie against the world revolution and the world proletariat, the proletarian state included; as American imperialism is currently the strongest one, the petty-bourgeois ‘workers’ parties are – with an eye to their own advantage - therefore agents in the first instance of this, the most powerful, section of the bourgeoisie. Trotsky had already stated this in 1926 in the case of the SP (Trotzki, 1926a, pp.29-30, 117), but today the same holds equally good for all the Stalinist parties, including the Russian one. Today, all the petty-bourgeois ‘workers’ parties are working in perfect harmony towards making the world working class, the world masses happy with the blessings of (capitalist) ‘peace’, i.e. ‘peace’ under the command of the predatory Anglo-American monopoly bourgeoisie and exploited by it.

> Opportunism in its developed form – according to the classic definition of Lenin – is a bloc formed by the leaders of the working class with the bourgeoisie and directed against the great mass of the workers. Under the conditions now existing in the Soviet Union, opportunism in its developed form would be the striving of the leaders of the working class to conclude a compromise (more correctly, an alliance; auth.) with the ***developing new bourgeoisie*** (the *Kulaks* and NEP men) and with world capitalism, at the expense of the broad mass of the workers and poor peasants (Trotzki, 1927, p.151).

This also applies today, except for the fact that the neo-capitalist elements are developing above all within the Stalinist bureaucracy itself and its milieu, and the alliance with the newly developing bourgeoisie is not coming about as a result of conscious striving on the part of the Stalinist party, but as the actual outcome of its entire politics.

ALL PETTY-BOURGEOIS ‘WORKERS’ PARTIES ARE, IN TERMS OF THEIR BASIC STANDPOINT, NATIONALLY-ORIENTATED, SOCIAL-NATIONALIST, NATIONALLY-LIMITED, NATIONAL-OPPORTUNIST PARTIES. THEY EITHER STAND CONSCIOUSLY ON THE BASIS OF THE CAPITALIST STATE OR MAKE A PRETENCE OF FIGHTING AGAINST THE BOURGEOIS STATE THROUGH WHAT THEY SAY, WHEREAS – THROUGH THEIR ENTIRE ACTIVITY AND ITS OUTCOMES – THEY STRENGTHEN IT, AND IN ACTUAL FACT WORK IN THE INTERESTS OFF THE BOURGEOIS STATE. OBJECTIVELY, THEIR ULTIMATE GOAL AMOUNTS TO HAVING A SHARE IN CAPITALIST RULE AND GETTING A SHARE OF THE FRUITS OF CAPITALIST EXPLOITATION, NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY. FUNDAMENTALLY, THEY ARE OPPONENTS, BITTER ENEMIES OF THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION; THEY NOT ONLY DO NOTHING TO PREPARE FOR IT MENTALLY, POLITICALLY OR ORGANISATIONALLY, INDEED DO NOTHING AT ALL TO PREPARE FOR IT, BUT ON THE CONTRARY SYSTEMATICALLY SABOTAGE IT, FIGHT AGAINST IT WITH ALL AVAILABLE MEANS, WITH CUNNING AND FORCE, including murder, see, for example, Spain. The Spanish SP did not lift a finger against the systematic assassination of proletarian revolutionaries in Spain by Stalinist agents.

Internationally, the entire SP, including the LP, shed a few crocodile tears over Stalin’s murderous deeds against the proletarian revolutionaries; as long as Stalin was an opponent of American and British imperialism they used Stalin’s murders as a weapon to discredit him from a bourgeois standpoint, but distorted and blurred the actual political reason for these murders and their significance, and mendaciously made them out to be personal differences; however, once Stalin began to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for the British and American bourgeoisie,

they spread a cloak of forgetfulness over the murders and launched into eulogies about Stalin the 'realist', who, demonstrating foresight, eliminated the 'Fifth Column'.

If a workers' revolution does break out without them and despite them working against it, then the petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties will do everything they can to destroy it: they will leave the property and the state apparatus of the bourgeoisie essentially intact and power with the capitalist class – like the SP did in 1918-19 in Germany and Austria, like the StP did in China in 1925-26 and like the Stalinist party did in alliance with Social Democracy in Spain in 1936-37. If the worker masses rise up in order to force the petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties into correcting their reactionary politics, then these parties will – with the help of the capitalists – beat them down with bloody force – like the German SP did repeatedly in 1918-23 and like the StP did in Spain in alliance with Social Democracy on the 4 and 5 May 1937 in Barcelona. The political form in which they want to achieve their desired petty-bourgeois share in capitalist power and in the capitalist gravy train is, in the capitalist states, 'democracy', i.e. bourgeois democracy, exploiters' democracy. In the proletarian state, which has been degenerated by the StP, the political form is the bureaucratic dictatorship, i.e. the dictatorship of the petty-bourgeoisified workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy, which deprives the proletariat of its rights, violates it, oppresses it, systematically stealing from the proletariat the lion's share of the fruits of its collectivised labour and objectively exercises the state power in a way that benefits the bourgeoisie. Ever since the Stalinist bureaucracy tangibly revealed itself to be a bloody instrument against the proletarian revolution, the Social Democratic and Labour parties are finding Stalin's 'socialism' in one country more and more to their liking.

Fundamentally nationally-orientated, the petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties themselves, as true lackey-parties, inevitably mirror the foreign policy differences of the capitalist masters of the nations to which they belong – both those who are already in this position, as well as those who are only on the way there – as in Stalinist Russia, but, who today already, objectively increasingly decisively determine Stalinist politics as a whole. ***BECAUSE THEY ARE NATIONALLY-ORIENTATED, THE MAIN POLITICAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE PETTY-BOURGEOIS 'WORKERS' PARTIES STEMS FROM THE RESULTING DIVERSITY OF THE 'NATIONAL' INTERESTS, I.E. THE NATIONAL-CAPITALIST INTERESTS THAT THEY IN FACT ESPOUSE***.

The character of the petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties becomes most clearly apparent when one examines their basic political line in relation to each of the classes.

a) Their relationship to the bourgeoisie

The petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties do not want the proletarian revolution, which is the only means of replacing the capitalist state apparatus with the proletarian state apparatus and turning capitalist property in the decisive means of production into the property of a proletarian-democratic state, i.e. the collective property of the workers, poor peasants/farmers and petty bourgeois; on the contrary they oppose the proletarian revolution as 'anarchy' or 'chaos'. They do, however, desire measures that are to a greater or lesser extent radical with regard to the state machine and the ownership of the decisive means of production. They therefore again and again appeal to the bourgeoisie's insight and to its best interests. Indeed they sometimes declare that this must be forced through by means of pressure from the masses – but these are merely empty phrases, because only the victorious proletarian-revolutionary onslaught of the

masses, which smashes the capitalist state apparatus and establishes the dictatorship of proletarian democracy, can actually compel the bourgeoisie to do this and that is precisely what they do not want to do. ***THAT IS WHY THEY CAN ONLY ACHIEVE WHAT THE BOURGEOISIE ITSELF DEEMS TO BE APPROPRIATE WITH REGARD TO ITS INTERESTS AND TO WHAT IT GIVES ITS CONSENT – ANYTHING ELSE IS PLAYACTING***.

At most, they want the destruction of the 'fascist' state apparatus i.e. the capitalist state machine cleansed of fascist elements and other elements who, from the standpoint of bourgeois democracy, are counter-revolutionary; in short, ***THEY WANT A DEMOCRATIC-CAPITALIST STATE APPARATUS, I.E. A CAPITALIST STATE APPARATUS***. Together with the degenerated bureaucracy of the trade unions, cooperatives, etc., the petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties are elements that conserve the bourgeois state, parties that in actual fact strengthen and conserve the capitalist exploiters' state; ***FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE PROLETARIAT, THEY ARE CONSERVATIVE PARTIES ON THE LEFT WING OF THE OVERALL CAPITALIST FRONT***.

Even with the consent of the bourgeoisie they merely want to transfer certain means of production into the ownership of the 'state', namely the capitalist state; they want to hand over other means of production to 'public' bodies or to cooperative or municipal undertakings – within the framework of the capitalist state; with regard to all the other capitalist means of production they want 'workplace democracy', i.e. the workers should 'have a say' in the (capitalist) workplace, in the (capitalist) economy, just as they politically 'have a say' in (bourgeois) state democracy – namely on the basis of the capitalist class continuing to own its means of production and the class-based capitalist state machine continuing to exist...

They want a 'socialism' – ***WITH THE CONSENT OF THE CAPITALIST CLASS***, but as the capitalist class only consents to 'socialist' measures that suit it and do not abolish capitalist profit, the 'socialism' of the petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties, like that of all petty-bourgeois 'socialism', amounts to bringing about improvements within the framework of capitalism, improvements, which are designed to bring the middle strata opportunities to develop economically and to bring better working and living conditions for the working class; in reality, however, they serve the purpose of ***REFORMING CAPITALISM, CONSOLIDATING IT AND EXTENDING ITS LIFE***. They are rightly called social-reformist parties (the Russian StP is a social-reformist party on the basis of the proletarian state that it has degenerated). Thus, in terms of their effect, the petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties are bourgeois-liberal 'workers' parties, are bourgeois parties. They are the heirs to bourgeois liberalism under the conditions of capitalist decline, which less and less allows the capitalist class to pursue liberal politics and ultimately not at all.

From a certain high point on in the development of capitalism and its class antagonisms, the bourgeoisie is no longer able to lead the worker masses directly, not even by means of the left-bourgeoisie. More and more the petty-bourgeoisified workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy fulfil this role in the service of the capitalist class by means of their petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties. In the USA the bourgeoisie still does this with the help of the AFL, the CIO, and the MWU, which are kept on a lead by the demoralised workers' bureaucrats and workers' aristocrats; here too, however, the time is approaching when it will need an American Labour Party for this purpose.

The two imperialist power groups are waging the imperialist world war for – amongst other things – the purpose (by vanquishing and thoroughly plundering the defeated group) of creating new conditions for bourgeois-liberal measures in the victorious states (the Beveridge Report and similar proposals) for a certain period of time for the victorious group, accompanied by the harshest exploitation of the masses in all countries, especially the vanquished ones; the petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties unreservedly support the economically stronger Anglo-American imperialism; they hope that by means of its victory they will regain new bourgeois-liberal ground for themselves for a more or less lengthy phase. On the other hand, the German bourgeoisie hopes, after its victory, to chain to itself the German workers, whom it has mistreated, by means of socio-political titbits – making use of its gigantic war booty – while at the same time exploiting the oppressed peoples even more harshly, and in particular the workers amongst them, whereby it could also allow the petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties to have some scope again for their political sponging.

Many honest workers think that the petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties are real workers parties, which at worst fight on the furthest-right wing of the overall proletarian front. A catastrophic error! Because ***IN REALITY THEY FIGHT AS THE FURTHEST-LEFT WING OF THE OVERALL CAPITALIST FRONT AGAINST THE OVERALL PROLETARIAN FRONT***. It is precisely from this fundamental fact that the apparently puzzling gigantic catastrophes experienced by the working class stem; they come about because the petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties – together with the mass organisations they lead – contrary to what the workers think, do not lead the worker masses who follow these parties on the line of the proletarian class interests, but mislead the worker masses on the very opposite line, i.e. against the working class, against the proletarian state, against the proletarian revolution, against Socialism and Communism and for the purpose of strengthening the bourgeoisie and capitalism.

THE ENTIRE POLITICS OF THE PETTY-BOURGEOIS 'WORKERS' PARTIES AMOUNTS TO RAISING THE THIN UPPER STRATUM OF THE WORKING CLASS TO A PETTY-BOURGEOIS EXISTENCE, INTO THE PETTY BOURGEOISIE – AT THE EXPENSE OF THE WORKER MASSES – I.E. WEAKENING THE PROLETARIAT AND, IN TERMS OF CLASS, INCREASING THE NUMBER OF PRIVATE PROPERTY OWNERS AND EXTENDING THEIR FRONT, AND THUS ALSO STRENGTHENING THE POSITION OF THE CAPITALIST CLASS IN SOCIAL TERMS.

The activity of the petty-bourgeois 'workers' party on the basis of the proletarian state that it degenerated, exhibits other forms; to a certain extent this also applies to the Stalinist parties outside Russia, which are after all merely branches of the Russian Stalinist Centre. In essence, however, everything that has been said, also applies to the Stalinist parties. With regard to the Stalinist party in Russia in particular, it has not built up the basic pillars that comprise the foundations of Socialism but has inherited them from the October Revolution. One must not make the enormous mistake of seeing only the quantitative changes that the Stalinist Party has carried out; on the contrary, one must at the same time and above all keep in mind the qualitative changes, the changes in terms of class that the Stalinist party has brought about, i.e. a ***FURTHER SHIFT, CONTINUOUSLY DRIVEN BY STALINIST POLITICS, IN THE RELATIONSHIP OF FORCES BETWEEN THE CLASSES TO THE DISADVANTAGE OF THE WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES AND TO THE ADVANTAGE OF THE WORLD BOURGEOISIE***, with all the disastrous consequences that result from this for the international

proletarian revolution, for the class character of the Soviet state, for the world proletariat and for Socialism and Communism.

The bourgeoisie values the services of the petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties. As a rule it has no interest in tearing away their 'socialist', 'communist' or 'proletarian' cloaks with which they deceive the workers – quite the contrary. Using all available means it supports the politics of these parties against the working class, the proletarian state, the proletarian revolution, against Socialism and Communism – this to a large extent explains their power in relation to the workers. 'The immense strength of the opportunists and the chauvinists stems from their alliance with the bourgeoisie, the governments and the General Staffs' (Lenin, [1915], 1921m, p.160). They enjoy 'every possible means of support – direct and indirect, material (ministerial posts, passports, the press) and ideological – from the world bourgeoisie' (Lenin, 1920b, p.69).

Subjectively, i.e. in terms of the interests for which they intend to fight, the SP, the LP, the StP, etc. are petty-bourgeois parties – in reality they fight for the specific interests of the degenerated, petty-bourgeoisified workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy – objectively, in terms of the actual overall effect of their politics, they are bourgeois parties, because, in terms of the overall result, their politics again and again benefits the capitalist class, capitalism, the capitalist state and the capitalist counter-revolution.

b) Their relationship to the proletariat

> The democratic petty bourgeois, far from wanting to transform the whole of society in the interests of the revolutionary proletarians, only strive for a change in social conditions which will make the existing society as tolerable and comfortable as possible for themselves. […]
>
> ***AS FAR AS THE WORKERS ARE CONCERNED ONE THING ABOVE ALL IS DEFINITE: THEY ARE TO REMAIN WAGE WORKERS AS BEFORE. HOWEVER, THE DEMOCRATIC PETTY BOURGEOIS WANT BETTER WAGES AND SECURITY FOR THE WORKERS […] IN SHORT, THEY HOPE TO BRIBE THE WORKERS WITH A MORE OR LESS DISGUISED FORM OF ALMS AND TO BREAK THEIR REVOLUTIONARY STRENGTH BY TEMPORARILY RENDERING THEIR SITUATION TOLERABLE***. […] But these demands can in no way satisfy the party of the proletariat. Whereas the democratic petty bourgeois want to bring the revolution to an end as quickly as possible, achieving at most the above demands, it is our interest and our task to make the revolution permanent until all the more or less propertied classes have been driven from their ruling position, until the proletariat has seized state power and until the association of proletarians has progressed sufficiently far – not only in one country, but in all leading countries of the world – that competition between the proletarians of these countries has ceased and at least the decisive forces of production are concentrated in the hands of the proletarians. Our concern cannot simply be to modify private property, but to abolish it, not to cover up class antagonisms, but to abolish classes, not to improve the existing society, but to establish a new one (Marx, [1850] 1885, pp.77-78).

One must not let oneself be blinded by the 'socialist' and 'communist' phrases of today's petty-bourgeoisifying, petty-bourgeoisified workers' bureaucrats and workers' aristocrats any more than by the 'socialism' of the democratic petty bourgeois of 1848 – objectively, these workers' bureaucrats and workers' aristocrats are playing the role of the democratic petty bourgeoisie that Marx so aptly denounced. ***A SOLID***, ***SECURE, RESPECTED, MATERIALLY COMFORTABLE EXISTENCE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF CAPITALISM IN ITS ENTIRETY***; ***IN SHORT***, ***A DECENT PETTY-BOURGEOIS SHARE IN CAPITALIST POWER AND IN THE CAPITALIST GRAVY TRAIN FOR THE DEGENERATING, DEGENERATED WORKERS' BUREAUCRACY AND WORKERS' ARISTOCRACY*** – ***THIS ALONE***, ***AND NOTHING ELSE***, ***IS THEIR ACTUAL ULTIMATE GOAL***, ***THEIR 'SOCIALISM'***, ***THEIR*** '***COMMUNISM***' if one disregards their fraudulent phrases.

In order to receive this wage from their capitalist masters, they must perform valuable lackey-services for them. In negative terms, by distracting the workers from the path of the international proletarian revolution, using all available means, above all cunning, and, if necessary, force, whereby in all such instances they have the bourgeoisie completely behind them – in positive terms, by keeping the workers on the petty-bourgeois class line: collaboration with the bourgeoisie – nationally-orientated politics – against the world proletariat, the proletarian state and the international proletarian revolution. In this respect they are lackeys of the bourgeoisie as a whole, both nationally and globally. When it comes to differences within the capitalist class, they, as a rule, serve the left wing of the capitalist exploiters. They exploit the class strength and the fighting strength of the workers politically: in the first instance, in the service of the entire bourgeoisie – in every country and globally; secondly, as a rule, in the service of the left-bourgeoisie, the non-monopolist capitalists; and, in both cases, thirdly, as the means to achieve their main aim: extracting the Judas Wage and their petty-bourgeois share – in all kinds of forms – in the power of the capitalist exploiters and in the capitalist gravy train, for the demoralising, demoralised workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy – at the expense of the masses.

> In its present form, the People's Front is nothing other than the organisation of class collaboration between the political exploiters of the proletariat (the reformists and the Stalinists) and the political exploiters of the petty bourgeoisie (the Radicals). […]
>
> The People's Front – an insurance company for insuring Radical bankrupts at the expense of the capital of the workers' organisations. […]
>
> The Radicals are the democratic party of French imperialism, [...] the head of which are the 'two hundred families' (Trotzki, 1936c, pp.86, 78, 80, 82), i.e. the French monopoly bourgeoisie.

This hits the nail on the head. They are nothing but 'agents of the bourgeoisie in the workers' movement' and 'the capitalist class's overseers of the workers (labour-lieutenants of the capitalist class)'. They are the 'carriers of bourgeois influence into the proletariat'.

The petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties systematically exploit the proletariat politically for the benefit of the stratum that leads these parties of the petty-bourgeoisifying, petty-bourgeoisified workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy. They are parties for sponging politically on the working class, they are ***parasitical parties***. These political parasites suck at the strength of the

proletariat until it becomes so weakened and paralysed that it succumbs to the capitalist offensive and is crushed. Once the proletariat begins to recover again after such a catastrophe and to gather new strength – without these political parasites and despite their betrayal – these political parasites, using different phrases, masks, etc., seek to latch onto the proletariat again in order to begin sponging politically on them again and to continue doing so.

Even with respect to the backward proletarian masses, this Judas role can only be carried out by the bourgeoisie granting the Judas parties ‘successes’ in the form of concessions and reforms, which in the main bring more or less substantial improvements for the upper stratum of the proletariat at the expense of the masses, but in essence bring nothing or almost nothing to the lower strata of the proletariat, i.e. the mass of the workers, and are intended to engender and keep alive the hope within them, that things will gradually get better for them within capitalism too. Whatever nice phrases the petty-bourgeois parasitical parties may use, this whole process at best boils down to making the drudgery somewhat more pleasant for the human workhorses, providing them with nicer stables, better harnesses, cleaner water, more feed, etc., in short making the torment of labour, making life under capitalist conditions more bearable for them – but workhorses in the service of the capitalist exploiters they are to remain for all eternity and never ever are they to become human beings among human beings, every one of them free from any kind of oppression, everyone equal with respect to having the sources of life and the decisive means of production at their disposal. With regard to the worker masses, the petty-bourgeois ‘workers’ parties at best play the role of a political ‘society for the protection of animals’ specialising in human beasts of burden. In reality all these ‘successes’ are very transitory. The bourgeoisie leaches them out by raising prices, intensifying labour, increasing taxes, devaluing money, etc., etc.; it has all the means for doing this – its ownership of the means of production and its capitalist state power. The jewel in the Blum-Stalinist crown of 1936, namely the 40-hour week together with the 15% wage increase – and all this only benefitted a section of the French workers – had already been so hollowed out after two years that only a little was left of it; in reality the overall situation of the French working class had deteriorated considerably under the glorious ‘People’s’ Front. When, thanks to Blum-Stalin (Thorez), the French proletariat had been sufficiently weakened, the iron broom of the overt capitalist dictatorship swept away the whole bag of reforms or what was still left of it onto the rubbish heap, at one stroke.

The work of the petty-bourgeois ‘workers’ parties enables the bourgeoisie to carry on capitalist oppression, rule and exploitation in the easiest and basically cheapest way. However, profit continues to be the one and only primary purpose of all the capitalist economic and state craft. Under the conditions of the progressive decline and decay of the entire capitalist system, the policy of reforms becomes unbearable for one section of the world bourgeoisie after the other, because – in consequence of the uneven distribution and development in capitalism of the means of production, the sources of raw materials, the investment markets and the markets, indeed all economic and political power – only the very strongest bourgeoisies still make a surplus profit, whereas the others find it increasingly difficult to make average profits, and some of them make even less than this. Hence, on a world scale, the weaker bourgeoisies go over to overt forms of capitalist dictatorship, ultimately to fascism; they liquidate the reforms, liquidate the parties of bourgeois reform, the petty-bourgeois ‘workers’ parties, and put an end to the policy of reforms. By means of imperialist war and victory they seek to regain the conditions for this policy at a higher level. But their victory would mean that the American and British

bourgeoisie would lose so much in terms of the means of production, sources of raw materials, investment markets and markets that they would lose their surplus profits and would then on their part go over to the politics of overt capitalist dictatorship, to liquidating reforms and the policy of reforms, in order – in spite of their losses – to maintain their profits by means of a huge escalation in the exploitation and plundering of their own masses.

Either way, the petty-bourgeoisified workers' bureaucrats and workers' aristocrats will never give up their hopes and efforts of hoisting themselves up again to their so lucrative role as political parasites. They know that the bourgeoisie will not be able to manage in the long term with fascism; they know that the multi-millioned masses will, despite fascism, ultimately begin to enter a state of revolutionary ferment and motion; they know that a phase will come, when the bourgeoisie will need someone to deceive, lull, mislead, disintegrate and paralyse the revolutionary mood brewing in the masses, who have begun to come into motion; it is for this very purpose that they are there and make themselves available, no matter how harshly and shabbily the bourgeoisie treats them during its fascist phase. With the help of the petty-bourgeoisified workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy the bourgeoisie is in a position to carry on the policy of the big capitalist pendulum which jumps from bourgeois democracy to fascist dictatorship and back again to bourgeois democracy, and from here again to fascist dictatorship and so on – for as long as the proletariat does not put an end to this bloodthirsty racket by finally turning its back on the petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties, building up its proletarian class party and – under its leadership in the revolutionary onslaught of the masses – breaking capitalist power along with its fascist henchmen and its petty-bourgeois 'socialist' and 'communist' lackeys.

It is only by enticing as large worker masses as possible into their ranks and as followers – and at the same time monopolising all the important posts in the party machine, keeping them firmly in their hands – that the petty-bourgeoisified workers' bureaucrats and workers' aristocrats are able to mislead the worker masses onto their fundamentally petty-bourgeois line and to move them and keep them on this line. In this way they actualise a petty-bourgeois 'workers' party, a petty-bourgeois 'socialist' or 'communist' mass party as a two-class party – with the petty-bourgeoisified workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy as its head and the politically exploited and sponged-upon worker masses as its tail.

c) Their relationship to the middle masses and the colonial masses

The small-peasant/small-farmer, petty-bourgeois multi-millioned masses can only be seriously helped at the expense of the capitalist class, i.e. in the last analysis only by means of the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the expropriation of capitalist property in the decisive means of production. This is something the petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties do not want, and cannot want, because they can only have and want measures to which the bourgeoisie itself in reality gives its consent. (The expropriation of Polish, Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian capitalists by the Russian Stalinist bureaucracy was not an expropriation that benefitted proletarian democracy, but one that benefitted the Stalinist bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy, and in the last analysis, in effect, benefitted the newly-forming Russian bourgeoisie; nonetheless we supported this expropriation, but at the same time we told the workers the truth, namely that forcible violation of the proletarian-democratic right of self-determination of the workers and poor peasants/farmers and also the annexation, the forcible incorporation of these areas, cannot be made good by the Stalinist bureaucracy by means of expropriating capitalists

and other such means; at the same time we fought and are fighting for the restoration of soviet democracy and we prepared and are preparing the political revolution for the overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy and for the Leninist reform of the Soviet state.)

The capitalist class constantly carries on its offensive against the middle strata too, escalating it again and again. Under pressure from this capitalist offensive, the poor, exploited, toiling middle strata again and again draw closer to the working class, for the struggle against the common enemy. The petty-bourgeois class line, i.e. collaboration with the bourgeoisie and the nationally-orientated politics of the petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties, however, again and again drives the small-peasant/small-farmer, petty-bourgeois multi-millioned masses, who are drawing closer to the working class, back into the arms of the capitalist class enemy, who in the end with devastating effect hurls the disappointed middle masses – who are going more and more out of their minds because of the dire straits they are in and have been aroused to a state of frenzy – against the working class, which has been disintegrated, paralysed by these same petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties – thus bringing about the fascist dictatorship.

In this way the petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties weaken the proletariat from this side too, lead it into catastrophes and help the bourgeoisie again and again out of the severest capitalist crises, at the expense of the worker masses and the middle masses.

This also applies to the exploited, oppressed masses in the backward countries, especially the colonial and semi-colonial countries. Even where they are only to some extent in a position to do this, they lead these masses into defeat, as in China, or drive them into the arms of the capitalist class enemy, as in the Spanish Revolution when they drove the Moors into the arms of Franco.

In the petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties the degenerated workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy entwine themselves with the section of petty-bourgeois producers and shopkeepers/traders and even with small capitalists, who seek support from the proletariat, in order to make use of its political strength to protect their petty-bourgeois or small-capitalist position against the big bourgeoisie i.e. for petty-bourgeois or small-capitalist interests.

3. The Judas arsenal

The petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties can only fulfil their Judas role by systematically deceiving and duping the workers, ideologically, politically and organisationally.

Theoretically and ideologically, they are committed to Socialism, indeed to Communism, especially on Sundays and anniversaries when they spout 'socialist' and 'communist' chants and unctuous sermons about the splendour of socialist goals and communist society – they are 'merely' against the one means of achieving Socialism and Communism, i.e the international proletarian revolution. Theoretically, they are committed to Marxism, or even Leninism; they decorate their offices with pictures of Marx and Lenin, name streets after them, erect statues of them wherever they can, hold splendid commemorative events for them, honour the memory of Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht, etc. with commemorative articles, erect a monumental mausoleum for Lenin with mass pilgrimages to it, etc. – just like the Judas Church does with Jesus – they are 'merely' against what singly and solely makes the teachings of Marx and Lenin

into Marxism-Leninism, namely their world-revolutionary side. Theoretically, many of them are even for the dictatorship of the proletariat, admittedly 'only' in the form of a bureaucratic dictatorship against the proletariat. In 1920, Lenin wrote the following about the Social Democratic centrists, Kautsky and Crispien: they 'are a thousand times more dangerous to the proletariat, when they give themselves out to be supporters of Soviet power and of the dictatorship of the proletariat because, in actual fact, whenever a difficult and dangerous situation arises they are sure to commit betrayal' (Lenin, 1920b, p.88). The exact same also applies today to Stalin & Co. Theoretically, they are committed to revolution, but to a revolution that ultimately breaks out of its own accord, automatically so to speak, without help from the petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties, indeed even though they are working against it; at best they are in words for the proletarian revolution, whereas in terms of their deeds they are working systematically against it – they talk of revolution but pursue anti-revolutionary, reactionary politics; they are totally and under all circumstances 'committed to the revolution and to socialism' – in alliance with the capitalist class... Theoretically, they are utterly against capitalism, against the bourgeoisie, against the capitalist state; in reality they are, alongside fascism which is the mainstay of the bourgeoisie on the right wing of the overall capitalist front, the mainstay in social terms of the bourgeoisie on the wing furthest to the left of the overall capitalist front. Lenin wrote in 1918 that it was precisely 'their attitude to the state that is the clearest manifestation of the fact that our Social-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks are not socialists at all […], but petty-bourgeois democrats using quasi-socialist phraseology' (Lenin, [1918] 1933a, p.5).

Nowadays we must say the same thing about the Stalinists too; they are petty-bourgeois democrats and their ultimate goal is a more or less democratically-draped bureaucratic dictatorship against the proletariat. In words here and there, now and again they pay homage to proletarian internationalism; in reality they are nationalist, chauvinist parties through and through. 'Russia, Russia above all, above all in the world', even if the world proletariat goes under as a result! – this is the guiding principle of the Stalinist nationalists, chauvinists and social-patriots.

Even the bankrupt SPD nowadays in reality fights for a 'Germany, Germany above all, above all in the world!' – only it must be a capitalist-democratic Germany. A 'Britain above all!' is the real highest goal of the Labour Party; an 'America above all else!' is the highest goal of Green, Murray, Lewis & Co., even if the workers of all the other countries perish because of it. At best they practice sham internationalism, more correctly ***parasitical internationalism,*** i.e. 'internationalism', which aims to make use of the honest internationalist feelings of the proletariat of other countries for its own nationalist, chauvinist purposes, by demanding, indeed making use of the support from the workers of all countries, but on the other hand not supporting the international proletarian revolution, the revolutionary struggle of the workers of all countries against the bourgeoisie, and indeed, on the contrary, abandoning, sabotaging and betraying it, and working against and counteracting it with all available means and in every possible way. The LP and the SP give out their parasitic internationalism to be 'socialism'; the Stalinist bureaucracy even deceitfully presents it as 'communism'. 'communism' is what serves 'Russia', more correctly what serves interests of the Stalinist bureaucracy – this is the 'internationalism' of the Stalinist Party, of the Stalinist bureaucracy; 'socialism' is what serves 'Britain' – more correctly what serves the interests of the British workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy and the British bourgeoisie and British imperialism – this is the

‘internationalism’ of the Labour Party, the British trade union bureaucracy and the bureaucracy in the cooperatives. It is likewise the case with the Social Democratic parties: to them ‘socialism’ and ‘internationalism’ are things that serve their ‘country’, i.e. what serves the interests of the workers’ bureaucracy, the workers’ aristocracy and the bourgeoisie of the country concerned. Theoretically, they are committed to the class struggle against the bourgeoisie, but in practice they are ‘merely’ for a coalition, for a ‘people’s’ front, for a national united front, for a ‘sacred union’ (*Union Sacrée*), for social-patriotism, for the defence of the (capitalist) fatherland, for party collaboration, collaboration of the trade unions and cooperatives, etc. with the bourgeoisie, in times of war and peace, i.e. ‘merely’ for the exact opposite. Under developed capitalist conditions a party alliance with the bourgeoisie, or sections of it, or striving for a party alliance is for them ‘merely’ a question of tactics – they glide over the fact that this ‘tactic’ is a punch in the face for the proletarian class principles. Theoretically, they are sometimes even against coalition (with the bourgeoisie or sections of it; trans.) or against a ‘people’s’ front, but in practice they calmly continue with it, giving out their participation in a bourgeois government to be ‘class struggle within the government’; as long as they are not yet sitting in a capitalist government, they present their collaboration with the bourgeoisie, and their politics that works into the hands of the capitalist class, as being ‘Realpolitik’; if the proletariat moves to the left, they reject ‘any’ collaboration with the bourgeoisie for the time being, but in actual fact want to ‘realise’ their ‘socialist’ goal on the basis of the (democratic) capitalist state; they are therefore in actual fact for the capitalist state, for the capitalist ownership in the decisive means of production – protected by the capitalist state; in short and in reality they work in alliance with the capitalist class. In times when the bourgeoisie does not need or does not seriously want a coalition or a ‘people’s’ front with them, they reject any coalition as ‘irrelevant’ or would not ‘on principle at present’ come into question ‘at all in the prevailing situation’; in short, the more they outwardly thunder against it, the more they on principle leave a back door to coalition for themselves. Here too, they in actual fact continue their cooperation with the capitalist class and they hide their dialogues about this cooperation – and if they are not able to avoid it publicly – they hide behind the little word, ‘one’. Whenever the petty-bourgeois ‘workers’ parties use the word ‘one’, the workers can nearly always substitute the ‘capitalist class’ – then they will see through the political machinations of the Judas parties more clearly. They call themselves ‘Marxists’ and ‘Leninists’; Marx and Lenin were on principal against all opportunism – they, on the other hand, are ‘merely’ for opportunism on principle and call this ‘revolutionary realism’...

The petty-bourgeois ‘workers’ parties employ countless means and methods, in order to deceive the workers ***politically*** and they are always inventing new ones – this is a basic condition for their existence. They give out the degenerating, degenerated workers’ bureaucracy and workers’ aristocracy to be – the proletariat, and their egotistical interests to be – the proletarian class interests. They give themselves names that are intended to project their ‘socialist’ or ‘communist’ character to the proletariat. After a devastating political bankruptcy, which they themselves have caused, they change their name, just like a bankrupt tries to continue their business under a new name.

Thus, for example, the Austrian SP changed its name to ‘Revolutionary Socialists’ after the February catastrophe, a catastrophe for which it had been responsible. They carefully strive to cling to the prevailing mood amongst the mass of the workers at any given time. They ‘adapt themselves ‘on principle’, so to speak, to the prevailing trend among the workers and assume

the protective colouring that they need, just as a hare's coat turns white in winter' (Lenin, [1921] 1925b, pp.682-683).

Using all available means they seek to deceive the proletariat again and again and to mislead it about their role, for example, by means of their passivity or by 'honestly and democratically' shifting the leadership role onto the masses, and then after the ensuing defeat passing the blame on to the masses. In any case, they 'skip over' their own role with ever greater deviousness and brazenness. Thus, for example, the Labour Party and nearly all the Social Democratic parties have participated through thick and thin with the politics of the Munich Agreement and lied to the working class about the fact that the policy of 'saving the peace' was actually calculated preparation for the predatory war of the world bourgeoisie against Soviet Russia by means of the German-imperialist sword – subsequently they 'condemned' the very same politics of the Munich Agreement, silently skipping over their own role, whereby they always gambled on the forgetfulness of the masses. Whenever, as a result of their politics of betrayal, they make the conditions of struggle worse for the proletariat, they adapt themselves 'realistically' to the 'new' situation, whereby they 'skip over' the decisive fact that they themselves, through their own role, through their own politics have worsened the situation for the proletariat. The most cunning opportunists escalated the duping of the workers to the political system of centrism. 'Undisguised opportunism, which directly repels the worker masses, is by a long way not so frightful and injurious as this theory of the golden mean, which uses Marxist phrases to whitewash opportunist practice' (Lenin, [1915] 1921m, pp.168-169).

Kautsky was far surpassed by his pupils, the Austro-'Marxists'; they knew how to juggle with sham-radical phrases to perfection. With 'struggles' between 'Lefts' and 'Rights' they sought to lead the workers into believing that these constituted a 'struggle for the social revolution' – in reality these left and right wings were only two arms, serving one and the same body, namely the degenerating, degenerated workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy from two sides and differing in form: in reality they were both fighting on one and the same basic line of betrayal, namely on the basic line of party collaboration with the capitalist class enemy, on the basic line of nationally-limited, anti-revolutionary, anti-proletarian politics. Yet, even the Austro-'Marxists' were eclipsed by Stalinism, which, as required, combined sham-revolutionary phrases with sham-revolutionary adventures, in order to deceive the workers about the petty-bourgeois 'communism' that sails under the flag of the Stalinist 'General Line'. The petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties systematically engage in ***demagogy with regard to the worker masses*** – they do nothing to raise their consciousness, but work ceaselessly at confusing, lowering and disintegrating it. If need be they flatter the 'calloused fist of the masses', nourish their backwardness, weaken them by 'soft-soaping them' ('*Honig ums Maul schmieren'*) and systematically and calculatedly present the best friends of the working class as being its enemies; this is what Ebert, Scheideman, Legien, Renner, Bauer, etc. did in all countries with regard to the communists under Lenin; this is what all the petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties have been doing since Lenin's death with regard to the Trotskyists. 'Demagogues are the worst enemies of the working class' (Lenin, [1902] 1925b, p.75). It was for this very reason that Lenin demanded an '***IRRECONCILABLE STRUGGLE AGAINST ALL DEMAGOGIC ELEMENTS WITHIN THE SOCIALIST MOVEMENT***' (ibid., p.74). The petty-bourgeoisified workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy have no belief in the masses, in their creative, independent strength; on the contrary they fear and suppress any independent stirring or movement by the masses. Even though their petty-bourgeois politics inevitably leads the

proletariat again and again into catastrophes, they want to stay on top at any price and hold onto their share in capitalist power and in the capitalist gravy train at any price. That is why already prior to defeats, defeats they are working towards, they are anxious to keep the door open for ***excuses*** for themselves. They never tie themselves down; they speak and write in as ***vague terms*** as possible, terms that blur the class antagonisms, that avoid the class differences and expressions that in class terms can be interpreted in one way or the other, such as: 'working people', 'people', 'people' of a particular country, 'people's state', 'people's republic', 'country', 'Britain', 'Germany', 'Russia', the 'British', the 'Germans', the 'Russians', the 'electorate', the 'Parisians', the 'Viennese', the 'public', the 'world', the 'economy', 'industry', 'agriculture', the 'farmers/peasants', 'townspeople', 'work', the 'workers' movement', etc., etc.

> [We] 'must… never forget a characteristic feature of present-day opportunism in every sphere, namely its vagueness, amorphousness and elusiveness. An opportunist by his very nature will always evade taking a stand in a clear and decisive manner; he will always seek a middle course; he will always wriggle like an eel between two mutually exclusive standpoints and try to 'agree' with both and reduce his differences of opinion to petty amendments, doubts, innocent and pious suggestions, etc., etc. (Lenin, [1904] 1924b, pp.92-93).

They avoid taking a principled position on any fundamental issues, especially in the very delicate question of collaboration with the capitalist class against the proletariat. They always only tie themselves down on a 'case by case basis', presenting their opportunist politics as being *Realpolitik*. Prior to gigantic catastrophes – like a cunning wrongdoer – they ensure that they have a political ***alibi***. Thus, for example, in 1933 in Germany, the StP, which for many years had declared that any offer of a united front to the Social Democratic leaders was a betrayal ('social fascism'), suddenly at the eleventh hour – when the catastrophe, for which the SP and the StP were to blame, could no longer be stopped – made the offer of a united front against fascism to the leaders of the SP and the trade unions... Thus, for example, the Austrian SP – after having sabotaged the struggle against Bonapartism and fascism for three years in consequence of its collaboration with the bourgeoisie or sections of it, and when the *Schutzbund* – without the SP and despite its treacherous passivity – rose up heroically, the SP, which, contrary to its duty, had remained passive, suddenly in the midst of the struggle – when the catastrophe could no longer be avoided – called for a general strike... Both of them, the StP and the SP, then used the masses as an excuse. In any case, after such defeats and catastrophes – brought about by themselves – they shift the blame onto the masses in a calculated manner. At best, like the SP, they admit to tactical mistakes, but maintain that the basic line is right, namely their collaboration with the capitalist class enemy against the proletarian revolution, against the working class. Or, like the StP, they declare that the incorrect application of the Stalinist basic line was to blame, and that the 'General Line' itself – namely the Russian-chauvinist politics and party collaboration with the bourgeoisie – continues to be correct. Marx's words also hold good for them:

> 'In any case, the democrat comes out of the most shameful defeat, just as immaculate as he was innocent when he went into it, with the newly-won conviction that he is bound to be victorious, not that he himself and his party have to give up the old standpoint, but, on the contrary, that conditions have to ripen to suit him' (Marx, [1852] 1914a, p.41).

As outstanding specialists in excuses and evasions, the Stalinist bureaucracy has developed the following: the scapegoat tactic; the deception involving Stalinist 'self-criticism' – shifting the blame onto 'those implementing the politics', on the right (Bukharin) or on the left (Trotsky), depending on the needs of Stalinist demagogy; the murder trials in which they amalgamate innocent proletarian revolutionaries with White Guardists, saboteurs and Stalinist spies, agents and provocateurs. These special methods are inevitable products of the bureaucratic dictatorship; should the SP or the LP come to be in a position to establish such a dictatorship (dressed up democratically in some way) – after the Stalinist 'successes', it appeals to them more and more – then their workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy too would inevitably resort to the special Stalinist methods. ***Cunning in relation to the masses*** is the main component of the leadership craft of the petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties, but if need be they combine this with force – as in the Spanish Revolution, where the Stalinist–Social Democratic united front gunned down proletarian revolutionaries and mowed down the revolutionary worker masses.

Organisationally, the Judas role of the petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties is expressed in the first instance in their class composition and their peculiar form of organisation. To the ordinary worker, who looks at them superficially, they appear to be real workers parties – after all the great majority of the members are workers. It requires very hard experiences over a long period of time, until the best Social Democratic worker elements recognise that the party machine is in reality in the hands of the petty-bourgeoisified workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy, who determine the party line in accordance with their egotistical, petty-bourgeois interests. Outwardly, the deception is reinforced by what appears to be party democracy. Outwardly, the members have the right to criticise according to their convictions, to make proposals, to vote and to elect. But proles, you must adhere to the ***petty-bourgeois*** class line! If you leave the Stalinist 'General Line' then you will be kicked out of the party, sacked, left to starve, shipped off to Siberia or thrown into prison or cast into a cold grave; the SP and the LP, not yet having reached the omnipotence of a bureaucratic dictatorship, use 'more elastic and more refined' means and methods for the time being.

However, in order that the worker members would not be in a position at all to make use of party democracy for the ***proletarian*** class interests, the Judas parties for this very purpose carry out an appropriate 'mental education' that aims to prevent proletarian-revolutionary consciousness from arising among the worker-members, aims to destroy it and confuse the workers and keep them on the petty-bourgeois line of betrayal; in short, the Judas party amounts to an entire, well-thought-out system of lying to mislead and deceive its worker members, ideologically and politically. The Stalinist bureaucracy has also introduced organisational 'specialties. Above all, the Stalinist '***Bolshevisation***', namely throwing out proletarian revolutionaries, indeed all upright and steadfast elements out of the party, whereby at the same time they are showered with gigantic chamber pots full of the most concentrated original Stalinist liquid manure; the selection and drawing in of spineless elements, who would sell their souls for pieces of silver, posts and careers; the systematic breeding of corruption and the flooding of the party with backward elements ('Stalin levies'). However varied the methods used by the petty-bourgeoisifying, petty-bourgeoisified workers' bureaucrats and workers' aristocrats may be, in order to hollow out, undermine party democracy and in actual fact liquidate it, the Social Democratic, Stalinist and Labour bureaucrats are as one in that they evade any revolutionary control by the worker members, thwart any such control and indeed,

within the framework of the petty-bourgeois ‘workers’ parties, they make it in reality altogether impossible. ‘It is inevitable that there is conservatism within the bureaucracy. An apparatus can fulfil revolutionary functions only as long as it remains an instrument in the service of the party, i.e. subordinated to an idea, and is controlled by the mass’ (Trotzki, 1933a, p.468). They endeavour to conceal their fundamentally anti-proletarian line from the workers by organisational cries: ‘The Party above all else! Party unity above all else!’ Above all else – this means above the class interests of the workers too... whereas the Party must only be a means to an end, a means to an end in the struggle against the capitalist class for the proletarian class interests, the petty-bourgeois ‘workers’ parties seek to deceive the workers by using these kind of abstract organisational slogans and commit them to the unity of a Party that has in reality become a means for fighting against the world proletariat, the proletarian state and the international proletarian revolution.

4. Summary

Taking all in all, the petty-bourgeois ‘workers’ parties – in effect at any rate – betray the working class, the proletarian state, the proletarian revolution, Socialism and Communism, and have continued to do all this for many years, despite the gigantic defeats of the working class brought about by this, even after the catastrophes. They are ***parties of betrayal***.

If we examine their theoretical, ideological, political and organisational arsenal, then the outcome is unambiguous: they are – from the standpoint of the working class, whose class party they deceitfully masquerade as – parties of ***deception***.

5. The Left Opposition in petty-bourgeois ‘workers’ parties

From time to time – especially after big failures, defeats and catastrophes – left oppositions re-appear in these parties. Their leaders are in many cases careerists, who want nothing other than to take the place of the old, (politically; trans.) bankrupt, petty-bourgeoisified leaders, in order that they themselves can once again open and continue the lucrative careers of those leaders. But in their midst, especially amongst their followers, there are also many honest elements who, awakened by the harsh experiences, seriously try to bring the petty-bourgeois ‘workers’ parties – whose nature they do not yet see through – onto the line of the proletarian class interests, onto the path of the proletarian revolution, in short to revolutionise, cure and reform them.

There is one infallible method of recognising the honest elements within these left oppositions, namely their attitude to the question of party collaboration with the bourgeoisie or sections of it, in times of peace and war.

Those amongst them who evade adopting a ***principled*** position in this question, i.e. rejecting any such coalition, any such ‘people’s’ front on principle, cannot be regarded as serious left-opposition elements. Only someone, who, under developed capitalist conditions, rejects, repudiates on principle ***any*** coalition, any ‘people’s’ front, any collaboration with the bourgeoisie or sections of it, and indeed does this openly in front of the worker masses in peace and war, and therefore also on principle rejects the defence of any capitalist state, rejects capitalist

‘defence of the fatherland’, rejects social-patriotism – and does all this in actual fact and not as a sham! – has ***begun*** to turn towards the proletarian class line and can be regarded as a ***serious*** left oppositionist in a petty-bourgeois ‘workers’ party. And this also essentially applies to the centrist parties and groups. In words ‘rejecting any collaboration with the bourgeoisie’ – but in reality, wanting ‘to achieve’ the ‘socialist’ goal on the basis of both the (democratic) ***capitalist*** state and capitalist class property in the decisive means of production protected by the capitalist state, that means, in actual fact, that behind the mask of a sham fight against collaboration with the bourgeoisie, it is in reality, collaborating with the bourgeoisie for the purpose of safeguarding the basic conditions of capitalist exploitation and rule, i.e. in reality deceiving the workers.

From here on, there is a more or less lengthy road to them recognising the absolute necessity of the dictatorship of proletarian democracy, of the unavoidable necessity of breaking with every petty-bourgeois ‘workers’ party, and of joining the organisation of the proletarian revolutionaries. It is an important task of any proletarian-revolutionary group, of the proletarian class party, class international to facilitate and accelerate this process.

As long as the left-oppositionist elements only fight to replace individual leaders or only fight for a change in the basic political line, against the petty-bourgeois line and for the proletarian class line, but cling to a petty-bourgeois ‘workers’ party and to the conviction that it can be cured or reformed, and as long as they perpetuate this belief amongst the worker masses when they are in a state of ferment, they fulfil an extremely important service for the petty-bourgeois workers’ bureaucracy and workers’ aristocracy, however unpleasant they may be for them – because, by means of these illusions, they keep the leftward moving worker masses behind the Judas party, thus allowing it to continue to exploit the working class, sponge on it, and betray it politically.

In reality, the petty-bourgeois ‘workers’ parties can ***never ever*** be cured – for ***class reasons***. Never ever is the petty-bourgeoisified workers’ bureaucracy and workers’ aristocracy willing to give up their very lucrative business of exploiting the working class politically and sponging on it, on account of any left opposition. In 1927, the supreme Judas Stalin stated publicly that ‘the group that rules today can only be defeated by civil war’; put plainly this means: we Stalinist bureaucrats will not permit party democracy that is directed against Stalinism and the Stalinist bureaucracy, and we will throw party members who are against us bureaucrats out of the party. As long as it is overall substantially to the advantage of the sponging, betraying upper stratum, it tolerates the left opposition in the party; once these conditions no longer exist, it will without fail expel the left opposition. This point is reached at the latest once the left opposition has recognised that the party can no longer be cured, once it begins to say this publicly to the masses. (If their relationship with the bourgeoisie necessitates this, the petty-bourgeoisified Judases already resort to excluding the left opposition much sooner; thus, for example, in the StP, where the Left Opposition, which had been fighting honestly for the reform of the party, was excluded as early as 1927 and, even though it continued this struggle equally honestly over the years, it was never allowed back into the Party. Only once the German catastrophe showed that the Stalinist parties, even after this gigantic defeat, were continuing their line of betrayal, did the Left Opposition rightly adopt the standpoint that the StP and the StI could no longer be cured, and only then did they give out the slogan of forming the proletarian class party, the Fourth International.)

In particular, the conduct of the petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties after the proletarian catastrophes for which they were responsible – 1927 (China), 1933 (Germany), 1934 (Austria), and 1936-39 (Spain and France) – shows that they are incurable.

They are no longer capable of learning even from these severest of defeats. They admit to tactical mistakes but keep silent about their fundamental political root cause from which these tactical mistakes ***were bound to*** arise. It was precisely their 'self-criticism' that proved that they wanted to continue their old line of betrayal, something that subsequent facts have again and again proved to be the case. It is precisely their actions that prove conclusively: ***THEY ARE NO LONGER CAPABLE OF REPOSITIONING THEMSELVES, BECAUSE IT IS NOT A QUESTION OF TACTICAL MISTAKES OR ERRORS, BUT IS ON THE CONTRARY ALREADY A NEW CLASS LINE STEMMING FROM THE CHANGE THEY HAVE UNDERGONE IN CLASS TERMS***; as a stratum that has already petty-bourgeoisified, the degenerated workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy cannot pursue any other politics than a ***petty-bourgeois one***; it must, admittedly, endeavour to conceal its basic petty-bourgeois line as much as possible from the workers and to portray this as proletarian politics, in order to be able to exploit and sponge upon the fighting strength of the masses in a petty-bourgeois manner.

The development of a left opposition in the petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties is accompanied by greater or lesser political vacillations.

Here is how Lenin summarised the experience of the Bolsheviks in relation to the left-leaning centrists. 'The correct tactic of the Communists must consist of making use of these vacillations, and not at all of ignoring them; making use of them requires making ***concessions*** to those elements, then, whenever and insofar as they turn to the proletariat, and in a way that depends on the manner and on how far they do so (Trotzki, 1932c, p.65).This tactic can be applied to all left oppositions in the petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties, always combining it with both comradely criticism of the political inadequacies of the honest, serious, left-opposition elements and working out and counterposing to it the positive revolutionary line on the important topical questions at any given time, in order to further the process of revolutionary clarification among the left-opposition elements in the petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties.

6. The Social Democratic Party

> *Revolt against the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, the need for a change of society, adherence to democratic-republican institutions as organs of their movement, grouping around the proletariat as the decisive revolutionary power* – these are the common characteristics of the *so-called Party of Social Democracy, the party of the red republic*. This *party of Anarchy*, as its opponents christen it, is no less a coalition of different interests than the *party of Order*. […]
>
> So swiftly had the march of the revolution ripened conditions that the friends of reform of all shades, the most moderate claims of the middle classes, were compelled to group themselves around the banner of the most extreme party of revolution, around the *red flag*.

> Yet manifold as the *Socialism* of the different large sections of the party of anarchy was […] in *one* point it is in agreement: in proclaiming itself to be the *means of emancipating the proletariat* and the emancipation of the latter as its *object*. Deliberate deception on the part of some; self-deception on the part of the others, who present the world transformed according to their own needs as the best world for all, as the realisation of all revolutionary claims and the elimination of all revolutionary collisions (Marx, [1850] 1895, p.93).

Against this, Marx counterposed proletarian Socialism, ***revolutionary Socialism***, and ***Communism***:

> This Socialism is the ***DECLARATION OF THE PERMANENCE OF THE REVOLUTION***, ***THE CLASS DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT*** as the necessary transit point to the abolition of class distinctions altogether, to the abolition of all the relations of production on which they are based, to the abolition of all social relations that correspond to these relations of production and to the revolutionising of all the ideas that result from these social relations (ibid., pp.94-95).

> As against the coalesced bourgeoisie, ***A COALITION BETWEEN PETTY BOURGEOIS AND WORKERS HAD BEEN FORMED***, the so-called Social Democratic Party. […] The revolutionary point was broken off and a democratic turn given to the social demands of the proletariat; the purely political form was stripped off the democratic claims of the petty bourgeoisie and their socialist point thrust forward. Thus arose Social Democracy. […] The peculiar character of Social Democracy is epitomised in the fact that democratic-republican institutions are demanded as a means, not of doing away with two extremes, capital and wage labour, but of weakening their antagonism and transforming it into harmony. However different the measures proposed for the attainment of this aim may be, however much it may be dressed up with more or less revolutionary notions, their content remains the same. This content is the ***TRANSFORMATION OF SOCIETY IN A DEMOCRATIC WAY, BUT A TRANSFORMATION WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF THE PETTY BOURGEOISIE.*** Only one must not get the narrow-minded notion that the petty bourgeoisie, on principle, wishes to enforce an egotistical class interest. Rather, it believes that the special conditions of its emancipation are the general conditions within whose frame alone modern society can be saved and the class struggle avoided. Just as little must one imagine that the democratic representatives are indeed all shopkeepers or enthusiastic champions of the shopkeepers. According to their education and their individual position they may be as far apart as heaven and earth. What makes them representatives of the petty bourgeoisie is the fact that in their minds they do not get beyond the limits which the latter does not get beyond in life, that they are consequently driven, theoretically, to the same tasks and solutions, to which material interests and social position drive the petty bourgeoisie in practice. This is in general terms, the relationship between the political and literary representatives of a class and the class they represent (Marx, [1852] 1914a, pp.36-37).

What Marx wrote nearly 100 years ago about French Social Democracy in essence also holds good for the present-day Social Democratic parties. But the Parisian petty bourgeoisie of 1848 – which, despite all its revolutionary phrases, still rolled out its petty-bourgeois-democratic programme relatively openly – has been replaced by a modern-day petty-bourgeois stratum of parasites, namely the degenerated workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy, a stratum which on paper excels in its 'socialism', but, in terms of the effect of its politics, wants fundamentally the exact same thing that the Parisian petty bourgeois of 1848 wanted: A ***REFORM OF CAPITALISM WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PETTY-BOURGEOIS INTERESTS***. Otto Bauer, Leon Blum and Major Attlee have taken the place of Louis Blanc and Ledru Rollin – that's all. And does what Marx and Engels wrote in 1879 about Höchberg, Bernstein and Schramm not apply nowadays to Social Democracy and the Labour Party in their entirety and, increasingly, in essence, to the Stalinist party too?

> These are the voices of the representatives of the petty bourgeoisie, terrified lest the proletariat, impelled by the revolutionary situation – may 'go too far'. Instead of resolute political opposition – general conciliation; instead of struggle against the government and the bourgeoisie – an attempt to win them over and talk them round; […] The people, who in 1848 entered the arena as bourgeois democrats, might now just as well call themselves Social Democrats. To the former, the democratic republic was as unattainably remote as the overthrow of the capitalist system is to the latter, and therefore utterly irrelevant to present-day politics; one can conciliate, compromise and philanthropise to one's heart's content. The same thing applies to the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. On paper it is recognised, because its existence can no longer be denied, but in practice it is glossed over, diluted and emasculated. The Social Democratic party *should not be* a workers party, it should not incur the hatred of the bourgeoisie or, for that matter, of anyone else; above all it should conduct energetic propaganda among the bourgeoisie; instead of laying stress on far-reaching goals that frighten the bourgeoisie and are after all unattainable in our own generation, it should rather devote its entire strength and energy to those petty-bourgeois stopgap reforms that, by providing the old social order with new props, may perhaps transform the ultimate catastrophe into a gradual, piecemeal and, as far as possible, peaceable process of dissolution. These are the same people, who, ostensibly keep up an appearance of ceaseless activity, yet not only do nothing themselves but also try to prevent anything happening at all except – chatter; the same people… who never see reaction and are then utterly dumbfounded to find themselves at last in a blind alley where neither resistance nor flight is possible; the same people who want to confine history within their narrow, philistinic horizon and over whose heads history invariably proceeds to the order of the day (Marx und Engels [1879] 1934, pp.646-647).

The revisionist Eduard Bernstein had the merit of being an overt opportunist. In 1899, he called upon Social Democracy (in his *Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus*; Bernstein, 1899 p.165) to find the courage 'to make up its mind to appear what it is in reality today: a ***DEMOCRATIC-SOCIALIST PARTY OF REFORM***'. This is what it really was and is; today, it is at the same time a petty-bourgeois radical reform party and a petty-bourgeois reactionary state party. One must

beware of taking its ‘revolutionary’, ‘socialist’ talk and bluster at face value; one must recognise this for what it really is – hypocrisy and bait.

On the 4 August 1914 Rosa Luxemburg called Social Democracy a ‘stinking corpse’. The SP has long been dead as a force working for the proletarian revolution, for Socialism; however, as a force working in the service of the bourgeoisie against the working class, against the proletarian state, against the proletarian revolution, against Socialism and Communism, it is now as before very much alive – despite the catastrophic defeats that it has brought about for the working class. It is carefully preparing its ‘rebirth’, under a new name, with new slogans, new baits and new promises. Solemnly proclaiming: ‘this time we shall not repeat the mistakes of 1918!’ – it calmly, consistently continues with the exact same basic line, namely the petty-bourgeois class line, which led to the ‘mistakes’ of 1918 and all the proletarian catastrophes since 1918. Those who fall for this, those who help Social Democracy to start up its Judas party again, those who follow it, are helping Social Democracy bring about new defeats, new catastrophes for the working class.

The fascist counter-revolution frightened Social Democracy so much that it is increasingly dropping the revolutionary phrases and positioning itself more and more openly on the basis of capitalist exploiters’ democracy. It makes use of socialist phrases all the more diligently in order to make its (bourgeois) democratic ‘socialism’ more palatable for the masses. Opportunist from the proletarian class standpoint, it is becoming opportunist even from the standpoint of bourgeois democracy; it is reconciling itself with the Church, indeed even with the monarchy (Britain, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, etc.). Careers in the service of the world bourgeoisie, respected, well-paid posts, and rising to a self-satisfied, petty-bourgeois existence – this is increasingly becoming the true content of the ‘socialism’ of this degenerated stratum of leaders, and of the aspirants, whom this stratum gathers around itself. This also applies to the LP and, increasingly too, to the StP. Ever since the Stalinist bureaucracy has – by systematically murdering proletarian revolutionaries – given bloody proof of its loyalty to the world bourgeoisie against the international proletarian revolution and the world proletariat, the demoralised leadership stratum of the SP and the LP especially likes to disguise its parasitical role by advocating ‘socialism’ in one country.

The Labour Party

In capitalist countries with very large reserves and gigantic profits at their disposal, the Social Democratic parties appear in the form of a Labour Party. The generous bribery and corruption of the upper stratum of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie – the bulk of this ends up in the pockets of the degenerated workers’ bureaucracy and workers’ aristocracy – allows them to dispense with the sham-revolutionary, sham-socialist camouflage and to show their petty-bourgeois-democratic, bourgeois-liberal, true Social Democratic face completely openly. The Labour Party goes through thick and thin with the British bourgeoisie: ‘my country, right or wrong’, ‘Britain, Britain above all, above all in the world!’ – even if the workers of all the other countries were to perish as a result, is also its slogan. It is complicit in all the crimes that the British capitalist class has committed and commits against the proletariat, the proletarian state, the proletarian revolution and against Socialism and Communism. It helped the British imperialists with their policy of intervention against Soviet Russia in the years after 1917-18. It did everything in its power to support the ‘League of Nations’, which was in reality an instrument of power of the British and French capitalists. In 1926, it made it possible for the British bourgeoisie to put down

the General Strike of the British workers and the gigantic strike of the miners – with active political help from Stalin; in 1925-27, it helped British imperialism and the Chinese bourgeoisie to throttle the Chinese Revolution – with active political help from Stalin; in 1933, and even beforehand, it helped the British capitalist class to put fascism into the saddle in Germany – with active political help from Stalin and the SPD. It helped the British bourgeoisie to strengthen Seipel in Austria and, in 1934, helped the Austrian bourgeoisie to crush the *Schutzbund* and propel the Austrian workers into the clutches first of Dollfuss, then Schuschnigg – with the assistance of Social Democratic and Stalinist politics. In 1936-38, it helped the British exploiters to strangle the Spanish Revolution (by means of their policy of 'non-intervention') – with active help from the StP and the SP, who were allied to each other. In 1936-38, it helped the British imperialists and the French right-bourgeoisie against the French proletariat and indeed even against the bourgeois–liberal-democratic 'People's' Front – with the assistance of the Stalinist–Social Democratic united front.

In 1938, it helped the British bourgeoisie to deliver up first Austria, then Czechoslovakia – something that was in actual fact contrary to the express commitment given under the terms of Britain's alliance with Czechoslovakia – to be plundered by the National Socialists; it supported the politics of predatory British and French imperialism at Munich: it helped the capitalist bandits of Britain and France, who were working at driving the war machine of the German imperialist bandits against the proletarian state, in order to overcome the capitalist economic crisis for a period of time at the expense of the Soviet Union and concealing their predatory war plans under the hypocritical slogan of it being a matter of 'safeguarding peace' – all this was made possible by Stalin's entire politics since 1923-24 and by the entire politics of the Social Democratic parties since 1914-18. During the Second (imperialist) World War the LP has, with all available means, supported the predatory plans of the British and American bourgeoisie, who are not only waging war against the German and Japanese bourgeoisie and their fascist henchmen, but also against the German and Japanese workers, poor farmers/peasants and petty bourgeois, against the very same exploited and oppressed German masses , who fell under the fascist yoke of the German capitalist class – not least through the fault of the British and American bourgeoisie and the Labour Party, with active political help from all the Stalinist and Social Democratic parties. With the use of hypocritical phrases, the LP is supporting the British bourgeoisie, in particular too when it comes to its predatory politics towards India. It is helping the British capitalists with their Beveridge which is appealing in an enticing manner to the workers: 'Help us British imperialists with *Gut und Blut* (literally property and blood).; trans.) first to crush German imperialism and eliminate this capitalist competitor completely; help to give us, British exploiters, power over its means of production, sources of raw materials, investment markets and markets, and to 'control' them – in short, to well and truly plunder the German bourgeoisie and indeed the entire German people, using every capitalist trick in the book to fill our pockets and we promise you today that we shall ***then***, after victory, let you have a small portion of this gigantic booty in the form of the 'Beveridge Report!' – The StP and the SP support this predatory policy by praising it to the skies as a 'step towards socialism' and as being a 'true revolution' or at least quietly agreeing to it, instead of telling the workers the truth.

The Labour Party does not treat the workers of countries outside Britain as brothers, but as objects of exploitation and has a shared interest in them being sucked thoroughly dry by the British bourgeoisie. The LP's entire politics amounts to helping British imperialism plunder and squeeze, pillage and grind to the bone as much as possible, not only the British workers, but

also above all the masses in all the countries outside Britain, especially the workers there, so that the British workers get a small portion of the gigantic super profits that have been obtained in this way, and indeed in such a way that the major part of this small share lands in the pockets of the British workers' bureaucrats and workers' aristocrats. Attlee, Bevin, Morrison & Co. are essentially no different at all from MacDonald and Snowden, who switched over to side openly with the British bourgeoisie: they are exactly the same kind of social-imperialists, social-chauvinists, social-patriots.

The British bourgeoisie has not yet had the need to go over to forms of the overt capitalist dictatorship. At any rate there are already today at the head of the LP, the trade unions and the cooperatives in Britain, not only types like Ebert, Scheidemann, Legien and Noske, but also centrist ones in abundance, who are preparing the way for the bourgeoisie to do this. And there will also be no lack of Mussolini types amongst these leading figures when the British monopoly bourgeoisie changes the course of the great capitalist pendulum towards fascism.

A Labour Party has not yet emerged in the USA. For the time being, the American capitalist class keeps the worker masses on a leash by means of the left-bourgeoisie (Roosevelt) via the AFL and CIO transmission belts. Regardless of their differences, the leaders of the big American trade union organisations – Green & Co., Murray & Co., Lewis & Co. – go through thick and thin with the American capitalist class against the heavily exploited, oppressed multi-millioned mass of the lower strata of the proletariat in the USA, against the workers, against the toiling masses of all the countries outside America, against the world proletariat, the proletarian state, proletarian revolution, Socialism and Communism.

They represent nothing other than the selfish interests of the thin stratum of the American petty-bourgeoisified workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy, interests that they seek to satisfy by in alliance with the USA exploiters, by means of as large scraps as possible from the latter's enormous exploiters' and robbers' table. But the days when the American bourgeoisie, and especially its left wing, is able to pull large worker masses ***directly*** in behind it, politically, are beginning to draw to a close. In the foreseeable future, the American bourgeoisie too will only be able to carry on this business of political exploitation ***indirectly***, namely via the transmission belt of a ***US Labour Party***. The elements for this already exist: Green, Murray and Lewis or successors of their ilk are people thoroughly suited for this. An American LP will pursue the same politics that Green, Murray and Lewis are at present already pursuing, will be the same politics as those of the British LP – only to the benefit of the US exploiters, the US imperialists and the US bourgeoisie, with the biggest possible 'tips' for its own workers-bureaucratic and workers-aristocratic lackeys' pockets, at the expense of the worker masses of the US, at the expense of the world proletariat. Unlike Green and Murray, who make common cause with the left-bourgeoisie, Lewis is eyeing the right-bourgeoisie.

7. The Stalinist Party

It is opportunist through and through and is always merely chasing after momentary advantages, without considering the effect that these have in the long run; it resorts from time to time to sham-revolutionary adventures, whereby opportunism is and remains its basic line; the

adventures, however, merely serve to conceal the anti-proletarian character of this line from the masses.

Lenin demands a 'complete ideological break with all varieties of social-nationalism' (Lenin, [1915] 1921l, p.93) – the Stalinist party is nationalist, Russian-chauvinist through and through.

Lenin declares categorically that:

> The epoch of imperialism cannot permit the co-existence (in one and the same party) of the revolutionary proletariat's vanguard and the semi-petty-bourgeois aristocracy of the working class, who benefit from the privileges of their 'own' nation's 'Great-Power' status. (Lenin, [1915] 1921m, p.168).

Stalin's 'Communist' Parties achieve this in their own way: they expel the proletarian revolutionaries, pour veritable Stalinist slanderous manure over them again and again, condone their assassination by Stalinist agents, indeed welcome these murders as 'revolutionary' deeds – and at the same time make the demoralised, utterly corrupt, utterly egotistical, usurpatory Stalinist bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy into the master and beneficiary of the party.

> The opportunism now prevailing […] trains the members of the workers party to be representatives of the better paid workers, who distance themselves from the masses, 'get along' fairly well under capitalism, and sell their birthright for a mess of pottage, i.e. renounce their role as revolutionary leaders of the people against the bourgeoisie (Lenin, [1918] 1933a, p.16 – what Lenin wrote here in 1918 is also applicable, and indeed all the more so, to the party of the Stalinist bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy, who 'get along' fairly well within world capitalism and pocket a substantial mess of pottage at the expense of the worker masses.

The number of its 'heroic deeds' is legion; there is not a single catastrophe for the working class since 1923-24 for which the Stalinist party has not been partly responsible – as the chief culprit! It suffices to name the following: the German October catastrophe (1923); the Chinese catastrophe (1927); the German catastrophe (1933), for which it was primarily to blame; Trotsky correctly states that 'Without Stalin there would have been no Hitler' (Trotzki, [1935] 1936b, p.30) and elsewhere he rightly writes that even Hitler's exertions did not contribute as much as the politics of Stalin and the Stalinist parties to the victory of fascism in Germany, to the Spanish catastrophe and to the fact that it was only thanks to the entire politics of Stalin and his parties that the capitalist bandits could risk inflicting the enormous crime of a Second (imperialist) World War upon labouring humanity, whereby the proletarian state was dragged into the maelstrom of war under what were for it the worst possible conditions.

With the help of Zinoviev and his comrades and with the help of Bukharin and his comrades, Stalin had already in 1923, when Lenin was still alive, but lay paralysed on his sickbed, succeeded in opening the door to the demoralisation of Lenin's party. Already back then the process had begun of replacing resolute proletarian revolutionaries with spineless, ambitious creatures, who trim their sails in order – come what may – to remain in any event on the gravy train; already back then the process had begun of liquidating party democracy and applying methods of distortion and falsification of the viewpoints and proposals of those who criticised the fundamentally wrong line of the *Troika* (Zinoviev, Bukharin and Stalin); already back then the

process had begun of confusing, lowering, poisoning and disintegrating the consciousness of the party, accompanied by a systematic lying, slandering and incitement against Trotsky and his friends, who were the consistent defenders of Lenin's line, the honest guardians of Lenin's legacy and the unbending defenders of Lenin's spirit. Already back then the process had begun of nourishing a cadaver discipline and selecting blind followers, lickspittles and people who were greedy for their own personal advantage. From being leaders with initiative and organisers of the world revolution, who fulfilled their fundamental task under the supreme leadership of Lenin's Comintern, Lenin's Communist Parties became subordinate auxiliary tools for politics that were nothing other than Russian social-nationalist and Russian chauvinist and were in the last analysis lackeys in the service of the world bourgeoisie.

The Social Democratic parties only differ from the Stalinist parties in terms of their specific national stance; the former are, as the case may be, Swedish nationalist, French nationalist, British nationalist, etc., while the latter are Russian nationalist; but they are all, without exception, lackey-parties of the world bourgeoisie. The former are parties operating on the basis of capitalist states; the Russian Stalinist party is the party of the petty-bourgeoisified workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy operating on the basis of the proletarian state degenerated by the Russian Stalinist party – the Stalinist parties outside Russia are a hybrid of the two. The Menshevik Party outside Russia only differs from the Russian Stalinist party in that its workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy had degenerated and petty-bourgeoisified on what were former Tsarist-capitalist territories; it fully applauds the development of the Stalinist bureaucracy; it merely wishes for a more explicitly (bourgeois) democratic cloak for this dictatorship; it has been shrinking numerically more and more and has long since been ripe for absorption into the StP; it is superfluous because the StP has fully taken over the role of the Mensheviks.

Objectively, in terms of the effect of its overall politics, the Stalinist party is working into the hands of fascism, but it is in no way a fascist party; it is a party of Russian social-nationalism, Russian social-chauvinism, but it is not a national 'socialist' party. A fascist party is a capitalist party of overt bourgeois dictatorship in its sharpest form, in its fascist form, a dictatorship that has been consciously formed in a capitalist state by the fully-fledged, fully-developed monopoly bourgeoisie – in Soviet Russia, however, the monopoly bourgeoisie has not yet surfaced, even if elements of it are maturing more and more in the womb of the Stalinist bureaucracy and around it, and it is not at all certain that the monopoly bourgeoisie will in fact be able to establish itself, because the Russian working class has not yet had its final say! The Russian Stalinist bureaucracy and its party, the Russian StP, is objectively working into the hands of these neo-capitalist elements, but it is not a party that has been consciously created by these developing neo-capitalist elements, on the contrary it is a party of the parasitical Stalinist bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy, and – in terms of its intentions – is fighting against the new bourgeois elements, but – contrary to its intentions – as a result of the overall effect of its politics, it is in reality increasingly furthering and strengthening these elements and preparing the ground for them for the capitalist counter-revolution. For the Nazi Party, its 'socialism' is a conscious sham cover for its consciously monopoly-capitalist, fascist politics – for the Stalinist parties their 'communism' is a consciously sham cover for their politics that are objectively capitalist, but are subjectively petty-bourgeois-radical, petty-bourgeois-socialist. But they agree on one matter: they are both extreme nationalist, chauvinist parties; one is German chauvinist on the basis of a capitalist Germany that has long been ripe for proletarian revolution – the other is Russian

chauvinist on the basis of a proletarian state that it has degenerated, that it is driving towards capitalist counter-revolution. In any case, the fascists serve the bourgeoisie as agents, above all among the middle masses; in contrast, the Social Democratic, Labour, Stalinist and other lackeys of the capitalist class serve as agents within the workers' movement, within the worker masses.

Stalin's Third International, the ***Stalinist International***, was merely an international Stalinist party; its task consisted in coordinating the activities of the Stalinist branches on the treacherous General Line, keeping them in harmony with it and consolidating them. Having been finally dead for the purposes of international proletarian politics since 1934, it lived on as the instrument of the anti-revolutionary, anti-proletarian politics of the Stalinist parties. In 1943, at the behest of the world bourgeoisie, it was formally dissolved. The Stalinist bureaucracy has found other ways to coordinate the anti-proletarian, anti-revolutionary activity of the Stalinist parties.

8. The relationship between the SP (the LP) and the StP

As a party of the international proletariat, Lenin's party fought on principle against the SP and the LP as lackey parties of the bourgeoisie (which did not preclude on occasions making common cause or forming a united front with them for the struggle for certain burning day-to-day demands of the workers – but on the contrary included doing this). On their part the SP and the LP fought on principle against Lenin's CP because they rightly regarded it as the main obstacle to the SP's and the LP's political exploitation of the working class and their political sponging on it.

What is the relationship between the SP (the LP) and the StP? Both in actual fact operate on the fundamental line of party collaboration with the bourgeoisie, or sections of it, against the international proletarian revolution and against the world proletariat, including the proletarian state; objectively both are lackeys of the bourgeoisie, are agents of the world bourgeoisie within the workers' movement, within the worker masses. Both pursue purely nationalist, chauvinist politics and adopt the position of 'socialism' in one country. Both are for sponging on the working class politically for the benefit of the petty-bourgeoisified workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy. Both are in actual fact in favour of the capitalist state, namely for the kind of regime in which they are able to very thoroughly sponge on the proletariat. In terms of intentions, they are admittedly against the fascist dictatorship, because it monopolises not only the economic exploitation, but also even the political exploitation of the workers – in actual fact, however, they again and again work into the hands of the fascist dictatorship. What they like best of all, because it is the most lucrative thing for them, is sponging upon the proletarian state by means of their bureaucratic dictatorship, under a more or less democratic cloak; in doing this they remain, objectively, utterly faithful to their role as lackeys of the world bourgeoisie. Where their bureaucratic regime is not yet or no longer achievable, they are in favour of capitalist democracy, whereby the degenerated workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy get as large a share as possible of capitalist power and the capitalist gravy train. In terms of the effect of their politics the StP, SP and LP have in actual fact ***never*** been fundamentally against each other; at most they fight each other tactically, as ***competitors on the same treacherous fundamental line***, and fundamentally they have always acted in one and the same basic direction, in one and the same class direction; fundamentally, they have in reality worked into

each others hands, have worked together in what is in reality a united front against the working class, the proletarian state, the proletarian revolution, Socialism and Communism – for the bourgeoisie, for the capitalist counter-revolution, for capitalism. Even 'social fascism', which to outward appearances rejected any united front with the SP 'on principle' and solemnly announced the destruction 'on principle' of the SP to be its main aim, was in reality – in its effect – the most intensive alliance of the StP with the SP for the objective purpose of preventing the working class mounting any effective defence against the capitalist economic crisis, against the capitalist offensive, against fascism, and of helping the German bourgeoisie out of the crisis at the expense of the masses and ensuring that the monopoly bourgeoisie was able to establish the fascist dictatorship with the minimum possible risk and resistance by virtue of the complete loyal, collective capitulation of the Stalinist party and Social Democratic Party to the benefit of the capitalist class. (This applies even to Austria; the action by the *Schutzbund* was not an action by the SP – on the contrary the SP made every effort to sabotage it.) Both work into the hands of the bourgeoisie, internationally and nationally; this even applies to the SPD, because by fighting for the restoration of capitalist democracy in Germany, it is seeking to conserve the German bourgeoisie, and this even applies to the Russian StP, which is in actual fact objectively working into the hands of the neo-capitalist elements in Russia, elements that it itself is nurturing more and more.

In 1936 already, what had been a *de facto* agreement on principle between the two parties also emerged publicly and formally. The French CP and the French SP formed a united front on condition that they explicitly ***renounced mutual criticism*** and expressly agreed not to lure each other's members or supporters away.

> As soon as the two workers[41] parties, which in the past had been in a fierce competitive struggle, renounced mutual criticism and the winning of adherents from each other, they ***ceased to exist as distinct parties.*** The caveat in relation to still remaining 'principled differences', changes nothing in this. If the principled differences of opinion are not manifested openly and actively at a moment so laden with responsibility […] they thereby cease to exist politically – Trotsky wrote, and rightly characterised this united front as '***an uncompleted party constructed on the federalist principle***' (Trotzki, 1936c, pp.26-27).

There is only one serious ***difference between the StP and the SP (the LP***): they are all petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties, are all parties of petty-bourgeois nationalism, but – and in this way they differ from each other – they represent nationalisms of ***different*** hues; the SPs (LPs) are petty-bourgeois chauvinists of a British, German, French or Italian, etc. hue, the Stalinist parties are petty-bourgeois chauvinists of a Russian hue. There is ***no fundamental difference*** between them, but in consequence of their fundamentally nationally limited stance ***THEY CAN ONLY MAKE COMMON CAUSE IF AND AS LONG AS 'THEIR' RESPECTIVE BOURGEOISIES IN ESSENCE AGREE ON FOREIGN POLICY MATTERS – AND MAKE***

[41] In Trotsky's original work it reads workers parties. In the first German edition of this work Melt left the word workers out. This is unlikely to have been a typographical error on the part of Melt. It is more likely that he was indicating to readers that neither of these two parties were real workers parties, but had already developed into ***petty-bourgeois*** parties; trans.

COMMON CAUSE, ***OR AT LEAST***, ***DO NOT ACT AGAINST EACH OTHER***. It is this same difference, namely the ***difference with regard to the nationally orientated foreign policy*** that exists between all the Social Democratic and Labour parties. On the basis of their mutual animosity towards the world proletariat, the proletarian state, the world revolution, Socialism and Communism, the world bourgeoisie has its national differences. Objectively loyal to the world bourgeoisie, the capitalist lackeys – both the Social Democratic and the Labour lackeys, as well as those of a Stalinist hue – have among themselves the national differences of their capitalist masters – whether or not their masters are already fully-grown predators, as in the capitalist countries – or, as in Soviet Russia, have only been reared by the Stalinist bureaucracy to an embryonic stage.

The Second International[42], namely the Social Democratic phrase-mongering International fell apart in 1914, when national, chauvinist differences escalated into armed conflict, into imperialist war. After the First (imperialist) World War, the Social Democratic parties came together again, forgiving each other their sins, as a 'socialist' International, as an 'instrument of peace' as they said. Its main purpose was to safeguard ***capitalist*** peace, i.e. by using all available means to sabotage the proletarian revolution and the revolutionary war being waged by the proletarian state. The more the Second (imperialist) World War drew near, the more the national differences among the Social Democratic parties manifested themselves. Attlee and Blum campaigned with hypocritical peace pipes with their imperialists in support of the Munich Agreement, whereby, for example, Austria and Czechoslovakia were delivered up to the German monopoly bourgeoisie – including even the handing over of the Austrian and Czech Social Democracy German fascism. The Second 'International' was now no longer able to maintain its unity, even in words, and effectively fell apart.

Precisely this kind of international umbrella organisation, comprising the Social Democratic, Labour and Stalinist parties, is now possible. Namely an international for jointly sabotaging the struggle of the international working class, one that is against the proletarian state, against the international proletarian revolution, against Socialism and Communism – with, it goes without saying, very solemn 'socialist' or 'communist' oaths, declarations and fanfares. As long as the foreign policy line of their capitalist masters coincides, the ***petty-bourgeois*** '***workers***' ***international*** can and will function in peacetime and possibly even in wartime. However, if the national differences, and therefore the foreign policy differences, between the parties affiliated to the International escalate to the point of war, then the '***united international***' of the SP, LP and StP will ***fall apart again***, just as the Second International did in 1914.

After the war they would then – once agreement between their capitalist masters as to the foreign policy line is restored – forgive each other again and unite once more to do business with each other, to jointly sabotage all the proletarian class interests and so forth. Nationally too, such unified ***umbrella organisations of the SP, LP and StP*** are possible, indeed in these capitalist countries they can temporarily lead to unification, to ***petty-bourgeois*** '***workers***' ***unity parties***, if and as long as the course of their foreign policy remains the same for a prolonged period of time.

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[42] From 1923-40, the Second International was known as the Labour and Socialist International; Ed.

A unified petty-bourgeois ‘workers’ party or ‘workers’ international is ***temporarily possible*** for a certain period of time, but ***is by no means certain***. It is equally very possible that the British bourgeoisie will change over again from its presently ***disguised*** policy agreed at Munich (1938; trans.) a là Churchill and Attlee (Roosevelt), to an ***overt*** Munich policy a là Chamberlain and Attlee (Roosevelt) – just as it is equally possible that Stalin will again jump to form an alliance with the German bourgeoisie. A turn of events like this would – while they continue to pursue the same petty-bourgeois basic line, with the same hostility towards the proletarian revolution, etc. – pit the petty-bourgeois ‘workers’ parties sharply against each other, ***along national lines***, split them up and take the question of them joining forces, of them uniting off the agenda for a more or less lengthy period of time.

What would be the outcome of a Stalinist–Labour–Social Democratic unification for the ***working class***, a unification that, as has been demonstrated, would be carried out on a thoroughly Social Democratic basis? It cannot bring about a change in the petty-bourgeois Judas line. The very thing that they have hitherto worked for in fact in a united front – namely against the proletariat, the proletarian state and the proletarian revolution, and against Socialism and Communism – they would now continue to do as a petty-bourgeois ‘socialist’–’communist’ unity party, as a united international. Their treacherous line would not change and would remain unchanged; only the form of their organisational relationship would change: they would – as a unified organisation – continue and escalate their betrayal of the workers. Their unified organisation would have, amongst other things – by blurring their immense responsibility for the gigantic proletarian catastrophes and by generating and propagating new illusions in the worker masses – the purpose of operating as a ***JOINT INSURANCE COMPANY FOR THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC, LABOUR AND STALINIST BANKRUPTS*** as protection against the consequences of their massive political bankruptcy in front of the working class. At best this would succeed for a certain transitional period, because the very fact of unification would initially give rise to enormous illusions among the broad worker masses. At the same time, however, the double smokescreen caused by the competitive struggle between the SP (the LP) and the StP would clear and the workers would be faced with considerably simpler and more transparent relationships. The best proletarian elements and, with their help, the masses too would more quickly than previously progressively see through the treacherous role of the unified petty-bourgeois ‘workers’ party and ‘workers’ International, turn their backs on them and join in helping to build the proletarian class party and the proletarian class International, namely the Fourth International.

If, however, a petty-bourgeois ‘workers’ unity party or united ‘workers’ international does not materialise in consequence of big foreign policy – in the last analysis national-chauvinist – differences or conflicts of interests, then – against their will! – their ***competitive struggle*** will compel the petty-bourgeois ‘workers’ parties to tear the mask of demagogy, trickery and deception from each others Judas face, the mask that they use to conceal and disguise their betrayal of the workers. Unmasking them will thus become easier and easier for the proletarian revolutionaries.

One way or another, conditions for the working class to rid themselves of the ‘socialist’ and ‘communist’ parasite parties and parasite Internationals, to build up the proletarian class party and class International, will objectively become more and more favourable.

XIII. The Proletarian Class Party, the Proletarian Class International

What, without exception, fundamentally distinguishes a proletarian class party from a petty-bourgeois 'workers' party is the diametrically opposed direction of all its work and its entire struggle. Even when the struggle of the two parties temporarily runs in parallel or comes together in any more or less important day-to-day or partial issues, here too the same basic difference exists: here too the proletarian party fights ***for*** the proletariat, for the proletarian state, for the international proletarian revolution, for Socialism and Communism – the party of the petty-bourgeoisifying, petty-bourgeoisified, parasitical workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy in the last analysis fights ***against*** the working class, against the proletarian state, against the world revolution, against Socialism and Communism, for the world bourgeoisie, for capitalism.

ABSOLUTE LOYALTY TO THE PROLETARIAN CLASS INTERESTS AND CLASS PRINCIPLES UNDER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES – THIS ABOVE ALL CONSTITUTES THE ESSENCE OF THE PROLETARIAN-REVOLUTIONARY PARTY. This is why it wages a systematic struggle ***AGAINST ALL RIGHT OPPORTUNISM, BUT ALSO ALL 'LEFT' OPPORTUNISM*** within the working class and within the party of the working class.

> How is it possible to prepare ourselves for revolution and advance towards decisive battles, when there are people in the Party who are sabotaging the revolution? This is not merely a mistake, it is a crime. […]
>
> Victory in a proletarian revolution ***cannot*** be achieved, and the revolution ***cannot*** be safeguarded, while there are reformists and Mensheviks within one's ranks. […]
>
> ***ON THE EVE OF THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION THE PRIMARY AND FUNDAMENTAL PRECONDITION FOR SUCCESS IS FREEING THE PARTY OF THE REVOLUTIONARY PROLETARIAT FROM OPPORTUNISTS AND 'CENTRISTS' AND FROM THEIR PREJUDICES, WEAKNESSES AND VACILLATIONS*** (Lenin, [1920] 1925b, pp.573, 575, 587).
>
> One of the main factors hampering the revolutionary workers' movement in the advanced capitalist countries is the fact that, because of the colonial possessions and the super profits of finance capital, etc., the capitalists of these countries have been able to detach a relatively broad and more stable stratum, a small minority – a ***workers' aristocracy***. It enjoys the best terms of employment and is most imbued with a narrow-minded craft spirit and with petty-bourgeois and imperialist prejudices. This is the real social 'pillar' of the Second International of reformists and the 'centrists'; at present it is well-nigh the social mainstay of the bourgeoisie. ***NO PREPARATION OF THE PROLETARIAT FOR THE OVERTHROW OF THE BOURGEOISIE IS POSSIBLE, EVEN IN THE PRELIMINARY SENSE, UNLESS AN IMMEDIATE, SYSTEMATIC, EXTENSIVE AND OVERT STRUGGLE IS WAGED AGAINST THIS STRATUM***, which – as experience has already clearly demonstrated – will no doubt provide the bourgeois White guards with many a recruit after the victory of the proletariat' (Kommunistische Internationale, 1920, pp.17-18).

This also applies nowadays to the Stalinist aristocracy, together with its topmost stratum, the Stalinist bureaucracy. Hence the need for the periodic Leninist cleansing of the Party of opportunists, centrists, place hunters, careerists, climbers and the like is necessary. 'There is not, and there cannot be, a place for it (the Fourth International; auth.) in any of the People's Fronts. ***IT STANDS IN IRRECONCILIABLE OPPOSITION TO ALL POLITICAL GROUPINGS ALLIED WITH THE BOURGEOISIE***' – including, of course, all those who aim for this kind of an alliance (Trotzki, 1938, p.29). That is why uniting the organisation of the proletarian revolutionaries with opportunists, centrists, social-nationalists, social-patriots, social-imperialists, petty-bourgeois 'socialists' ('communists') and petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties into one party would not lead to the creation or strengthening of a proletarian class party, of a class International, but on the contrary would be the ***surest way of destroying it***. Only by gathering together the proletarian-revolutionary parties and groups of all countries, while consciously, consistently excluding all opportunist, centrist, social-patriotic, social-nationalist, social-imperialist, social-pacifist, anarchist and ultra-'left' parties and groups, does the proletarian class International, the ***Fourth International***, come into being. In his letter of 20 July 1873, about the efforts of the Eisenachers to unite with the Lasalleaners, Engels wrote:

> One must not let oneself be misled by the cry for 'unity'. Those who have this word most often on their lips are those who sow the most dissension, just as at present the Jura-Bakunists in Switzerland, who have provoked all the splits, scream for nothing so much as for unity. These unity fanatics are either people of limited intelligence who want to stir everything up into one nondescript brew, which, the moment it is left to settle, throws up the differences again in much more acute opposition because they are now all together in one pot (in Germany we have a fine example of this with the people who preach the reconciliation of the workers and the petty bourgeois) – or else they are people who unconsciously or consciously want to adulterate the movement. For this reason, the biggest sectarians and the biggest brawlers and rogues are at certain moments those who shout loudest for unity. Nobody in our lifetime has given us more trouble and been more treacherous than those who shout for unity (Engels, [1873] 1920, p.9).

In the face of the efforts of Stalin & Co. to unite with the Mensheviks after the 1917 February Revolution, Lenin declared very sharply:

> What is important is not quantity but correctly formulating the ideas and policies of the truly revolutionary proletariat. […]
>
> It is better to remain as two, like Liebknecht, because this means ***remaining within the ranks of the revolutionary proletariat,*** than to entertain even for a moment any thought of unification with the party of the Organising Committee, with Chkheidze and Tsereteli. These people tolerate collaboration with Potresov in '*Rabochaya Gazeta*' (Workers Newspaper), vote in the Executive Committee

> of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies for the loan[43] and pivot towards the 'hullabaloo of patriotism' (Lenin, [1917] 1925b, pp.404, 405).

Lenin demanded the '*disentangling* of the proletarian line from the petty-bourgeois and patriotic "mass" intoxication' (Lenin, [1917] 1925b, p.377). He repeatedly stressed that '***IT IS NECESSARY TO DRAW A DIVIDING LINE BETWEEN THE PETTY BOURGEOISIE AND THE WAGED PROLETARIAT***' (Trotzki, 1931a, p.309). There must be no alliance with the middle strata ***within*** the revolutionary party, precisely in order to be able to form an alliance with them on the proletarian-revolutionary line; this alone will bring serious help to the poor-peasant/poor-farmer and petty-bourgeois multi-millioned masses. ***COMPLETE DETACHMENT***, ***POLITICALLY AND ORGANISATIONALLY, FROM THE PETTY BOURGEOISIE*** **AND** ***FROM EVERY PETTY-BOURGEOIS STRATUM*** is a fundamental condition for the proletarian class party, without which it can neither fulfil its general fundamental task in the struggle and victory for the proletarian revolution, nor, in particular can it win the small-peasant/small-farmer and petty-bourgeois masses for the revolutionary alliance with the working class and under its leadership.

Marx and Engels were against ***calling the party*** of the working class the Social Democratic Party.

> The name 'Social Democracy' is ***scientifically incorrect***, as Marx has explained on a number of occasions, including in his '*Critique of the Gotha Programme*' in 1875, and as Engels reaffirmed in a more popular form in 1894[44]. From capitalism, humanity can pass directly only to Socialism, i.e. to social ownership of the means of production and to the distribution of the products according to the amount of work performed by each individual. Our Party looks further ahead: Socialism must inevitably evolve into Communism, upon the banner of which is inscribed the motto: 'From each according to their ability, to each according to their needs.' [...]
>
> The second part of the name of our Party (***Social Democrats***) is also scientifically incorrect. Democracy is a form of the ***state***, whereas we Marxists are opposed to ***every kind of*** state. […]
>
> It is time to cast off our soiled shirt and put on a clean one (Lenin, [1917] 1925b, pp.406, 409).
>
> In 1847, two kinds of people were considered ***socialists***. On the one hand, were the adherents of the various utopian systems, notably the Owenites in Britain and the Fourierists in France, both of whom had by then already dwindled to mere gradually dying out sects. On the other hand, diverse social quacks, who wanted to eliminate the social ills through their various universal panaceas and all kinds

[43] Lenin is contrasting the principled stance taken by Liebknecht in December 1914, when he voted in the *Reichstag* against the extension of war credit, to the stance adopted by Chkheidze and Tsereteli in Russia; Ed.

[44] This refers to Engels, 1894 (Preface to *Internationales aus dem Volkstaat*, *1871-1875*); trans.

> of patchwork, without in the least hurting capital and profits. In both cases, people who stood outside the workers' movement and looked for support rather to the 'educated' classes. However, the section of the workers that demanded a radical restructuring of society, convinced that mere political revolutions were not enough, at that time called itself ***Communist***. It was still a rough-hewn, only instinctive and frequently somewhat crude Communism. Yet, it was powerful enough to bring into being two systems of utopian Communism – in France, the 'Icarian' communists of Cabet and in Germany that of Weitling. Socialism in 1847 signified a bourgeois movement, Communism a working-class movement. Socialism was, on the continent at least, quite respectable, whereas Communism was the very opposite. And since we were already by that stage very decidedly of the opinion that 'the emancipation of the workers must be the task of the working class itself', we could have no hesitation as to which of the two names we should choose. Nor has it ever occurred to us (Marx and Engels; auth.) since to repudiate it (Engels, [1890] 1891b, p.8).
>
> It will be noted that in all these essays, and particularly in the aforementioned one, I consistently do not call myself a Social Democrat, but a ***Communist***. This is because at that time in various countries people called themselves Social Democrats, who had certainly not inscribed upon their banners the taking over by society of all the means of production. […] For Marx and myself it was therefore quite impossible to choose a name of such elasticity to describe our special standpoint. Today the situation is different, and the word can be allowed to pass, unfitting for a party whose economic programme is not just generally socialist, but directly communist, and whose ultimate political aim is to overcome the entire state, and thus democracy too. The names of *real* political parties never fit exactly; the party develops, but the name stays (Engels, 1894, pp.6-7).
>
> Marx and I, he (Engels; auth.) said, had a splendid, scientifically accurate name for the Party, but there was no real Party, i.e. no mass proletarian party. Now (at the end of the nineteenth century) there is a real party, but its name is scientifically wrong. Never mind, it may perhaps 'pass muster', as long as the party ***develops***, as long as the scientific inaccuracy of its name is not hidden from it and does not hinder its development in the ***right*** direction (Lenin, [1918], 1933a, p.52).

The present-day Social Democratic Party is against the taking over of the means of production by the ***proletarian***-democratic state, and is, therefore, inevitably against them being taken over by society. The Stalinist party is only formally in favour of the taking over of the means of production by the proletarian state; it is, in reality against this – with regard to the administration of and the fruits of the means of production; it is in favour of them being taken over by the petty-bourgeoisified, parasitical, treacherous Stalinist bureaucracy – to the exclusion of the working class from the administration of and the main fruits of the collective property; the Stalinist party is against the taking over of the means of production by the proletarian-democratic state, by the ***proletarian-democratic dictatorship***. The ***Communist Party*** – this is the only correct name for the proletarian class party. But this name is nowadays defiled and dishonoured and has lost the trust of the masses as a result of the gigantic betrayals by the Stalinist party. Only once the

Stalinist crimes have been atoned for and the name has been cleansed of the Stalinist betrayals and filth, can the proletarian class party bear this correct name again and bear it with honour.

The Party is only a means to an end: it is the main means for the working class to steer, guide, lead and organise the proletarian revolution and for attaining, maintaining and consolidating the revolutionary victory of the working class. This single purpose that includes all party tasks of whatever kind must also be in keeping with the specificities of the ***organisation of the Party***, both in its entirety and in all its parts without exception.

What applies to the proletarian class party also applies to the ***proletarian class International***. When in 1914, with the outbreak of war, the Social Democratic parties sided with imperialism and the Socialist International collapsed, Lenin – settling accounts with them – wrote:

> ***TO ANYONE WHO WANTS TO REMAIN A SOCIALIST THERE CAN BE NO MORE IMPORTANT DUTY THAN TO REVEAL THE CAUSES OF THIS CRISIS IN SOCIALISM AND ANALYSE THE TASKS OF THE INTERNATIONAL***

and, for the first time, issued the slogan of the ***Third International***:

> Long live the Third International purged not only of turncoats […] but of opportunism as well! […]
>
> To the Third International falls the task of ***ORGANISING*** the proletarian forces ***FOR A REVOLUTIONARY ONSLAUGHT AGAINST THE CAPITALIST GOVERNMENTS; FOR CIVIL WAR AGAINST THE BOURGEOISIE OF ALL COUNTRIES FOR THE CONQUEST OF POLITICAL POWER; FOR THE TRIUMPH OF SOCIALISM!*** (Lenin, [1914] 1925, pp.289, 294).

In 1917, he emphasised

> the duty of the proletarian party to clearly, precisely and categorically counterpose ***internationalism in deed*** to 'internationalism' in word. […]
>
> There is one, and only one, real internationalism, and that is working whole-heartedly for the development of the revolutionary movement and the revolutionary struggle in ***one's own country***, and supporting (by propaganda, sympathy and material aid) ***this struggle*** and only this line of struggle in ***every*** country without exception.
>
> Everything else is deception and is mendacious sentimentality. […]
>
> It is we who must found, and right now, without delay, a *new* ***revolutionary, proletarian International***, or rather, we must not be afraid to acknowledge publicly that this International is *already established* and functioning (Lenin, [1917] 1925b, pp.395, 396, 403)

This was written at a time, when – and this is important in tactical terms – the proletarian state was not yet in existence. In 1920, Lenin once again outlined the task of 'creating a truly centralised, a true leadership centre capable of directing the international tactics of the revolutionary proletariat in its ***struggle for a world Soviet republic***' (Lenin, 1920b, p.69).

This showed that the role of the proletarian class international was to be ***THE LEADER OF THE WORLD PROLETARIAT, OF THE WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES IN THEIR COMMON STRUGGLE FOR THE WORLD REVOLUTION, FOR THE WORLD SOVIET STATE, FOR COMMUNISM ACROSS THE ENTIRE GLOBE***. The ***Stalinist International*** has betrayed this programme; it was a reactionary force, a force that operated against the communist programme. This is why the creation of a proletarian class international is once again on the agenda, the building up and consolidation of the ***Fourth International***.

XIV. Party Organisation and Mass Organisations

The proletarian party is the organisation of the ***class-conscious*** minority for the steering, guiding, leading and organising of the ***entire*** struggle of the working class. The proletarian mass organisations, on the other hand, are as broad organisations of the proletarian masses as possible for certain ***limited***, more or less important goals, organisations that embrace all workers who are advocating a specific limited goal, ***even if they are not class-conscious***. Even if they encompass very large masses, the trade unions, for example, under capitalist conditions, only encompass a fraction of the gigantic multi-millioned proletarian masses – perhaps between a fifth and a quarter of them; in Britain, in the USA, and even in Weimar Germany not even a third. Examples of this kind of mass organisation are: workers' self-defence organisations (the *Arbeiterwehr* [workers' defence], the Red Front Fighters' League, the *Schutzbund* [Defence League, in Austria], the Red Militia, etc.), the trade unions, cooperatives and workers' gymnastic and sports clubs, the Freethinkers; the workers' cultural clubs, tenants' defence organisations, etc. In organisational terms these are independent structures. While safeguarding this organisational independence it is the task of the class-conscious workers organised in them, to bring the specific work of each of these mass organisations onto the proletarian class line and to keep it on this line. We have already pointed out the fundamentally incorrect anarchist, revolutionary-syndicalist view of guiding the entire struggle of the working class by means of a proletarian mass organisation, namely a trade union, without a proletarian party – thus in actual fact replacing the Party by a trade union.

The proletarian ***mass organisations*** of the proletarian ***party***, namely the auxiliary organisations of the proletarian party, like its revolutionary youth organisation, its revolutionary women's organisation, etc. differ from the proletarian mass organisations. They are ***revolutionary*** mass organisations organised by the Party that specialise in waging the struggle for special, extremely important ***Party tasks***. The Party supports them in their special work and, conversely, they serve the Party as an effective lever in the Party's struggle for these special issues and indeed in its entire struggle too. The Party supports the ***youth organisation***, which is at the same time one of its important levers in the struggle of the whole Party for the special interests of young workers, deed in mobilising all the young workers for the revolutionary struggle of the entire working class. The Party supports the ***women's organisation***, which is at the same time one of its important levers in the struggle of the Party as a whole for the special interests of female workers and the working, non-exploiting women and in mobilising the female workers, indeed all the toiling, non-exploiting women for the revolutionary struggle of the entire working class. Politically, the mass organisations of the proletarian party are under the leadership and control of the Party.

Where it is appropriate the Party gives them a certain, more or less large, degree of flexibility in organisational matters; for educational purposes it gives the revolutionary youth organisation organisational autonomy.

Capitalist and petty-bourgeois parties, including the petty-bourgeois 'workers' parties often launch auxiliary organisations in the form of 'non-party', 'neutral' or 'non-partisan' organisations. See, for example, the (capitalist) scout movement, the (capitalist) national youth clubs, the (capitalist) 'Young Men's Christian Associations' or 'Women's Christian Associations'; Stalin's petty-bourgeois, Russian-chauvinist, 'communist', 'Red' Aid, and 'Workers' Aid; the bourgeois-

democratic (capitalist) Catholic–Social Democratic '*Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold*'[45], etc. Outwardly, they also give out the workers' mass organisations that they mislead and misuse to be national, Christian, non-party, neutral, non-partisan or 'free' organisations.

[45] Literally: The Black, Red, Gold Banner of the Reich; trans.

XV. How Parties Change

Every party is a living organisation and is in a state of continuous change. In the course of its development every party changes in terms of its tactics, size, reach, influence, composition, level of consciousness and programme. It can degenerate, it can change the basic direction of its actions and change its class line; then it will also need masks and disguises that it will have to change again and again, in order to conceal the fundamental change in its character from its mass following that it exploits politically.

The proletarian revolutionaries must keep a sharp eye on these processes and on the direction and tempo of such changes. In doing so they must always assess the ‘striking power’, etc., of every party in its overall context. A party can become stronger and weaker simultaneously; for example, it can become weaker – relative to the bourgeoisie, but stronger relative to the proletariat. This was very much in evidence in the process of the degeneration of both the Social Democratic and the Stalinist parties. The more they petty-bourgeoisified, the weaker they became in relation to the capitalist class; at the same time, the more they turned against the working class, the more they had the bourgeoisie behind them and were thus in a position to increasingly hinder, sabotage, paralyse and prevent any proletarian-revolutionary action and already even the run-up to it. It is like in the case of the process of degeneration of the proletarian state: the more its degeneration is driven forward by Stalinist politics in its entirety, the weaker it becomes as a ***proletarian*** state in relation to the world capitalist class; on the other hand, as a ***degenerated*** proletarian state – in which the capitalist tendencies and elements are fostered and the socialist tendencies and elements and the revolutionary weight of the proletariat are weakened more and more – it simultaneously becomes stronger in relation to some or other capitalist powers and above all in relation to the proletariat.

The proletarian revolutionaries must keep a watchful eye on all changes in the proletarian party itself. They must remain aware of the fact that the healthy development of the entire body depends to a very large extent on the health of its head.

XVI. The Coming into Being and Passing Away of the Party

At a certain stage of development in the workers' struggle, the best, most militant, clearest, most far-sighted proletarian elements begin to sense, to recognise that the struggle of the workers for economic and political success, for revolutionary victory and for the emancipation of humanity from any kind of exploitation and oppression, indispensably requires a stable leadership for the struggle of the worker masses. They begin to organise themselves for the purpose of creating a stable leadership for the struggle, and in this way the Party comes into being.

Just like classes and the state, parties too are not something eternal. Once any kind of class cleavage in human society has been overcome and Communism has become the economic and social system of humanity in its entirety, parties will become superfluous and will gradually wither away.

> The need for a political party of the proletariat will only disappear with the complete dissolution of the classes. […]
>
> The Communist Party will not, however, completely *dissolve into the working class* until Communism has ceased to be a goal of struggle and the entire working class has become communist (Kommunistische Internationale, 1920, p.37).

In fully-developed communist society there will be countless organised groups of the most varied kind and for the most varied purposes, but there will be no parties because there will be no classes.

As fully-developed Communism can only be achieved on a world scale, parties – just like classes and the state – can only be liquidated, can only wither away on a world scale.

BOOKLET 4:

THE GOAL

–

THE ENEMY

–

OUR OWN STRENGTH

THE GOAL – THE ENEMY – OUR OWN STRENGTH

A. The Goal

As enormous as the goal of the world proletarian revolution is, as gigantic as the task of the proletarian party, the proletarian International and the proletarian revolutionaries is – never before in its history, a history that has lasted hundreds of thousands of years, has humanity faced such a gigantic task – it is, however, only a ***limited*** goal, it is only a limited task. It is not a matter of solving all the problems of human society once and for all: this is impossible – but a matter and only a matter of freeing humanity from the sufferings that the ***capitalist*** form, the ***exploitative*** form of economy and society altogether, imposes on it; it is a matter and only a matter of solving the specific historical tasks that the present era, the capitalist era, places in front of human beings and for which the possible solutions themselves are maturing or have matured in the womb of capitalist society.

> No social formation ever perishes before all the productive forces for which it is sufficient have been developed, and new superior relations of production never replace them before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society. Humanity, therefore, only ever sets itself such tasks that it is able to solve, since closer examination will always show that the task itself only arises when the material conditions for its solution are already present or are at least in the course of formation (Marx, 1859, p.vi).

Proletarian revolutionaries want a fundamental renewal of the social relationships between human beings, of the relations of human beings to each other and among each other, but this renewal that they want is in two respects not ***completely*** new.

In reality they want to ***restore*** the forms of economy, community, living and development in which humanity, over hundreds of thousands of years, struggled for existence and lived, one can say, has almost always lived; since, extremely important as the slave-based, feudal and capitalist modes of production – in short the exploitative modes of production, with all the resulting consequences – are for the history of human beings, for the last 6000 years to which they together lay claim, they are an extremely tiny stretch of the enormously long road that humanity has covered, since it began to struggle upwards, to detach itself from and raise itself above the animal world. Proletarian revolutionaries want to restore the ***truly fraternal relationship between human beings*** that existed in primitive communist society. It was only able to achieve this at the scale of blood relatives, the horde, the kinship group or at best that of the tribe; to prehistoric man, whoever was not a blood relative, did not belong to the horde, the tribe, was not a brother, not a human being but an enemy – proletarian revolutionaries, however, by means of modern communist society, want to restore the old fraternal relationship of prehistoric man ***at the scale of the entire globe*** – whoever ***has a human countenance should be a brother***, a brother in the truest sense of this word, not merely a brother in pious wish, not a brother in mere prayers and alms, but a brother in the reality of all the life-critical relationships.

The fraternal relationships between human beings throughout primitive communist times moved on the basis of the extremely modest productivity of human labour, the very simplest means of production, the most primitive mode and methods of production, on the basis of the most meagre circumstances of life – proletarian revolutionaries, however, in modern Communism, want to restore the fraternal relationships of the primitive communist human beings at the highest possible level of productivity of human labour, and systematically increase it more and more, i.e. at an ***extremely high material, intellectual and cultural level for all human beings*** without exception across the entire planet.

Like primitive Communism, modern Communism will exist for a very, very long time; because, like the former, it too will provide a very high degree of flexibility for solving all kinds of problems within its framework. But the dialectical materialist worldview teaches us that all forms of existence come into being and pass away. Thus, modern Communism, too, will ultimately in the distant, very distant future pass away, giving birth to new forms of economy and society from its womb. Today, we cannot even guess what contradictions will lead to this or what their content and form will be. It is not down to us to hatch unlaid eggs. Finding the solution to new problems posed in the age of fully-fledged modern Communism is a task for much later generations.

Proletarian revolutionaries want an economic and social order that is fundamentally different from the capitalist form of order, from every exploitative form of order altogether. However, in no way do they want what is new to emerge out of some kind of utopian fantasy, however well-meant. They do not seek what is new separate from what is old, somewhere in an empty space above the clouds, instead they look for it in sober capitalist reality on Earth – because they want ***the new out of the old***. What capital itself in actual fact works out in its womb and brings forth through the struggle between its immanent contradictions; whatever it is in the mechanism of capitalism itself that is thrusting, driving with more and more vitality towards this solution, for this they want to clear all the obstacles out of the way and overcome them, with all suitable means, completely and across the entire planet. And it is precisely this new in the old, this new from out of the old, this new that is already embodied in embryonic form in the old, this new that in its first impetus, in tangible capitalist reality is striving upwards out of it, forming itself anew – this is what they want to further, to build up and expand with all their strength, across the entire planet – this is precisely what ***modern Communism*** is.

The colossal task, encompassing gigantic epochs, is subdivided into gigantic tasks, which, one succeeding one another, more or less transition into one another: The formation of the proletarian class party – The winning of the masses for the international proletarian revolution – The establishment of the dictatorship of proletarian democracy across the entire planet – The building up of world Communism.

I. Communism

Marx calls communist society, 'just as it *emerges* from capitalist society, which is thus in every respect, economically, morally and intellectually, still stamped with the birthmarks of the old society, from whose womb it emerges' (Marx, [1875] 1934b, p.9) the first or lower phase of Communism – in contrast to communist society 'as it has *developed* on its own foundations' (ibid., p.9) – this latter he calls the developed, the higher phase of Communism. Communism at its lower, undeveloped stage is ***Socialism*** – Communism at its higher, more developed stage is Communism in the narrower, in the proper sense of the word or in short ***Communism***. Here we are only dealing with the latter.

Here all the decisive ***means of production*** are the ***property of, are actually at the disposal of, are actually administrated by and actually under the control of all human beings*** without distinction, who, precisely for this purpose, are organised as a well-structured ***world cooperative*** of human beings, who are free and, in relation to the means of production, completely equal. It is a 'community of free individuals […], carrying out their work with the means of production in common, in which the labour power of all the different individuals is consciously applied as the combined labour power of the community' (Marx, [1867] 1914b, p.42). It is production newly organised by society on the basis of a free and equal association of producers (see Engels, [1884] 1922, p.182). It is a single, very carefully organised cooperative, encompassing all human beings on the entire planet – it is simultaneously a production-, distribution- and consumption-cooperative – a single big family in the best sense of this word, a real world family. There is only ***individual property*** in the means of consumption and in the non-vital means of production – always merely at the scale of immediate personal needs. All public functions without exception, within the workplace and outside it, in all spheres of economic and social life are carried out without remuneration, are carried out on a rotating basis by all human beings, under the constant control of all the others, who to cap it all not only have the right, but also the time and above all also actually have, in terms of their capabilities, the opportunity to do this. 'Communism is […], if you take that word in its strict meaning, is unpaid work for the common good' (Lenin, [1919] 1933b, p.19). Social work, economic work as well as public functions of all kinds is self-evidently a duty for everyone, indeed more than this: every individual feels and consciously recognises in this duty the most significant part of their humanity and of the content of their very own personal life.

Communism is a ***classless*** society. There are no longer any differences between human beings in terms of their relationship to the social means of production: they are the property of everyone, every single person has them at their disposal, every individual administrates them, every individual controls the administration of the means of production – all this together with all other human beings via a world cooperative that is organised as a union of free and equal individuals, and is built up from bottom to top. The conditions of life, the conditions for development are secured for all human beings to such an extent and in such abundance, that the ***struggle for individual existence ceases***, that no individual has any kind of urge to accumulate private property. Every human being is a worker, 'productive labour ceases to be an attribute of a class' (Marx, [1871] 1891, p.49).

Communism is a ***stateless*** society. As there are no classes, there is nobody to oppress, there is also therefore no apparatus of oppression, no machine for ruling, no state.

> Only in communist society, when the resistance of the capitalists is finally broken, when the capitalists have disappeared, when there are no classes any more (i.e. when there is no distinction any more between the members of society as regards their relationship to the social means of production) – *only* then 'the state ceases to exist' and '*it becomes possible to speak of* ***freedom***'. Only then is democracy possible and it will be possible to realise a ***truly complete democracy***, a democracy without any exceptions whatever. And only then will ***democracy begin to wither away***, for the simple reason that, freed from capitalist slavery, from the untold horrors, brutalities, absurdities and infamies of capitalist exploitation, people will gradually become ***accustomed*** to observing and keeping to the most elementary rules of living together socially – rules that have been known for centuries and have been repeated in all the regulations, for thousands of years. They will become accustomed to observing them without force, ***without coercion***, without subordination, ***without the special apparatus of coercion***, called the state. […]
>
> The state will be able to wither away completely when society has adopted the principle: 'from each according to ability, to each according to need', i.e. when people have become so accustomed to observing the fundamental rules of living together socially and their labour has become so productive that they ***voluntarily*** work *according to their ability* (Lenin, [1918] 1933a, pp.58, 63).

Any bureaucracy whatsoever '***withers away***', the functions of all officials, all public functions will be carried out in turn by everyone. The economic prerequisites for the communist social order will have already been realised, when

> the ***antithesis between mental and physical labour*** disappears and consequently at the same time one of the principal sources of modern ***social inequality*** is abolished, a source moreover, which cannot on any account be removed immediately by the mere conversion of the means of production into social property, by the mere expropriation of the capitalists (ibid., p.62).
>
> When, in the course of development, the class distinctions have disappeared and all production has been concentrated in the hands of an association of individuals, public power will lose its political character (*Das Kommunistische Manifest*, [1848] 1891, p.24).
>
> The government of persons is replaced by the administration of things, and by the management of processes of production (Engels, [1883] 1907, p.49).

Fully-fledged communist society will no longer know a state of any kind, but it certainly will have a very thoroughly developed ***community***; it will no longer have any state organisation, but it will certainly have a very carefully structured ***economic and cultural organisation***.

Communism is a society ***without parties***. As there are no classes, there is no class struggle, there are no class interests, but there will certainly be 'humanity-struggles' (*Menscheitskämpfe*), there will be 'humanity-interests' (*Menscheitsinteressen*) and the unified struggle of humanity as a whole for the interests, the existence and the ascent of all human beings without distinction within the framework of the infinite universe. Therefore, any need for a special organisation for

directing, guiding, leading and organising the struggle of individual classes and the strata within social classes is also eliminated. The party with all its auxiliary organisations and its lever-organisations will have become superfluous, it will no longer exist.

Increasing the productive powers, and increasing them again and again, ***in a planned way*** is the most vital goal of communist society. Fulfilling this task lays the indispensably necessary foundation on which alone all other communist tasks can be solved. Trotsky reminds us of the extremely important words which the young Marx wrote two years before the 'Manifesto of the Communist Party': 'The development of the productive forces is an absolutely necessary practical prerequisite (of Communism), also because without it, want is generalised, and with want the struggle for necessities will begin again and consequently the whole same old story is revived' (Trotzki, 1936a, p.58). How can and will Communism realise the gigantic, systematically continuous increase in the productivity of human labour? By virtue of the fact that in communist society, property in all the vital means of production, the pursuit of profit and the limits that the this places on production will have been completely abolished, and the following main paths are open for communist society to boost the productive forces, paths on which communist society will systematically march forward ever further:

1. Communist production is ***production for the needs of humanity***: the communist economic order does not produce for the profits of a thin stratum of capitalist parasites, but for the needs of human society, to fully and abundantly meet the needs of every single member of society without distinction and of all human beings together, and in such a way that it also always systematically secures sufficient scope for their continued ascent. In this way the contradiction between the productive forces that capital unfolds and the purchasing power of the masses that capital inevitably again and again lowers, is eliminated: the deepest root, the fundamental root of the periodic economic crises is thereby abolished.

2. Communist production is ***production according to a plan***: it is organised according to a plan, it is carried out according to a plan, and indeed not merely in an individual workplace or at the scale of a trust, but also above all at a world scale. The anarchy of production is completely overcome, full proportionality prevails permanently between all branches of production; the movement, growth and change in each branch of production is and always remains in tune with every other branch: this deals with the secondary source of the periodic economic crises. Anarchy within social production is replaced by systematic, conscious organisation. The struggle for individual existence ceases. 'Then, for the first time, man, in a certain sense, is finally marked off from the animal kingdom and emerges from animal conditions of existence into really human ones' (Engels, [1883] 1907, p.51).

3. In the communist economy there is ***no*** longer any ***competitive struggle*** between the producers, shopkeepers/traders, etc. for markets, investment markets, sources of raw materials, means of production and labour power; there is also no longer any competitive struggle among the workers themselves; all the oncosts connected with this become superfluous. There is also therefore no more destruction of goods and use-objects (*Gebrauchgegenstände*) due to a lack of profitable sales; all methods of producing artificial demand (such as fashion fads and such like) are obsolete; there is no longer any conquering of market opportunities by outcompeting others, neither with advertisements nor with guns and poison gas. With this the sharpest form of the capitalist competitive struggle is eradicated, i.e. ***war among human beings*** for markets,

sources of raw materials, means of production and labour power, with all its colossal destruction and damage.

4. A capitalist only resorts to ***more effective machines***, ***to more effective technical and other methods of production*** when, and only when, they can utilise them profitably. Communist society is not bound by these narrow limits. It applies every technical achievement, every invention, every improvement in the methods of production that actually increases the level of effectiveness of human labour, either to produce more goods or to shorten the labour time of human beings or, combined in a well–planned way, to implement both simultaneously. In Communism, ***science*** gains a scope that, in relation to capitalist conditions, is increased in every respect; it is a main lever that communist society organises and applies consciously, according to a plan and systematically on a world scale.

5. The mechanism of the capitalist economy hinders the development of ***agriculture***, which lags pitifully behind the achievements of science, indeed even behind industry. Communist society knows no landlords, nor any ground rent that, in capitalism, shoots up higher and higher and disappears into the pockets of these very same landlord parasites; it knows no price of land nor, therefore, any rise in the price of land; it knows no bequeathing of property, nor any encumbrances on the land, no mortgage interest, no subdivision of the land; it knows no private property in land at all, this most important material condition of production. It knows no ruination of the peasant/farmer masses, neither through ruining them directly nor through increasing their dependency; it knows no financially weak, technically and agriculturally backward agricultural producers; it knows no peasant/farmer class at all, since all human beings take their turn to work in agriculture and industry. Communist society undertakes agriculture, well-organised on a world scale, at the highest level of science and linked very closely everywhere with industry.

6. In communist society there are ***no antiquated workplaces*** – neither in agriculture, nor in manufacture nor in industry – all workplaces are in every respect at the highest level, in particular with respect to their technical design.

But there are also ***no antiquated producers any more*** – not in agriculture either – instead all producers without exception are at the prevailing highest possible level of skill.

In communist society there are ***no antiquated modes of production*** any more, no remnants of capitalist production, but also no remnants of pre-capitalist forms of production. All remnants of handicraft and small-peasant/small-farmer commodity production, all remnants of the feudal, slave-based and also primitive communist modes of production have disappeared. The descendants of those who were formerly engaged in them have been raised to the high level of skill possessed by all the other producers.

7. In communist society there are ***no parasitic classes or strata*** for which things would have to be produced: no exploiters on top with their luxury and their waste, and no lumpenproletarians below. ***All human beings work and all are active in production***.

8. Whereas capital exploits ***human labour power*** with the utmost ruthlessness, communist society regards the human being as the most important means of production altogether, and consciously places them at the centre of its production plan, its production endeavours, indeed all its economic and social endeavours. It therefore, in a well-planned way, increases the ***skills level*** of every single person without exception to the highest possible level and ever higher; it

therefore gives every single person an all-round education to an as high a multi-facetted skills level as possible; for this reason, it harnesses all the forces of human society as a whole, in a never-ending 'war' for the ***health*** of every single person and against disease, against everything that impairs the health and shortens the life of human beings; an unceasing 'war' for prolonging their lives, for increasing their vitality and zest for life and for increasing their creative energy and creative power; for this reason it works systematically, never resting, at the task of raising ever higher the ***knowledge*** of every single person without exception, more and more to the highest levels of science. It is not the machine that dominates human beings, as in capitalism, but rather it is the communist human being who, in the true sense of the word, dominates the machine, as its master, not only technically, but also economically and socially.

It is ***not*** '***sharing out'*** ('***Teilerei***') that constitutes the essence of the communist economic order. Quite the opposite: it does not share out; it ***brings together*** all the productive powers of humanity in its entirety, in order to systematically boost them and boost them more and more, in order to let all the sources of life flow more and more richly till they ultimately provide in abundance, so that the needs of all human beings, the needs of every single person without exception are always amply satisfied – this, precisely, is the main aim, the main purpose of communist production. In any case, it is not distribution but production that constitutes the decisive main question of Socialism, of Communism.

> Any distribution whatever of the means of consumption is only a consequence of the distribution of the conditions of production themselves. The latter distribution, however, is a feature of the mode of production itself. The capitalist mode of production, for example, rests on the fact that the material conditions of production are – in the hands of non-workers in the form of property in capital and land, while the masses are only owners of the personal condition of production, of labour power. If the elements of production are so distributed, then the present-day distribution of the means of consumption results automatically. […] Vulgar Socialism (and from it in turn a section of the democrats) has taken over from the bourgeois economists the consideration and treatment of distribution as independent of the mode of production, and hence the presentation of Socialism as turning principally on distribution (Marx, [1875] 1934b, pp.11-12).
>
> The ***structure of distribution is entirely determined by the structure of production***. Distribution itself is a product of production (Marx, [1859] 1903, p.741).

Capitalist society imposes ***working conditions*** in accordance with the profit requirements of the exploiters – in communist society these conditions are in every respect adapted to the needs of human beings. All advances in science and technology serve the purpose of amply providing every single person without exception with everything that they need and, ***on this basis,*** reducing their ***labour time*** as much as possible. It is precisely the ***conscious, systematic shortening of labour time*** that creates the basic prerequisite of the communist system of education that has as its main aim the well-rounded development of every single person.

> But if, on the one hand, variation of work at present imposes itself after the manner of an overpowering natural law and with the blindly destructive effect of a natural law that meets resistance at all points, modern industry […] imposes the necessity of recognising, as a fundamental social law of production, variation of work, consequently fitness of the worker for varied work, consequently the greatest possible development of his varied aptitudes. It becomes a question of life and death for society to replace the monstrousness of an impoverished worker-population – which is kept in reserve, usable for the changing exploitation needs of capital – with the absolute usability of the human being for the changing requirements of work; [the replacement of] the detail-worker, the mere bearer of a social detail-function by the fully-developed individual, for whom different social functions are modes of activity which alternate with each other (Marx, [1867] 1914b, p.429).

In communist society, every male worker, every female worker expertly masters a whole range of productive activities, manual and mental, agricultural and industrial, and in public administration, like housekeeping, which itself has become a branch of public industry. This enables a systematically organised, regular, all-round, invigorating ***alternation of work*** for every single person; being harnessed to one and the same dreary torment of labour, year in, year out, the monotony of employment, 'the enslaving subordination of the individual to the ***division of labour***, and therewith also the ***antithesis between mental and physical labour***, has vanished' (Marx, [1875] 1934b, p.11). There is no need for the obligation to work, there is no need to compel someone to work, there is no need for labour-discipline, since in communist society '***labour*** has become not only a means of life, but ***life's primary requirement***' (ibid., p.11). As in every decent family, every member of the communist world-family performs their portion of the family work willingly, happily and carefully. The systematic shortening of labour time, the well-planned distribution of the labour powers prevents the emergence of any interruption in production; the communist economy knows no ***unemployment***. The communist economic order, which treats human beings as the most valuable part of production in its entirety, pays attention – with continuous and continuously increasing care – to organising all working conditions in such a way that the ***security and health***, that the ***development of every single person is protected to the maximum***. It does not subordinate the life and limb of human beings to the profit needs of some exploiter; on the contrary, it subordinates all conditions of production, indeed of all social life, to the maintaining and unfolding of a healthy, invigorated, contented humanity and all its individuals without distinction.

'***From each according to ability, to each according to need***': communist society fulfils planned ***distribution*** in accordance with this principle.

> In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labour, and therewith also the antithesis between mental and physical labour, has vanished; after labour has become not only a means of life, but life's primary requirement; after the productive forces have also increased with the all-round development of the individual and all the springs of cooperative wealth flow more abundantly – only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be crossed in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: From each according to ability, to each according to need! (ibid., p.11).

Communist society ***can*** act in this way because it produces in abundance; it is ***able*** to act in this way because careful education and the traditions of many generations have nurtured and embedded the spirit of decency in every single person without exception, so that everyone only takes what they really need and does not waste things, a spirit that we already find today in every decent family, of course only within the bounds of its limited budget.

> The material prerequisite of Communism must be so high a development of the economic powers of man that productive labour, having ceased to be a burden and hardship, will no longer require any slave-driving (*Antreiberei*), and the distribution of life's goods, existing in continual abundance will not demand – as it does not now in any well-off family or 'decent' boarding-house – any control except that of education, habit and public opinion (Trotzki, 1936a, p.48).

Every single person is allocated everything that they need but in ***no way*** receives '***the full proceeds of their labour***'. The communist mode of production is a ***plan-based process of reproduction on the basis of a systematically expanding scale*** that also always includes the process of distribution. Communist society again and again calculates the social need for each period of production and accordingly allots the labour powers and the material conditions of production (land, means of labour, raw and auxiliary materials) according to plan to the various branches of production. It again and again distributes the total yield of social labour, the ***budget of human society***, in a well-planned way to the following ***funds***:

1. the fund for the reproduction of human labour power (for the means of consumption);

2. the fund for the reproduction of the material conditions of production (for the means of production);

3. the fund for the material costs of the public administration of the economy, health, education and culture (every kind of public function is performed without remuneration; the costs of public administration are covered directly out of the proceeds of production; there are no taxes, no administration of taxes);

4. the fund for those incapable of work: for those not yet able to work (children); for those not quite able to work (those who are becoming full workers and during this time are only partially productively active, even if this increases by stages); for those temporarily incapable of work (for those who are pregnant, those who are ill or need to recover, etc.); for those less capable of work (for example, as a result of personal injury); for those permanently incapable of work (as a result of advanced age or infirmity);

5. the fund for exceptional damage like bad harvests, fire, hail, floods, epidemics, earthquakes, natural catastrophes, indeed all unforeseen events;

6. the personnel accumulation fund, i.e. the fund for increasing the number of social labour powers (population increase) and for increasing their productivity through raising their vitality and skills;

7. the material accumulation fund, i.e. the fund for expanding, improving, increasing and strengthening the material conditions of production.

Part of the yield of each individual unit of labour is therefore systematically again and again allotted to funds 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7; individual labour powers only receive allocations from fund 1 and from fund 6, which is intended for new, additional working individuals. The ‘right to the full proceeds of one’s labour’, a thoroughly vague expression, therefore only exists at the ***level of society as a whole***.

> It (the phrase, the 'full proceeds of his labour’; auth.) has a meaning only if it is extended to mean not that each individual worker becomes the possessor of the 'full proceeds of his labour’, but that the whole of society, consisting entirely of workers, becomes the possessor of the total proceeds of its labour, which it partly distributes among its members for consumption, partly uses for replacing and increasing the means of production, and partly stores up as a reserve fund for production and consumption (Engels, [1872] 1887, p.18).

Money has become completely superfluous. Communist society measures, calculates ***directly*** in terms of socially necessary labour, in short social labour, social labour time. It is actually able to do this. Firstly, because it systematically, continuously and, in actual fact, keeps the socially necessary labour, labour time for the production of each article in harmony with the social need being met by this article.

> It is only where production is under the actual, pre-determining control of society that the latter establishes a relation between the volume of social labour time applied in producing definite articles, and the volume of the social need to be satisfied by these articles (Marx, [1894] 1919a, pp.166-167).

Secondly, because by means of the careful education of every single person, of everyone without exception to an approximately equal, very high level of skills, the expenditure of human labour power per se, of muscle and nerve energy, within the same time period, is, admittedly, not identical in the case of all individuals, but is to a large extent equalised between them; all human beings work with the best means of production available at any given time (i.e. with means of production of approximately the same effectiveness), rotating between the various branches of production with uniform regulation of labour time and intensity of labour; thirdly, because it has worked out scientific methods, has refined and perfected them to the highest level, in order to be able in a direct way to convert all labour, of whatever quality or level of skill, every specific labour time quickly and accurately into socially average, socially necessary, in short, social labour, social labour time (something that in turn is made appreciably easier by the fact that in the communist economic order conscious harmony exists between value – between the social labour, social labour time expended on each article – and the social use-value, i.e. ‘the volume of social need to be satisfied by these articles) (ibid., p.167).

> The deathblow to money fetishism will be struck only upon that stage when the steady growth of social wealth has made us bipeds forget our miserly attitude toward every excess minute of labour, and our humiliating fear about the size of our ration. Having lost its ability to bring happiness or trample men in the dust, money will turn into mere bookkeeping receipts for the convenience of statisticians and for planning purposes. In the still more distant future, probably these receipts will not be needed (Trotzki, 1936a, p.68).

In the commodity economy, even in its developed, capitalist form, the commodity producers can ***only indirectly*** express and measure the socially necessary labour time expended on the production of each commodity by expressing and measuring this through a third commodity, money-commodity; they can only indirectly express the fact that in reality they work for each other by making reference – as commodity producers and commodity owners – to a third commodity, to money-commodity, to money. The development of production to the full heights of the developed communist mode of production is required in order to make the reference by the producers to money-commodity superfluous, and make it possible for them to both directly express and measure in terms of social labour their reciprocal relationships in the process of social reproduction and their actual working for each other in the social life-process.

Likewise in society. As long as social relationships are not transparent, as is particularly the case in capitalist commodity production, human beings express the fact that they are all without exception human beings and are in human relationships to each other, essentially ***only indirectly***, by making reference to a third being, created, glorified and idealised by means of their own fantasy, to a ***god***, whereby the acting out of their fantasy is in most cases unconscious and not transparent to them. Only the communist economic and social order creates simple economic and social relationships between every single person that are clear and simple from all angles and are completely transparent, completely understandable to every single person without exception, as well as the very same development patterns in these relationships so that everyone without exception can and does relate to each other ***directly*** in the process of living in human society. Like the 'money-function', the 'god-function' will also become superfluous; like the 'money-idea', the 'god-idea' will also gradually die out, after they have both long since completely exhausted the historically conditioned progressive sides of their role in the history of humanity. Taking the place of fantasy-religion will be a ***social mores*** with its simple, clear tenets that are transparent and understandable to everyone, a social mores that no longer requires any fantasy-aids or any, however sublimated, idea of god, or any deified human beings or saints.

In the higher stage of Communism, allotment no longer takes place according to work performed but according to need. But social labour, social labour time, the ***determination of value*** all remain of the greatest significance in the communist system of production too. The whole communist ***distribution process,*** together with the ***book-keeping*** for it, moves on the basis of social labour, social labour time, i.e. on the basis of the determination of value as its ***measure***.

> After the abolition of the capitalist mode of production, but still retaining social production, the determination of value continues to prevail in the sense that the regulation of labour time and the distribution of social labour among the various production groups, ultimately the book-keeping encompassing all this, become more essential than ever' (Marx, [1894] 1919b, p.388).

Education plays a crucial role in communist society. Every single person without exception is educated systematically from earliest childhood in such a way that they completely master a whole range of productive activities, manual and mental, agricultural and industrial, in household management and in public administration, which includes the administration of the economy. From early on, lessons throughout are linked with productive activity, which is systematically increased step by step. If communist production creates the material prerequisites, then

communist education creates the mental, qualitative prerequisites that make it possible for communist society to organise the comprehensive alternation of labour, to overcome the antithesis between mental labour and manual labour, between agriculture and industry, between town and country and between household labour and public labour.

Everyone without exception enjoys a compulsory education – this may well last till the age of 21, perhaps beyond this – which gives them a very thorough general education and multi-facetted technical education, hand in hand with a comprehensive physical education. The basis for this is formed by lessons in ***social theory***, which gives every single person full insight into the structure of human society, into its economy, its culture, into the interrelationships of human beings between each other and the resulting duties and rights of every single person with regard to human society as a whole and with regard to every other person. In this way the conscious education in ***social ethics*** emerges from education about society. Everyone is educated in a ***truly fraternal spirit***, in such a way that it becomes second nature to them to never seek their own advantage at the expense of other human beings, but always only in harmony with the interests of all other human beings.

Every single person is developed – on the basis of this fraternal spirit – into a personality, into an ***individuality***, to have the strongest ***self-confidence***, ***self-reliance***, not in contradiction to, but in harmony with human solidarity – always starting out from it and always ending in it. Every single person enjoys primary, secondary and university/college education. All kinds of subjects, which today are part of the curriculum and which only serve to train and cloud the hearts and minds of human beings in accordance with the interests of the exploiting parasites, including religious instruction too, have become superfluous. On the other hand, ***technology***, indeed all science ***lessons***, are given all the more carefully, particularly in those subjects that capitalist society deliberately keeps from everyone, namely in those sciences that provide everyone with a clear insight into the relationships of human beings to nature and in particular into the relationships of human beings to each other. Thus, ***history lessons*** too – till now a system of barefaced lies, falsification, distortion and concealment, concocted by the exploiters and their henchmen in order to mislead the exploited about the meaning and lessons of their own struggles – are most thoroughly transformed. They show the driving forces, the laws of motion of human society, including too the epochs of its class struggles, in a truthful form. History written by the exploiters and their helpers has buried the memory of all those who have fallen in the struggle for the liberation of humanity from oppression and exploitation, under an enormous stratum of lies and dirt. Communist history lessons regard it as a duty of honour for human society to remove this rubbish that the tormentors of human beings, their clerics (*Pfaffen*) and other such servants and lackeys have piled up over the millennia, and to restore the memory of these fighters in full measure, to engrave the names and deeds of the men and women who have fallen in the interests of humanity deep into the hearts of all human beings for ever more. The great achievements in the course of the struggles for the liberation of human beings from exploitation and oppression, indeed all great achievements of whatever kind for humanity will be recognised, the memory of all these great human beings will be honoured, they are models setting an example to youth, indeed to everyone. But not one of them, however great their achievement, will be deified or even surrounded with a halo. However great they may be, they remain human beings among human beings.

Everyone without exception will be taught to fully utilise the ***language*** that has prevailed as the world language, so that everyone can understand one another without further ado.

The tremendous shortening of labour time gives every single person abundant scope to develop themselves according to their inclinations. Thus, everyone without exception has the inner urge to participate in both ***scientific research*** and the ***arts***. Communist society places the necessary resources of all kinds at their disposal in a most generous way in order to support this: it organises the scientific and arts-related work on a world scale, permitting ***complete freedom of criticism.*** It is of the greatest interest to communist society to develop science and art to the very highest degree. For not only do they continually fertilise production in countless forms, but over and above this they bestow a feeling of vitality, zest for life and vigour to everyone without exception, and increasing these in every respect as much as possible; this, precisely, is the main task into which in the last analysis all other communist tasks flow, including the task of communist production.

Democracy only gives ***formal equality***. Only communist society achieves actual equality, namely ***social equality*** between human beings. It creates an equal relationship for everyone without exception to the sources of life for humans, to the social means of production. In communist society, because it has completely overcome the classes, all the social and political differences that had arisen from the cleavage of society into classes, have disappeared.

By acting in accordance with the principle: 'From each according to their ability, to each according to their needs', communist society amply safeguards everyone without exception from hunger, cold, illness, etc.; it gives everyone without exception in full measure material, intellectual and cultural opportunities to develop and thus creates ***equal conditions of existence for everyone***, and indeed at the objectively highest possible level of human society at any given time. ***Within this framework***, there can and will be certain ***differences in living conditions***:

> between one country, one province and even one place and another, living conditions will always evince a ***certain*** inequality, which may be reduced to a minimum, but never wholly eliminated. The living conditions of Alpine dwellers will always be different from those living on the plains (Engels, [1875] 1928a, pp.48-49).

Such 'inequalities' in the conditions of life are, to a certain degree, inevitable, but they play out on the basis of and within the framework of ***communist equality***, i.e. the equal relationship of all human beings to the means of production; the same freedom for everyone from all oppression and exploitation, and equal opportunities for existence and development secured for everyone. That is what matters and not ***absolute*** equality, which Communism neither wants to achieve, nor can.

Communist society achieves ***social*** equality, but not ***individual*** equality – anything but. Rather it consciously educates every individual to achieve individuality, to become a ***personality***; it thus consciously deepens the individual differences – ***but always on the basis of communist equality***! It enriches human society through the diversity and the particularity of countless individualities, not on the basis of divergence, of competition for profit, of working against each other, of class struggle or of waging war against each other, but on the basis of the

conscious solidarity of all human beings without exception in their strivings, in their actions and in their work. Capitalist individualisation weakens human society, because it sets human beings against each other, incites them against each other – communist individualisation strengthens, stimulates, enriches human society and makes it attractive for every single person and everyone together, because it is individualisation in the ever deepening root bed of a consciously fraternal community (*Lebensgemeinschaft*), of working for each other, striving for each other, living for each other – for everyone without exception in all the vital questions, in equality in terms of living conditions, in freedom from all oppression. Only Communism unfolds the individuality of all human beings without difference, only communist society shapes every human being into an individuality, only it truly achieves individualism. On the basis of oppression and exploitation only very few are able to achieve it. On the other hand, individuality blossoms in all human beings, growing in the topsoil of communist equality, with its roots in the fraternal communal life that has been raised to the maximum; ***every human being*** without exception in actual fact develops to become a ***personality***!

Communist society achieves ***social freedom***. In it all human beings without exception are free from every kind of oppression and exploitation. It gives everyone the greatest possible freedom that human society can create through its solidarity-based strivings at any given time within the framework of nature as a whole in the face of hunger, cold, disease, etc. Communist society gives every single person without exception the freedom to develop their body, intellect and their personality to the highest level, within the framework of the opportunities that human society is able to secure in solidarity, through maximum collective effort at any given time with regard to the forces of nature. Communist society thus always gives what, under the prevailing objective conditions, is the greatest possible ***individual freedom*** and it increasingly extends the scope of these objective conditions consciously and systematically, but it neither wants nor can achieve ***absolute*** freedom. On the contrary, it is precisely communist society that imparts to every single person the self-conscious insight into the current existence and future development of human beings, into the objective fundamental condition of human existence and development, into the dependence – not only of every single person, but indeed of the whole of human society – on the infinite universe, of which it is only a tiny part.

But at the same time it embeds in every person the knowledge that human beings, precisely by ending the struggle between themselves, by creating the indispensably necessary economic and social preconditions for this, precisely by combining all their powers, all their strivings, creations and works fraternally, in solidarity, consciously and according to a plan, in a word, precisely as a ***communist society***, gives human existence the very form that secures and systematically creates to an ever greater extent for human society and, within its framework, for every single person, the greatest freedom that is at all possible at any given time, within the framework of the infinite universe.

The struggle for existence by human beings does not cease in communist society in any way. On the contrary, communist society intensifies this struggle, its successes and victories too, to unforeseen heights. It gains the titanic strength necessary for this because – unweakened by any class struggles or wars between human beings – it, for the first time in the history of humanity, combines and binds together the forces of all human beings without exception on the entire globe into a truly ***fraternal unit***, which wages the struggle of human beings for their existence and ascent within the framework of the infinite universe in the face of

all other ways of life in solidarity and ***in actual fact*** according to the principle: ***one for all and all for one***!

> In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all (*Das Kommunistische Manifest*, [1848] 1891, p.24).
>
> The full and free development of ***every*** individual' is the fundamental principle of communist society (Marx, [1867] 1914b, p.527).
>
> In fact, the ***realm of freedom*** actually begins only where labour which is determined by necessity and mundane considerations ceases; thus in the very nature of things it lies beyond the sphere of actual material production. [...] Freedom in this field (namely in the field of the economy; auth.) can only consist in socialised man, the associated producers, rationally regulating their interchange with Nature, bringing it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by the blind forces of Nature; and achieving this with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most favourable to, and worthy of, their human nature. But it nonetheless still remains a ***realm of necessity***. Beyond it begins that development of human energy which is an end in itself, the ***true realm of freedom, which, however, can blossom forth only with this realm of necessity as its basis. The shortening of the working-day is its basic prerequisite*** (Marx, [1894] 1919b, p.355).

Not only every man, but also every ***woman*** will be educated to become a personality. She fulfils the same role economically, culturally, indeed in all public life and in society, like every man. She is fully secure in material terms, just like he is. She needs no dowry and no man needs to pursue a dowry. As in the case of every man, every woman too is, without exception, conscious of her personality, from the full heights of insight into nature and society. Thus, every marriage is only made on the basis of real, genuine affection. No woman is forced anymore to sacrifice herself due to poverty. The sources of prostitution have petered out, and with this prostitution itself will also have completely disappeared. For the first time in the history of its development, humanity makes pure ***individual marriage*** based on ***individual love*** a reality, and what is more not as a rare exception of particularly fortunate individuals, but throughout ***as the rule***.

Household chores, indeed all domestic labour, which in class society completely burdens, overburdens the shoulders of women and, in consequence of its fragmentation, places excessive demands on the time and strength of human society, is transformed into a public service, which is undertaken and administered in systematic rotation by everyone without exception as regards gender.

> The place of the family as a closed petty enterprise [was to be occupied] [...] by a finished system of social care and services: maternity units, crèches, kindergartens, schools, public dining rooms, public laundries, clinics, hospitals, sanatoria, sports clubs, cinemas, theatres, etc. The complete absorption of the housekeeping functions of the family by the institutions of socialist society, uniting all generations in solidarity and mutual aid, was to bring to the woman,

> and thereby to married couples, a real liberation from their thousand-year-old fetters (Trotzki, 1936a, pp.141-142).

Like all selfishness, ***family egotism*** has also disappeared. The very close relationship between parents and children, between close relatives remains, but on the basis of the fraternal community of all human beings – the enduring focal point around which the whole life of every individual and all family life revolves.

The ***antithesis between town and country*** has been completely removed. There are no peasants/farmers, no villagers, nor any urban dwellers or urban proletarians. Everyone works in systematic rotation, both in agriculture and in industry, in the very closely linked agrarian and industrial production carried on by society. The unhealthy conglomeration of human beings in cities has been overcome; dwellings and workplaces are distributed in a well-planned way over the entire surface of the earth and connected with each other by a dense communications network.

> Capitalist production, by collecting the population in great centres, and causing an ever-increasing preponderance of urban population, on the one hand concentrates the historical motive power of society; on the other hand, it disturbs the circulation of matter between man and the soil, i.e., prevents the return to the soil of its elements consumed by man in the form of food and clothing; it therefore violates the conditions necessary to lasting fertility of the soil. By this action it destroys at the same time the physical health of the urban worker and the intellectual life of the rural worker. But while destroying the naturally grown conditions for the maintenance of that circulation of matter, it imperiously calls for its restoration as a system, as a regulating law of social production, and in a form appropriate to the full development of humanity. [...] All progress in capitalist agriculture is progress in the art, not only of robbing the worker, but at the same time of robbing the soil; all progress in increasing the fertility of the soil for a given time, is progress towards ruining the enduring sources of that fertility. [...] Capitalist production, therefore, develops the technology, and the combining together of various processes into a whole social production process, only by undermining the original sources of all wealth – the soil and the labourer (Marx, [1867] 1914b, pp.445-446).

> Only as uniform a distribution as possible of the population over the whole country, only a close connection between industrial and agricultural production, together with the thereby necessary extension of the means of communication – presupposing the abolition of the capitalist mode of production – would be able to wrench the rural population from the isolation and stupor in which it has vegetated almost unchanged for thousands of years (Engels, [1872] 1887, p.67).

> The ***housing question*** can only be solved when society has been sufficiently transformed for a start to be made towards abolishing the antithesis between town and country, which has been brought to an extreme point by present-day capitalist society. Far from being able to abolish this antithesis, capitalist society is compelled on the contrary to intensify it day by day. […] To want to solve the housing question while at the same time desiring to maintain the modern big

> cities is an absurdity. The big modern cities will, however, be abolished only by the abolition of the capitalist mode of production (ibid., p.36).

In communist society, the ***arts***, in all its forms, no longer chases money. It no longer serves an exploiting, parasitic upper stratum, but, on the contrary, serves – in the true sense of the word – each of us and everyone together.

Everyone participates in the arts. They have the full opportunity to do this: they have the necessary time; communist society puts all the requisite means and aids at their disposal; they have the necessary thorough general education; society maintains institutions which offer everyone without exception the opportunity of educating themselves in the arts too, according to their inclinations; and everyone has the character, personality and the inner drive not only to maintain and to further develop the fraternal community of human beings through their work, but also, at the same time, through their artistic creation and enjoyment, to shape it in a more beautiful way, to refresh it, to enliven and strengthen it again and again.

'The aim of Socialism is not only to abolish the present division of humanity into small states and all national isolation; not only to bring the nations closer to each other, but also to merge them' (Lenin, [1916] 1931a, p.8). In communist society ***nations merge*** into a single ***nation of human beings***, with a ***single*** language. Everyone can make themselves understood to everyone else without further ado. The entire education process is thereby enormously simplified. People's lives do not in any way become boring through this; on the contrary, freed from the gigantic hindrance of having many languages and from the so great expenditure of time and effort it places on humanity, social intercourse among human beings becomes much more intensive, much closer and only then, in this way, does everyone without exception really become very close to each other. Because everyone develops as a personality, the fraternal-companionable intercourse between human beings flows in a powerful stream that sparkles in a more and more varied, diverse and colourful way.

In communist society there are again and again ***differences of opinion*** of all kinds among human beings: it is not possible any other way. Everyone has the right to criticise; everyone can make suggestions and proposals. In as far as it is a matter of public issues, whether economic or cultural ones, the appropriate community decides again and again by means of a free vote. Other differences are settled by arbitration courts. The office of arbitration is not exercised by bureaucrats in judges' robes, but like every public function by everyone in organised rotation. There are no prisons, no sentences, no police truncheons and no enforcement officials. Public opinion is not made by a ruling stratum, but is a confident expression of fraternal human beings working and living together; the traditions and the social morality that has been passed to every single person by means of education, are so strong that all those means are not required. It was thus in the case of all primitive communist tribes and kinships. What they created within their narrow framework, modern communist society will re-create – this time on the scale of humanity as a whole: the fraternal moral law, which every human being always follows without compulsion – consciously and willingly.

In communist society the noblest and strongest ***impetuses for progress*** are at work. Its members are filled with the highest competitive spirit, but it is not competitive spirit against one another, but for one another. Thus, in every sphere every step forward is not a step against one another but for one another. Communist society knows no competition for profit, ***no struggle or***

war between human beings for markets, investment markets, sources of raw materials, means of production and labour power. But it wages a systematic, unceasing 'war' against everything that in any way threatens, endangers, damages human society – both every single person and humanity as a whole – and against everything that impedes, restricts, hinders its development. It wages an unceasing 'war' on the greatest scale and on an ever greater scale against hunger and cold, in order to create and secure for every single person without exception food, clothing, accommodation, etc. that is truly worthy of human beings and in abundance.

It wages an unremitting 'war' on an ever greater scale against germs, against everything that means danger or damage to the health and life of human beings. It wages a never-pausing, ever broader, an ever deeper and more wide-ranging 'war', in order to truly conquer the entire earth with its riches for humanity and make them serve all human beings without exception. It wages a systematically organised 'war' in ever greater dimensions, in order to advance further and further into the universe, in order to subject more and more forces of nature, new ones too, to humanity, in order to increase the scope for the actions, and for the life and development of human beings more and more. As immense as the historical tasks and achievements of capitalist society are, they are child's play compared to the titanic tasks of communist society. Communist society will accomplish them. It will work to gain all the very powerful levers which are necessary for this. Above all the most decisive lever of all, the ***communist human being***: the ***self-confident*** human being, who is unconditionally loyal to the fraternal community of human beings, who is ***self-sacrificing*** and precisely therefore whose ***boldness knows no bounds*** – not this or that exceptional elite human being, but this communist human being as ***the rule without exceptions***.

In communist society there will be ***no economic crises***: their sources have been completely eliminated. In the beginning frictions may still occur by way of exception, now and then, here and there, but they will only offer as many opportunities to formulate in an even more well-planned way the estimates of social need and the distribution of labour power, means of labour, etc. After a certain period of time, however, production according to a plan has become so completely well-established that even such frictions no longer occur. Great ***natural catastrophes*** can and will of course from time to time bring about crises. Communist society will overcome them without unemployment. In an emergency – and only until the damage caused by the natural event has been remedied – it will, through harmonious resolution, temporarily increase the general labour time, the general output of labour and reduce the general standard of living equitably so that everyone without exception contributes according to their abilities.

Will communist society possess ***weapons***, will it maintain an ***army***? Explosives in themselves can serve very different purposes. As weapons ***against*** human beings, for homicide and fratricide, they do not on principle come into consideration for communist society. But as a weapon for the ***benefit*** of human beings and indeed of ***all*** human beings, against the forces of nature and natural catastrophes, they can perform very useful services. This applies to all weapons altogether. Communist society will possess weapons of all kinds, much more effective ones than even those of today: but never weapons against any human being; on the contrary always only for the protection, for the benefit of all human beings without difference. ***In this sense*** communist society will instruct human beings in the use of weapons too; ***in this sense*** communist society will have its own organised army: as a ***defence against every force of***

nature and natural catastrophe that is dangerous, damaging and hostile to human society and ***to the individual human being***. It will be equipped with all appropriate tools, machines and weapons, with fire hoses as well as with explosives. It goes without saying that this service too, and all functions in it, will be undertaken by everyone without exception in well-planned rotation. The costs are charged to the fund for natural catastrophes.

Can communist society founder, perhaps on the ***population question***? Not at all. Undoubtedly at the beginning of the communist era some difficulty may arise through a too rapid growth in population, there could now and then be a relative overpopulation; the population could grow more rapidly than the increase in the productive forces. But the interplay between population growth and labour time and the standard of living will progressively put human society in a position to keep the process of population growth, too, consciously in harmony with the growth of the productive forces.

The general, all-round development of the personality of every human being will act in the same direction. The qualitative enhancement of all human beings and on this basis, their numerical increase, a gradual increase consciously guided by society in harmony with consciously guided total production – this will be the line taken by communist society in the sphere of population increase.

II. Socialism

Creating the material, intellectual and cultural preconditions for the higher stage of communist society requires the gigantic struggles and exertions of the entire socialist era – that already began with the Russian October Revolution of 1917. The main characteristics of the era of Socialism are:

1. Economic and political power is fully in the hands of the toiling masses, under the leadership of the working class, in the form of the ***dictatorship of proletarian democracy***, ultimately extended across the entire globe as a ***world soviet state***. Socialism is by its very nature incompatible with any bureaucratic dictatorship: under the dictatorship of a bureaucracy there can be no Socialism. 'socialism in one country' is a shabby bureaucratic trick to conceal the anti-socialist tendencies of the politics of the degenerating, degenerated workers' bureaucracy from the masses.

2. The vital ***means of production*** are no longer the private property of individuals, but on the contrary belong to society as a whole and are ***communal property***, collective property ***administrated by proletarian democracy***, which organises ***production on the basis of a plan*** and organises it more and more systematically.

3. The ***exploitation*** of human beings by human beings has been ***eliminated***.

4. The ***productive forces*** have been raised ***above the highest level in capitalism*** and are increased systematically more and more over and above this level.

> The only reason why and the only way Socialism will ultimately vanquish capitalism, is because it will ensure a far greater volume of products per unit of human labour power (Trotzki, [1922] 1923, p.422).
>
> 'The first phase of Communism', to use Marx's expression, begins at the level that the most advanced capitalism has reached. The real programme for the coming five-year plans, however, is to '***catch up*** with Europe and America' (Trotzki, 1936a, p.59).

In ***backward*** Russia it was, and is still today too, essentially a matter of catching up with the most advanced capitalism in Europe and America, i.e. it is not yet a matter of Socialism, but only a matter of the ***transition to Socialism***. Stalinist politics, which again and again increasingly weakens the socialist tendencies and increasingly strengthens the capitalist tendencies and boastfully declares that a war against Russia would this time round not be fought on Russian soil but in the enemy's country, has in its effect led to the destruction of around one half of the Soviet Russian productive forces, the reconstruction of which will require many years; Stalinist politics has thrown back the process of catching up by years, at the same time as American capitalism has been able to greatly increase its lead.

5. ***Distribution*** takes place ***according to the amount of labour each person performs***. But the workers, indeed all non-exploiting working people have already been raised materially, intellectually and culturally ***above*** the ***highest standard of living that they had reached in capitalism*** and over and above this are being systematically raised higher and higher.

Trotsky is a hundred times correct, when – with regard to the Stalinist bureaucracy, which tries to pretend to the workers that the conditions in Russia amount to Socialism – he states:

> Collective ownership of the means of production is not yet Socialism, but merely its juridical prerequisite. The problem of socialist society is inseparable from the problem of the productive forces, which at the present stage of human development is in essence a world problem. An individual state, having become too narrow for capitalism, is even less capable of being the arena for a finished socialist society. The backwardness of a revolutionary country, moreover, increases the danger for it of being thrown back to capitalism. In rejecting the perspective of isolated socialist development, the Bolsheviks had in view, not a mechanically isolated problem of intervention, but the totality of the questions bound up with the ***international economic basis of Socialism*** (Trotzki, 1933a, p.690).
>
> Socialism could not be justified by the abolition of exploitation alone; it must guarantee to society a greater economy of time in comparison to capitalism. Without the realisation of this condition, even the abolition of exploitation would only be a dramatic episode without a future. […]
>
> Socialism, if it is at all worthy of the name means: human relations without seeking personal gain, friendship without envy and intrigue, love without base calculation. The official doctrine declares these ideal norms already realised – and with more insistence the louder reality protests against such declarations (Trotzki, 1936a, pp.80, 151).

COMMUNAL PROPERTY, COLLECTIVE PROPERTY IN THE MEANS OF PRODUCTION AS SUCH IS NOT YET SOCIALISM. IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT THIS QUESTION IS POSED IN THE CLOSEST CONNECTION WITH THE QUESTION OF STATE POWER AND WITH THE CLASS NATURE OF THE STATE! Marx speaks expressly (in the *Eighteenth Brumaire*) of the 'appropriation of the means of production, ***their subordination*** to the associated working class' (see Engels, 1895, p.5). Lenin speaks expressly about the basis [for Socialism] being '***state property***, i.e. the ***property of the working class*** in the land and in the means of production' (Lenin, [1923] 1925b, p.712).

The 'socialism' of degenerated Social Democracy perpetrates a swindle with the slogan 'common property in the means of production' by consciously skipping over the question of state power and its class nature. In truth, the SP and LP want to realise their supposedly 'socialist' slogan by means of and within the framework of the ***capitalist*** state. 'socialism' – with the consent, with the help and under the patronage of the capitalist exploiters! ... ***SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC*** '***SOCIALISM***' ***AND THE*** '***SOCIALISM***' ***OF LABOUR*** want to either entrust the means of production to the capitalist state and therefore simply fight for capitalist statification – or want to entrust them to public institutions that are (supposedly) 'independent of the state' or to cooperatives, municipalities or similar organisations. At best the capitalists (or bureaucrats of the capitalist state) and wage workers are equally represented on the managing body of the public institutions, where moreover a bureaucrat of the ***bourgeoisie*** legally, or at least in actual fact, occupies the chair or at least acts as arbitrator. Even if it is still a matter of an ever-so-democratic bourgeois democracy, the ***bourgeoisie*** has, in the last analysis, the deciding say

and this in essence is not changed by any ballot papers, by any Social Democratic or Labour ministers or by a Social Democratic or Labour government. However democratically the cooperatives, the municipalities or other similar organisations may be organised, as regards these too, the bourgeoisie – within the framework of the capitalist-democratic state – in actual fact retains the deciding say economically and politically. Furthermore, in any case, so-called '***economic democracy***' gives the workers only the appearance of a certain 'share in the economic power', whereby the real power remains now as before with the capitalist class.

With regard to Social Democratic and Labour ***sham-socialism***, the following needs to be stressed: the means of production must not become the property of 'the state', i.e. of the ***capitalist-democratic*** state; they must not become the property of municipalities, cooperatives and similar organisations within the capitalist state, organisations that are and remain in fact dependent on the capitalist state, but must become the property of the ***proletarian-democratic*** state, under its administration!

However, with regard to the Stalinist bureaucracy and with regard to the proletarian state that it has degenerated, it must be emphasised: the means of production must not be at the disposal of the bureaucracy or under its administration, but must be the property of, at the disposal of and under the administration of ***proletarian democracy*** – i.e. of the workers, small peasants/farmers and petty bourgeois! Indeed, today, this is the indispensably necessary and only correct concretisation of a general formula that has sufficed for many decades – the general formula of common property, collective property in the means of production.

The anarchist recipe of handing over workplaces to become the property of their respective ***workforces***, putting these workplaces at the workforce's disposal or under its administration, is ***not Socialism at all***, but, on the contrary, the exact opposite of it – it is ***capitalism***: the workforce becomes the owner of private property, the workforce collectively takes over the role of the capitalist employer and undertakes capitalist production for profit. If the ownership of the workplaces constituting an entire branch of production, if the disposal over and administration of the property that constitutes these workplaces is transferred to the relevant ***trade union***, then this is the same anarchist recipe at a higher level. ***REAL SOCIALISM ONLY BEGINS AT THE POINT WHERE THE WORKING CLASS AS A WHOLE IN ACTUAL FACT OWNS THE VITAL MEANS OF PRODUCTION, HAS THEM IN ACTUAL FACT AT ITS DISPOSAL AND IN ACTUAL FACT ADMINISTRATES THEM: THIS TAKES PLACE SINGLY AND SOLELY VIA THE PROLETARIAN-DEMOCRATIC STATE, VIA PROLETARIAN STATE DEMOCRACY***! Within this framework every workforce of course exercises a big influence on the administration of the means of production and on the administration of the economy, but it does not exercise it in a capitalist way, as the private owner of a workplace, but in actual fact collectively, namely via the indispensably necessary path of proletarian democracy, of which workplace democracy is an extremely important component. More importantly, every single trade union and more importantly still, the central trade union association – which encompasses all the trade unions – exercises a very considerable influence on the economic administration, but not as private owners of the workplaces, but collectively via proletarian democracy – of which trade union democracy is an especially important component – and whereby the weight of the trade unions is further increased by the significant role that they play within the framework of economic planning; but the supreme leadership and economic control of the administration, including

economic planning, remains now as before in the hands of the proletarian-democratic state, i.e. in the hands of all the poor working masses under the hegemony of the working class.

BRINGING TOGETHER SMALL AGRICULTURAL CONCERNS – WITH THE CONSENT OF THEIR SMALL-PEASANT/SMALL-FARMER OWNERS – INTO COOPERATIVES (AGRARIAN COLLECTIVES), IN ORDER TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR THEM TO PRODUCE AS A LARGE CONCERN, IS STILL NOT SOCIALISM, ALTHOUGH IT IS A SERIOUS TRANSITIONAL STEP TOWARDS IT. BUT THIS IS ALSO ONLY THE CASE IF IT IS CARRIED OUT IN AND BY THE PROLETARIAN-DEMOCRATIC STATE AND ON THE BASIS OF THE CONSISTENT PROLETARIAN CLASS LINE.

In any case, the entire economic policy of proletarian democracy aims to cover its territory with a network of producer communities and cooperatives and consumer communities and cooperatives and carry out the administration of the means of production through them.

> The ***socialist state*** can arise only as a network of producers' and consumers' communes, which conscientiously keep account of their production and consumption, economise on labour, and steadily raise the productivity of labour, thus making it possible to reduce the working day to seven, six and even fewer hours (Lenin, 1918b, p.29).

The supreme management and control of all these producers' and consumers' communes is of course in the hands of the proletarian, socialist state, in the hands of proletarian democracy and, in the course of time, of socialist democracy.

Without increasing the productive forces and indeed over and above the highest level reached in capitalism, and ever higher again, there can be no Socialism! ***Credit*** is an important instrument in the expansion of the productive forces. There is no doubt, writes Marx,

> that the credit system will serve as a powerful lever during the transition from the capitalist mode of production to the mode of production of associated labour; but only as one element in connection with other great organic revolutions of the mode of production itself (Marx, 1919b, pp.146-147).

In its revolutionary advance across the globe, victorious proletarian democracy will spare the backward ***colonial countries*** the transitional phase through capitalism; it will begin to lead them over directly into Socialism.

> Can we accept as correct the idea that the capitalist development of the economy is necessary for those backward peoples who are now liberating themselves [...]? We have come to the conclusion that we have to reject this. If the victorious revolutionary proletariat organises systematic propaganda and the Soviet governments come to its assistance with every means at their disposal, is it incorrect to assume that the capitalist stage of development is necessary for such peoples. […] Theoretically, the Communist International must declare and explain and that with the help of the proletariat of the advanced countries, backward countries can arrive at soviet organisation and, through a series of stages, and even avoiding the capitalist system, can arrive at Communism (Lenin, [1920] 1921b, p.142).

With the victory of its socialist revolution, the proletariat will embark on overcoming the class cleavage of human society by abolishing in a consistent manner the exploitation of human beings by human beings.

> The first phase of Communism therefore cannot yet provide justice and equality: differences, and unjust differences, in wealth will still persist, but the *exploitation* of one human being by another will have become impossible, because it will no longer be possible to seize the *means of production* – the factories, machines, the land, etc. – and make them private property (Lenin, [1918] 1933a, p.60).

The liquidation of the classes is a long, very long process; it takes up the entire era of Socialism and is in the last analysis only completed on a world scale. By completely eliminating and overcoming all classes, so that ultimately there are neither capitalists nor petty bourgeois, nor proletarians, by reshaping them into human beings, who, with regard to their relationship to the means of production – in the ownership of, disposal over and administration of the means of production – are in actual fact equal to each other, socialist society ultimately creates the basic condition that is the starting point for the higher level of Communism, i.e. the ***classless society***, and leads it over into the development, the unfolding of real Communism, into the formation, into the ascent of communist society.

Because there are classes in socialist society, there is also a class state, a state. But this is no longer a state in the old sense, but a ***transitional state***; it is no longer a machine of oppression in the hands of a minority, namely the capitalist exploiters, for the purpose of holding down the enormous majority who are exploited, but an apparatus of oppression in the hands of the overwhelming majority, namely the exploited, for holding down the exploiting minority, for liquidating exploitation and classes altogether.

By progressively shortening labour time, by systematically and comprehensively raising the material, intellectual and cultural level of, above all, the hitherto oppressed, exploited masses, through their increased participation in actual fact in the administration of economy and state, by them increasingly carrying out all functions in rotation – whereby the carrying out of these functions by persons in an official capacity is gradually overcome more and more – democracy, which in capitalism is limited in a narrow way, will become ***proletarian democracy***, which is in actual fact identical with ***democracy of the toiling people***, which also includes the poor peasants/farmers and petty bourgeois. The capitalist exploiters are excluded from proletarian democracy; but in the same measure that socialist society reshapes them and allows them to completely overcome their exploitative class character in all its manifestations, they will be included too with full rights in proletarian democracy, and in this way proletarian democracy will expand to become ***socialist democracy***. In this way democracy will ultimately in actual fact include everyone without distinction, and with this it too, and indeed every form of state altogether, will then begin to wither away. In this way socialist society too will also realise in the course of its epoch the second basic condition for communist development at the higher level: a ***stateless society***.

Socialist democracy, i.e. the socialist state, is fundamentally different from what the SP and LP and such like give it out to be. They fight against the proletarian revolution, they want socialist democracy without the proletarian revolution: that means they in actual fact seek to preserve the ***capitalist*** state apparatus, whereby, admittedly, a certain share of the prestigious,

well-paid posts in the capitalist state and state economy fall to the degenerated workers' bureaucracy. For them, the place of the individual capitalists and capitalist groups is taken by the ***capitalist class***, as the actual collective owner. This is the ***TRUE FACE OF THE 'SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY' OF THE LP and SP***, however nice the 'curtains' they hang up to conceal this reality from the masses. ***REAL SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY HAS AS ITS BASIC PREREQUISITE THE SMASHING OF THE CAPITALIST STATE MACHINE THROUGH REVOLUTION AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CLASS-BASED PROLETARIAN STATE APPARATUS THAT IS LED AND CONTROLLED BY THE PROLETARIAN DEMOCRACY OF THE WORKERS, POOR PEASANTS/FARMERS AND PETTY BOURGEOIS, I.E. THE DEMOCRACY OF THE TOILING PEOPLE***. After the capitalist elements have been reshaped and have really got rid of their exploitative class character, they will be drawn into proletarian democracy with full rights, which in this way is extended to become ***socialist democracy***. But the class-based ***proletarian*** state apparatus, still remains! However, the more the formerly non-proletarian elements shed their former class character and become workers, just like all other workers, the more they too will be drawn into the proletarian state apparatus, which in this way turns more and more into a ***socialist*** state apparatus. With the rapid increase both in the productive forces and the living standards and cultural level of the masses, with the progressive shortening of general labour time, with the ever more widespread, ever better organised thorough rotation of everyone carrying out public functions, including the economic ones, with the disappearance of the classes, which thus go hand in hand with this, the socialist ***state apparatus***, too, begins to become superfluous, it withers away. ***REAL COMMON PROPERTY CAN ONLY COME INTO BEING VIA THE PROLETARIAN-DEMOCRATIC STATE*** – where at first only the workers, poor peasants/farmers and petty bourgeois have its property at their disposal, to the exclusion of all exploiter elements. However, only this path leads in the course of time ultimately to the collective property of the developed socialist state: here in actual fact everyone without distinction already has the property in the decisive means of production at their disposal via socialist democracy. In the same measure that this order settles in and becomes a self-evident habit for all human beings and class antagonisms have finally disappeared across the entire globe, the socialist state apparatus too will disappear: the socialist economy and society passes over into the economic and social system of complete (classless, stateless, partyless) Communism.

> From the moment all members of society, or at least the vast majority, have learnt to administer the state *themselves*, have taken this work into their own hands, have 'set in motion' control over the tiny capitalist minority, over the gentry, who wish to preserve their capitalist airs and graces, and over the workers, who have been thoroughly corrupted by capitalism – from this moment the need for government of any kind begins to disappear altogether. The more complete the democracy, the nearer the moment when it becomes superfluous. The more democratic the 'state', which consists of the armed workers, and which is 'no longer a state in the proper sense of the word', the more rapidly *every* form of state begins to wither away. […]
>
> In capitalist society we have a democracy that is curtailed, wretched, false, a democracy only for the rich, for the minority. The dictatorship of the proletariat, the period of transition to Communism will for the first time create a democracy

for the people, for the majority, along with the necessary suppression of the exploiters, the minority. […]

During the *transition* from capitalism to Communism, suppression is *still* necessary, but it is now the suppression of the exploiting minority by the exploited majority. A special apparatus, a special machine for suppression, the 'state' is *still* necessary, but this is now a transitional state. It is no longer a state in the proper sense of the word, for the suppression of the exploiting minority, by the majority, the wage-slaves *of yesterday* is comparatively so easy, simple and natural a task that it will entail far less bloodshed than the suppression of the risings of slaves, serfs or wage-workers, and it will cost humanity far less. […]

We cannot do without officials *under capitalism*, under the *rule of the bourgeoisie*. The proletariat is oppressed, the toiling masses are enslaved by capitalism. Under capitalism, democracy is restricted, cramped, curtailed, mutilated by the whole milieu of wage slavery, and the poverty and misery of the masses. This and this alone is why the officials of our political organisations and trade unions are corrupted by the milieu of capitalism (or rather tend to be corrupted) and betray a tendency to become bureaucrats, i.e. privileged persons divorced from the masses and standing *above* the masses. […]

Under Socialism much of 'primitive' democracy will inevitably be revived, since, for the first time in the history of the civilised peoples the ***mass*** of the population will rise to taking an ***independent*** part, not only in voting and elections, but also in the ***everyday administration work***. Under Socialism ***everyone*** will govern on a rotating basis and will soon become accustomed to no one governing (Lenin, [1918] 1933a, pp.67, 58, 58-59, 77, 78).

'Equal rights', says Marx, in this case *still* certainly conforms to '***bourgeois law***', which, like all law, *implies inequality*. All law is an application of an *equal* measure to *different* people, who are in fact not equal, are not equal to one another; that is why 'equal rights' is a violation of equality and an injustice'. […]

Communist society [is] *compelled* [to abolish] at first *only* the 'injustice' that the means of production are appropriated by individuals, and *is unable* for the time being, to eliminate at one stroke the other injustice, which consists in the distribution of consumer goods 'according to the amount of labour performed' (and not according to need) […] (ibid., S.60).

And so, in the first phase of communist society (usually called Socialism) 'bourgeois law' is ***not*** abolished in its entirety, but only in part, only in proportion to the economic revolution so far attained i.e. only in respect of the means of production. 'Bourgeois law' recognises them as the private property of individuals. Socialism converts them into social property. ***To that extent*** – and to that extent alone – bourgeois law disappears.

However, it persists as far as its other part is concerned; it persists in its capacity as regulator (*Ordner*) in the distribution of products and the allocation of labour among the members of society. The socialist principle, 'they who do not

work, shall not eat', is ***already*** realised; the other socialist principle, 'An equal quantity of products for an equal quantity of labour', is also ***already*** realised. But this is not yet Communism, and it does not yet abolish 'bourgeois law', which gives unequal human beings, in return for an unequal (in actual fact unequal) quantity of labour, an equal quantity of products.

This is a 'defect' says Marx, but it is unavoidable in the first phase of Communism, because if we are not able to indulge in utopianism, we must not think that, having overthrown capitalism, people will at once learn to work for society ***without any rules of law***. Besides, the abolition of capitalism does ***not immediately*** create the economic prerequisites for ***such*** a change.

But there are no other norms than those of 'bourgeois law'. To this extent, therefore, there still remains the need for a state, which, while safeguarding the social ownership of the means of production, would safeguard equality with regard to both labour undertaken and the distribution of products [...] (ibid., S.61-62).

In its first phase, or first stage, Communism *cannot* as yet be fully mature economically and entirely free from the traditions or vestiges of capitalism. Hence the interesting phenomenon that Communism in its first phase retains 'the narrow horizon of *bourgeois* law'. Of course, ***bourgeois law*** with regard to the sphere of the distribution of *consumer* goods also pre-supposes the existence of the ***bourgeois state***, for law is nothing without an apparatus capable of *enforcing* observance of the rules of law.

It follows then that under Communism there remains for a time not only bourgeois law, but even ***the bourgeois state – without the bourgeoisie***! [...]

In fact, remnants of the old, surviving in the new, confront us in life at every step, both in nature and in society. And Marx did not arbitrarily insert a scrap of 'bourgeois' law into Communism, but indicated what is economically and politically inevitable in a society emerging *out of the womb* of capitalism' (ibid., pp. 64-65).

Internally, the proletarian-democratic state, the socialist-democratic state realises the greatest possible level of municipal and provincial ***self-government***. Proletarian democracy, socialist democracy gives every nation, every part of a nation without exception the full ***right of national self-determination,*** including the right to form an independent state; but at the same time it educates all the exploited masses of each nation to the effect that it is in their best economic and cultural interests to form, maintain and consolidate a ***proletarian-democratic state that is as big and all-embracing as possible***, because this is in every respect more efficient than several such small state structures, something that benefits every single worker, every non-exploiting toiler and every single participating nation.

In the proletarian revolution the insurgent masses are at first victorious in one place or in several places; they set up their power here, but these are only ***starting points*** for them to spread proletarian power from here across the entire area of the bourgeois state, for otherwise they could not prevail in the long term, never mind progress. This is exactly the same at the

world scale. ***ONCE A PROLETARIAN STATE HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED AT ONE POINT OR AT SEVERAL POINTS ON THE GLOBE, IT MUST BE THE STARTING POINT FOR SPREADING PROLETARIAN-DEMOCRATIC STATE POWER COMPLETELY OVER THE ENTIRE GLOBE***. Otherwise it could not prevail in the long term as a proletarian-democratic state, never mind progress: this line, the line of ***international proletarian revolution***, must be and remain the guiding line for every healthy proletarian state without exception, otherwise it must perish or – what is only another form of this – it must degenerate and inevitably act more and more against the world revolution, against the proletariat, against the proletarian-democratic state.

The line of the world revolution is an ***economic*** necessity: even the proletariat, even the socialist state cannot escape the context of the world economy or its dependence on it. The line of the world revolution is a ***power-political*** necessity: it is singly and solely through revolutionary collaboration with the world proletariat, with the workers of all countries, with the exploited toiling masses of all countries, with the oppressed, exploited colonial and semi-colonial peoples of the entire earth, that the proletarian state is able to prevail in the long term in the face of the unceasing economic, political and military attacks of the world bourgeoisie and ultimately able to defeat it, crush it and establish the ***proletarian-democratic state***, in which alone the prerequisites for the fully communist society can be brought to a close, can be finished completely.

> The socialist movement cannot triumph within the old framework of the fatherland. It creates new, superior forms of human community, in which the legitimate needs and progressive aspirations of the toiling masses of each nationality will, for the first time, be met through ***international unity*** provided the ***existing national barriers are removed*** (Lenin, [1914] 1925b, p.292).
>
> The proletarian revolution is directed both against private property in the means of production and against the national fragmentation of the world economy (Trotzki, 1933a, p.676).
>
> ***Federation*** is a transitional form on the way to the complete unification of the toiling masses of all nations… Recognising that federation is a transitional form to complete unification, we must strive for an ***ever closer federal link*** (Kommunistische Internationale, 1920, p.63).

The goal, therefore, must be: ***TO ATTAIN – VIA THE FEDERAL SOVIET-REPUBLICS OF EUROPE, NORTH AMERICA, SOUTH AMERICA, AUSTRALIA, ASIA AND AFRICA – A WORLD FEDERATION OF SOCIALIST STATES, ULTIMATELY A UNITARY PROLETARIAN-DEMOCRATIC STATE ON A WORLD SCALE, A WORLD SOVIET STATE***.

> The great centralised state is a tremendous historical step forward from medieval fragmentation to the future socialist unity of the whole world (Lenin, [1913] 1930b, p.48).
>
> America will enslave capitalist Europe unless the European working class seizes political power, sets about clearing the ruins of the world war and begins to build a ***federal soviet republic of Europe*** (Kommunistische Internationale, 1923, p.8).

How prophetic these words, spoken after the First World War, proved to be after 21 years, in the midst of the Second (imperialist) World War! A thousand times more urgent than then is the call they today direct at the working class. Today, however, not only is the world bourgeoisie, together with its Labour and Social Democratic lackeys fighting against the '***UNITED SOVIET STATES OF EUROPE***', but Stalin's 'communist' parties too are in actual fact fighting against it, and so too is the degenerated proletarian state, which has been violated by the Stalinist bureaucracy.

In 1902 a left-wing bourgeois liberal[46] wrote about a ***bourgeois*** 'United States of Europe' under imperialist conditions:

> We have foreshadowed the possibility of even a larger alliance of Western States, a European federation of great Powers which, so far from forwarding the cause of world-civilisation, might introduce the gigantic peril of a Western parasitism, a group of advanced industrial nations, whose upper classes drew vast tribute from Asia and Africa, with which they supported great tame masses of retainers, no longer engaged in the staple industries of agriculture and manufacture, but kept in the performance of personal or minor industrial services under the control of a new financial aristocracy (Lenin, 1926, pp. 92-93).

Lenin commented on this: 'Hobson is quite right. *If* the forces of imperialism were not to be counteracted, they would lead precisely to what he has described. The significance of a 'United States of Europe' in the present imperialist situation is correctly appraised' (ibid., p.93). One year earlier Lenin had written:

> From the standpoint of the economic conditions of imperialism, i.e. the export of capital and the division of the world among the 'advanced' and 'civilised' colonial states, a United States of Europe ***under capitalism*****, is *either impossible or reactionary***. [...]
>
> A United States of Europe under capitalism is tantamount to an agreement on the partition of the colonies. […]
>
> Of course, ***temporary agreements*** are entirely possible between capitalists and between states. In this sense a United States of Europe is also possible as an agreement between the *European* capitalists… but to what end? Only for the purpose of joining forces to suppress Socialism in Europe and to protect the colonies they have robbed *against* Japan and America, [...] Compared with the United States of America, Europe all in all denotes economic stagnation. On the present economic basis, i.e., under capitalism, a United States of Europe would signify an organisation of reaction to retard America's more rapid development (Lenin, [1915] 1921g, pp.124-126).

Fifteen years later Trotsky commented on this bourgeois slogan:

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[46] This refers to Hobson's, *Imperialism*, pp.385-386; trans.

> One of the basic reasons for the crisis in bourgeois society is the fact that the productive forces created by it can no longer be reconciled with the framework of the national state. From this follows on the one hand, imperialist wars, on the other, the utopia of a ***bourgeois*** United States of Europe (Trotzki, 1930b, p.161).

After the First World War the bourgeois slogan for a 'United States of Europe' in practice took the form of the '***League of Nations***', an organisation of the imperialists for ruling Europe through the Anglo-French bourgeoisie, designed above all to suppress the proletarian revolution and hold down the working class. The Second (imperialist) World War is, among other things, being waged in order to make this bourgeois slogan a reality in one of two forms: the German monopoly bourgeoisie wants to create a European '*Lebensraum*' (living space) as a slave state under its heel – the Anglo-American monopoly bourgeoisie wants to prevent European unity altogether; it wants a regionally fragmented Europe, united under the heel of one and the same '***world council***' that is dominated and led on an imperialist basis by the Anglo-American monopoly bourgeoisie and equipped with a sufficiently strong 'international' police force – a 'world council' that makes use of bourgeois-democratic phrases to disguise its policy of enslavement. The Stalinist bureaucracy, too, (because of its Russian chauvinism) is working (in actual fact in collaboration with the SP, LP, etc.) at thwarting European unity, at thwarting the unity of the proletarian-democratic states of Europe.

Because the world bourgeoisie, in the epoch of the socialist revolution, furiously steps up its efforts to maintain capitalist rule and exploitation, to crush and hold down the revolutionary proletariat, to smash any proletarian state, the socialist era, this epoch of international proletarian revolution, is full of the very greatest struggles, counter-revolutions, revolutions, counter-revolutionary wars and revolutionary wars. In the socialist era too, in order to steer, guide, lead and organise all the revolutionary struggles during this epoch, in order to ward off all kinds of counter-revolutionary attacks, which again and again escalate into revolutionary wars, the working class, indeed all the poor toiling masses, need a proletarian class party, need a ***Party***. Only once socialist society has completely liquidated the classes and along with this the class struggles, only once it has convinced and educated all human beings without exception across the whole world to become conscious communists, does the Party also begin to become superfluous and wither away.

The socialist revolution does not bring just victories, but sometimes setbacks too. The advance of Socialism, at all times on the proletarian class line, at all times on the line of the proletarian international revolution will go through victories, but in between these it will also go through some defeats. It is one thing to suffer defeats and setbacks that are more or less unavoidable here and there, now and then in the proletarian-revolutionary struggle, even when the proletarian-revolutionary line is consistently adhered to – but a ***defeatist line*** that is ***inevitably*** again and again bound to lead, and in actual fact does lead, to defeats and catastrophes for the world proletariat, the proletarian state, the world revolution, is a different matter, because the politics on which this line is based does not in any way start out from the proletarian interests, but from ***anti-proletarian*** interests, namely from the selfish interests of the degenerated, parasitic, treacherous, petty-bourgeoisified workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy, and because this politics in terms of its effect plays into the hands of the class interests of the bourgeoisie – in the way the politics of the Social Democratic and the Labour Judas parties, the Stalinist Judas-Cain-party, etc. does.

Distribution in socialist society takes place in accordance with the principle '***to each according to their contribution***'. In doing so it aims in a planned and consistent way to reduce the big differences in wages, with which the bourgeoisie – with the help of its fascist henchmen and torturers and its Social Democratic, Labour and Stalinist lackeys – divides the proletariat, and ***gradually align wages across the board***, above all by substantially raising the wage rates of the worst-paid male and female workers in capitalism. Hand in hand with this it more and more thoroughly extends a system of education, which raises the skills level of all workers without exception to an ever higher level and to such a degree that after a certain period of time there are no longer any unskilled workers at all, but only skilled workers and that the skills levels of male and female workers are also increasingly aligned with each other. In the first phase of Socialism, distribution will take place by means of ***money***. Only at a very advanced stage of socialist development will mere vouchers and payment slips take the place of money.

> Every member of society, performing a certain part of the socially necessary labour, receives a voucher from society to the effect that they have done a certain amount of work. And with this voucher they receive from the public store of consumer goods a corresponding quantity of products. After a deduction is made for the quantity of labour that goes to the communal fund, every worker, therefore, receives back from society as much as they have given to it (Lenin, [1918] 1933a, p.60).

Socialist society organises the ***general duty to work***. Everyone without exception must work, insofar as they are actually capable of working. It ensures that work is carried out in a well-ordered way in every respect, with all the conditions of production being treated carefully; in a word it ensures ***labour discipline***: through supervision, and at the same time through systematic education, which embeds in every single person the drive towards confident, voluntary labour discipline – the drive that exists in all human beings without exception – more and more deeply as their self-evident duty towards human society, towards all other human beings.

> But this 'factory' discipline, which the proletariat, after defeating the capitalists, after overthrowing the exploiters, will extend to the whole of society, is by no means our ideal, or our ultimate goal. It is only a necessary *step* for thoroughly cleansing society of all the infamies and abominations of capitalist exploitation, *and for further* progress (ibid., p.67).

> Socialism, or the lowest stage of Communism, demands, to be sure, a strict control of the amount of labour and the amount of consumption, but it assumes in any case more humane forms of control than those invented by the exploitive genius of capital (Trotzki, 1936a, p.83).

Real Socialism only begins when society has begun to surpass in every respect the ***working conditions*** in the ***most highly developed*** capitalist countries and surpasses and improves them more and more. An enormous, ever broader and more far-reaching ***expansion of social policy in all spheres*** characterises the development of socialist society. In a ***backward*** country the proletarian state is initially ***compelled*** to first catch up with, and ***overtake,*** the working conditions of the most advanced capitalist states: it must, in consequence of the backwardness of the country, first of all solve ***pre-socialist*** tasks; it must first of all, therefore, only implement

transitional measures leading in the direction of Socialism. This is precisely what the Soviet Union has had to do in Russia, which was backward in consequence of centuries of Tsarism, i.e. raise the backward Tsarist working conditions to the highest level being attained by the most advanced capitalist states. The Stalinist bureaucracy pretends that this enormous pre-socialist, not-yet socialist, but extremely important preparatory work is 'socialism', in order to conceal from the masses the predominantly ***anti-socialist***, capitalist tendencies that go with it, tendencies that the Stalinist bureaucracy in actual fact fosters more and more strongly through the effect of its entire politics.

Socialist education fulfils an extremely important role. In the same measure that socialist society achieves the necessary material prerequisites for this – above all the comprehensive, more and more substantial shortening of labour time – it begins to organise the theoretical and practical education of everyone without exception in a more and more wide-ranging and in-depth way. It spares no effort to give every single person without exception an ever more thorough general education, to raise their skills level, to educate them in an as multi-faceted way as possible, both in agriculture and industry, both manually and mentally, and to enable them to carry out all public functions, including economic ones, ever better. It works perseveringly at lifting the self-confidence, self-reliance of every single person and at the same time at freeing the spirit and the minds of human beings from all the poison with which 6000 years of class society has imbued them, and in particular increasingly supplanting the spirit of selfishness with the spirit of conscious fraternal solidarity of all human beings.

The victorious revolutionary proletariat begins to work out and create a new culture: ***proletarian culture***, from the positive things that previous epochs in the history of humanity, including the capitalist epoch, have achieved.

> We shall be unable to solve this problem unless we clearly realise that only a precise knowledge and transformation of the culture created by the entire development of humanity will enable us to create a proletarian culture. The latter is not clutched out of thin air; it is not an invention of those who call themselves experts in proletarian culture. That is all nonsense. Proletarian culture must be the logical development of the store of knowledge humanity has accumulated under the yoke of capitalist, feudal and bureaucratic society[47]. […]
>
> You can become a Communist only when you enrich your mind with a knowledge of all the treasures created by humanity (Lenin, [1920] 1925a, pp.42, 43).

[47] The original German text cited by Melt includes the passage '*der kapitalistischen, der feudalen und der Bürokratengesellschaft*'. Recognising that there may have been something illogical in the juxtaposition of these three forms of society, Melt changed the term '*Bürokratengesellschaft*' to '*antiken Gesellschaft*'. Other German translators of Lenin's works (e.g. Lenin: *Sämtliche Werke*, Bd.XXV, 1930, p.478) noticed the same discrepancy, and – with regard to society in pre-revolutionary Russia – translated the passage as: '*Gesellschaft der Kapitalisten, der Gutsbesitzer und Bureaukraten*'. This latter version was included in the second edition of Melt's work, and used as the basis for the first English edition; trans.

In the same measure that Socialism advances victoriously, and increasingly embraces and actually permeates more and more all human beings without difference, more and more of humanity in its entirety, the more proletarian culture becomes ***socialist culture***.

In its struggle for existence, in the struggle to extend Socialism victoriously over the entire globe, in all these gigantic class struggles, socialist society is, of necessity, based on class morality – not on the morality of the tiny minority, the exploiters, but on the morality of the exploited overwhelming majority, i.e. ***proletarian morality***.

> Morality serves to destroy the old exploiting society and to unite the working people around the proletariat, which is building up a new, communist society.
>
> Communist morality is what serves this struggle and unites all working people against all exploitation, against all petty private property too; for petty private property puts into the hands of one person what has been produced by the labour of the whole of society. In our country the land is common property (ibid., p.49).
>
> We say that our morality is entirely subordinated to the interests of the proletarian class struggle. Our morality stems from the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat. […]
>
> To us there is no such thing as a morality that stands outside human society; that is a deception. To us morality is subordinated to the interests of the proletarian class struggle (Lenin, [1920] 1931b, pp.73, 74).

Once the victory of Socialism has been firmly established, unshakably, everywhere, and the cleavage of society into classes, states and parties has become more and more superfluous across the entire globe and increasingly withers away, proletarian morality will increasingly become ***socialist morality***.

Socialist society is frequently hampered in its development, indeed it is sometimes thrown back, by the enormous exertions of the capitalist exploiters, who stop at nothing to hold up and roll back the wheel of history. Socialist society is therefore again and again forced to use a very considerable part of its strength to thwart and dash the plans and the attacks of the capitalist robbers; in particular, the wars caused by this necessitate great sacrifices. The ascent of Socialism is delayed, retarded, held up by this, sometimes thrown back a little, but only temporarily, only transiently. Marching again and again on the line of the international proletarian revolution, acting again and again in accordance with the slogan of the Communist Manifesto: ‘Proletarians of all countries, unite!’, pulling together again and again the fighting strength of all the workers, of all the exploited and oppressed, of all those who toil arduously and are burdened, socialist society will ultimately again and again, by virtue of its ***international*** Socialism, by virtue of its ***socialist*** internationalism, prove to be the stronger.

III. The Dictatorship of Proletarian Democracy

In order to embark upon socialist construction, it is indispensably necessary to have a dictatorship of proletarian democracy – which on its part can only be established through proletarian revolution, ultimately by means of a victorious armed proletarian insurrection. Right from the start the entire politics of the proletarian revolution – in particular the preparation and carrying out of the armed proletarian insurrection too – must move consistently on the line of the proletarian ***world revolution***, otherwise the result is anything but a dictatorship of proletarian democracy.

IV. Winning the Masses for the Proletarian World Revolution

In order to be able to begin the struggle for the establishment of the dictatorship of proletarian democracy seriously, i.e. with the prospect of success, the proletarian class party must first gain the trust of the masses; it must win them for the international proletarian revolution in such a way that they are ultimately prepared to follow the proletarian-revolutionary party into a life and death struggle for the establishment of the dictatorship of proletarian democracy, into a life and death struggle for World Socialism, World Communism.

V. The Formation of the Proletarian Class Party and Class International

In order that the Party is able to begin the struggle for the masses seriously, i.e. with the prospect of success, it is indispensably necessary that the proletarian revolutionaries form a proletarian class party, that is to say they join together to form an organisation that is capable of action, and acts consciously and in actual fact on the proletarian class line, and in doing so gathers the advanced elements of the working class as closely as possible round itself and establishes as close a connection with them as possible.

The history of Lenin's party shows that – thanks to particularly favourable objective and subjective circumstances – it was able to form, it was able to win the masses, and indeed establish proletarian-democratic state power without the help of a proletarian class International. The very same history, however, shows that the ***proletarian class International*** is indispensably necessary in order to maintain the dictatorship of proletarian democracy in the longer term, because only such an International, only a real International is able to mobilise the world proletariat and set it in motion on a revolutionary basis. The sooner an international organisation of proletarian revolutionaries that is capable of action is formed, i.e. a proletarian class International that acts on the class line of the proletariat in actual fact, the more easily, the better, the more quickly does the formation of the proletarian class party, the winning of the masses for the world revolution and also the establishment of proletarian-democratic state power proceed.

B. The Enemy

Taking all the capitalist exploiters, including the smallest and very smallest ones, then the bourgeoisie may, in absolute terms, even still be growing ***numerically***, to a small extent and at a slow pace. However, in relation both to the world proletariat and also to the world's total population, its numerical share is reducing continuously in percentage terms. The ongoing process of capitalist centralisation and concentration is in fact limiting more and more the independence of an ever greater number, above all, the small and middle capitalists, and is increasingly turning them into organs, which are dependent on the big capitalists and ultimately on the monopoly capitalists. In this way the bourgeoisie is becoming an ever thinner stratum of human society. If it were purely a matter of headcount, then the capitalist class would become weaker and weaker in relation to the working class. But the strength of each of the classes, the relationship of forces between classes is not solely determined by the number of members that it has.

Although the bourgeoisie comprises an exceedingly thin stratum of society, it has enormous power, it is by far the most powerful class. It has at its disposal humanity's decisive life-sources, the most vital means of production. It has at its disposal the capitalist state machine that, in class terms, built up in accordance with its own interests. These are the main sources of its class power and its gigantic economic, political and social superiority. But it has at its disposal other extremely important sources of strength, which are in the last analysis the product of these two main sources.

Above all the capitalist exploiters develop a relatively much higher class consciousness than the exploited, and indeed much higher than that of its most advanced section, the workers. The entire experiences of all the exploiting, ruling classes in the 6000 years of class society in organising, administrating, directing, guiding and leading the economy, state, party and society – including their extremely important, military experience – have accumulated a gigantic heritage within the capitalist class as lived experience.

By virtue of this heritage, by virtue of its far more favourable class position, it is able to develop an altogether higher level of consciousness. It has much more education and knowledge; those who work in science as their occupation are, in capitalist society, mostly filled with bourgeois consciousness and are extremely closely linked by thousands of ties with the bourgeoisie. The same applies to a large extent too to the highest-qualified functionaries in the economy, such as engineers, chemists, etc. By means of its higher class consciousness, the bourgeoisie has a much higher level of organisation. Its small number in this situation proves to be an advantage in certain respects. Not only is it able to come together more easily, to develop a much greater mobility and manoeuvrability, to regroup much more easily, but it is also able to disguise its organisations much more easily; the monopoly bourgeoisie, in particular, comprises so few individuals that they can meet in the most inconspicuous way and can easily hide themselves behind a strawman, whom they have pushed to the forefront – see Hitler & Co. The higher class consciousness, the greater degree of organisation also expresses itself – thanks to their large-scale material means – in much closer international relationships and interconnections between the capitalists of all countries, economically and politically; thus they are, to their great advantage, in a position – despite all the differences in their own camp – to

join together internationally much more easily and more quickly against the workers of different countries than conversely the latter can against the capitalist class.

The bourgeoisie can and must again and again dupe, lie to, deceive and mislead the masses – without doing this, exploiters' rule, an exploiters' economy would not be possible at all in the long term – and it can carry this out relatively easily because it holds down the consciousness of the masses generally as low as possible below the level of consciousness of the capitalists. The proletariat, on the other hand, has much greater difficulty in successfully utilising cunning against the bourgeoisie; firstly, because the exploiters' class has a much more developed and sharp-sighted level of consciousness at its disposal; and secondly, because the danger of confusing its own proletarian ranks through such manoeuvres is much greater, in consequence of the less-developed level of consciousness of the masses, than is conversely the case with the bourgeoisie.

The ***simple commodity economy*** of the small peasants/farmers, handicraftsmen, small traders/shopkeepers, etc. still runs alongside the capitalist commodity economy. In its decline too, simple commodity production again and again reproduces capitalism anew. Again and again thousands upon thousands of small undertakings go under, but again and again, now and then, here and there individual small undertakings involved in simple commodity production work themselves upwards into small capitalist undertakings, some of which again and again work themselves upwards even higher. Under capitalist conditions the countless non-exploiting small undertakings again and again breed new capitalist exploiter elements from within; again and again they supply the bourgeoisie in considerable numbers with new, fresh class forces, new fresh elements that strengthen it.

In the 6000 years of its existence, class society has ingrained in human beings a whole range of characteristics, has inculcated a whole range of habits that are very deeply-rooted in them; thus, for example, above all ***egotism***. It has even saturated the wage workers, the class that suffers most under capitalism, with this. The power of these habits of many thousands of years drives great masses of the exploited and oppressed, even the workers, to act in many cases against their own class interests and for the interests of their exploiters and oppressors. Strength again and again flows to the bourgeoisie from this source too. Not least it is precisely this legacy that enables the bourgeoisie under specific conditions – namely once and for as long as it draws big super profits and has accumulated big reserves of wealth – to bribe, to corrupt the upper stratum of the working class, the ***workers' bureaucracy*** and ***workers' aristocracy***, and use them as agents of the bourgeoisie within the worker masses against the proletariat and for the capitalist class.

These elements, themselves demoralised, demoralise and degenerate the political organisations that the working class has created for itself; Social Democracy, the Labour Party, the Communist Party, etc., misuse, classwise, the mass organisations, like the trade unions, the cooperatives, the *Rotkämpferbund*[48], the *Schutzbund*[49] etc., that they lead and turn them – in effect – into auxiliary instruments of the capitalist class against the international proletarian

[48] Red Front Fighters' League in Germany; trans.
[49] Defence League in Austria; trans.

revolution, against the world proletariat, against the proletarian state. In the same measure that the class strength of the international proletariat is paralysed by this, new strength continually flows from this source to the world bourgeoisie. Particularly today, this is a source of capitalist strength of the very first order. In any case, all groups of people, all individuals, once and for as long as they seek their own advantage – consciously or unconsciously – at the expense of the workers, poor peasants/farmers and petty bourgeois, constitute a reserve for the bourgeoisie against the exploited and oppressed.

Differences of all kinds among the exploited and oppressed constitute an enduring source of capitalist class strength; it is these differences that make it possible for the bourgeoisie to 'divide and rule'. What a big role this plays, is shown, for example, by India, where British imperialism, by utilising tensions between the Hindus, the Muslims and the mountain peoples, between the feudal princes and the Indian bourgeoisie, between the pariahs and the upper strata of the Hindus, between the Indian wage workers and the Indian employers, etc. is holding down a population of nearly four hundred million with relatively small forces, and has exploited them very thoroughly for centuries. The tensions between the urban and rural masses, between the petty bourgeoisie and the working class, but in particular the ***tensions within the working class*** itself are of the greatest significance to the bourgeoisie: between the skilled and unskilled workers; between unemployed, short-time workers and full-time workers; between young and old workers, between female and male workers; between workers in different occupations, of different nationalities, races or who are at a different cultural level. However, the internal differences within the proletariat only constitute a real source of power for the bourgeoisie if and for as long as: 1) the proletarian masses are in the hands of the parties of betrayal, parties such as the SP, the LP, the StP, etc., or in the hands of traitors such as Lewis, Green and Murray or if the organisation of proletarian revolutionaries continuously makes big mistakes and if at the same time 2) the bourgeoisie operates with the correct capitalist tactics. In the same measure that the working class forms its proletarian class party and this Party unifies the actions of the worker masses more and more on the line of the international proletarian revolution, it becomes increasingly difficult for the bourgeoisie to utilise the tensions within the working class in the interests of the capitalists.

In 1917-18, the bourgeoisie was taken completely by surprise by the revolutionary onslaught of the masses. With the help initially of the SP and the LP, and later (since 1923-24) of the StP too, it was able to hold up and divide the first gigantic world-revolutionary wave, and get it to ebb away; admittedly, it has not so far been able to smash the proletarian state, but – precisely with the help of the SP, the LP and the StP – it succeeded and is succeeding in bringing about its degeneration to an ever greater degree, in continually strengthening the capitalist tendencies and elements within the proletarian state at the expense of the socialist tendencies and elements, and in creating more and more the conditions for the counter-revolutionary restoration of a new capitalism, of a new capitalist state in Russia. The capitalists of all countries have learnt massively from the experiences of the years since the victory of the Russian October Revolution in 1917. Precisely the Second (imperialist) World War – which the world bourgeoisie could risk thanks to the Social Democratic, Labour and Stalinist treachery – shows this particularly clearly. Waging the war in such a way that it does not end in proletarian revolution ('winning the peace'…) is the guiding principle of the capitalists of all countries, and in actual fact they are acting in accordance with this and are supported in this, not only by the SP and the LP, by Green, Murray, Lewis, etc., but also by the Russian Stalinist bureaucracy together with

its Stalinist parties. This is the main reason for the Second (imperialist) World War being so prolonged; the capitalist exploiters of all countries together with their fascist henchmen and their Social Democratic, Labour and Stalinist lackeys are doing everything they can to whip up nationalism in the the masses, at best to get them to act in a way that furthers national revolution, but preventing them from acting in a way that furthers social revolution.

This policy that is prolonging the war, does in fact hold the proletarian revolution back like a dam for a time, but at the price that it objectively – against the will of the imperialists, their fascist torturers, their Social Democratic, Labour, Stalinist and other lackeys – deepens all these contradictions, which will, admittedly somewhat later, but then all the more so, hurl the second gigantic world-revolutionary wave upwards with a force that is magnified twofold, threefold, tenfold.

A specific, more and more dangerous source of weakness arises for the bourgeoisie with the progressive decline of the capitalist system, a decline that at first works slowly, almost imperceptibly, against the capitalist class, but in the course of time works against it in an ever greater and ever crasser manner – provided the working class, led by its class party, proceeds correctly, strategically and tactically, on the line of the international proletarian revolution. The more the capitalist system declines, the harder it is for the bourgeoisie to keep its capitalist day-to-day politics in harmony again and again with its capitalist class line and to harmonise its prevailing day-to-day interests again and again with its long-term interests, with its enduring capitalist interests. The more the crisis of the capitalist system as a whole takes hold of the foundations of the entire economic, social and political structure of capitalism and makes them crumble, the more the politics of the capitalist class ***inevitably becomes more and more opportunist***. This is carried over not only to the capitalist agents, to the capitalist henchmen and torturers (the fascists), but also to the capitalist lackeys (the SP, LP and StP, Lewis, Green, Murray, etc.). The capitalist leaders and their agents make a virtue out of necessity. They give out their increasingly opportunist politics as the wisdom of Solomon, as consistent – 'realism'. In reality now a stream has begun to flow, which in leaps and bounds and with increasing force is ominously and fatefully more and more rapidly sapping, churning up and undermining the foundations of the capitalist class. Inevitably the world capitalist class – and this applies to its agents too – is getting tangled up in ever bigger mistakes, which outwardly appear as the shortsightedness of inadequate capitalist leaders and capitalist agents, but in reality arise from the inescapable contradictions, which again and again are mounting up more and more gigantically, violently, rapidly, more and more insolubly in front of the bourgeoisie and its agents, contradictions out of which the bourgeoisie – and even this again and again very temporarily – only finds a capitalist way out again and again in consequence of the still greater mistakes of the working class, mistakes for which the parties of betrayal, the traitors that the working class still follows, are to blame, or in consequence of the youthful inexperience of the organisation of proletarian revolutionaries. In actual fact, the bourgeoisie, together with its agents, is forced against its will by the ever more sharply developing contradictions of the capitalist system, to work objectively more and more into the hands of the proletarian revolution – provided the proletariat again and again acts correctly, which above all requires it to create its proletarian class party, its class international.

If one takes all the capitalist exploiters, from the very smallest to the very biggest, then together – nationally and internationally – they form the ***capitalist class front*** with its left wing

(the left-bourgeoisie, the non-monopoly capitalists) and its right wing (the right-bourgeoisie, the monopoly capitalists). This is the nucleus of the capitalist battle order with all the ***capitalist reserves***, which the bourgeoisie gathers, groups around its class front. Behind its left wing the capitalist class lines up the still democratic strata of the middle masses in town and country, under the leadership of the left-bourgeois parties – behind its right wing it ranges the conservative section of the rural and urban middle strata, under the leadership of the right-bourgeois parties. Behind both wings it gathers significant masses of officials, white-collar workers and under favourable conditions, as, for example, in the USA still, even masses of workers, insofar as they are still filled with bourgeois consciousness – even though they are proletarian in terms of their objective class position. Obviously, all these reserve forces are shifting more or less continuously.

The bourgeoisie extends its right wing: by means of all kinds of pre-capitalist forces, such as, for example, the feudal princes of India together with their retinue; by means of the lumpen-proletariat, which it equips and organises according to their requirements; and finally by means of petty-bourgeois strata, and to a lesser extent by means of proletarian strata, which the monopoly bourgeoisie by means of the fascist movement and the fascist party it has organised, pulls by means of demagogy to the extreme right – after they have been totally disappointed by the SP, the StP and the LP, and have fallen into a state of complete despair under the severe, long-lasting pressure of the capitalist crisis from which they see no way out. The bourgeoisie extends its left wing: by means of the ascending bourgeoisie of the backward countries, in particular the colonial and semi-colonial countries, as soon as it feels seriously threatened by the independent demands of the proletariat in these countries, as, for example, the Chinese bourgeoisie; above all, however, by means of the enormous worker masses it draws behind itself by means of the degenerating, degenerated workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy operating as capitalist agents at the SP, LP, StP, etc. transmission belts together with the proletarian mass organisations (trade unions, etc.) that they and Lewis, Green, Murray and Co. have misled and misused. Together with its capitalist reserves, the capitalist class front – nationally and internationally – constitutes the ***overall capitalist front***, which, however much it may fluctuate, increases the striking power of the capitalist class front enormously by means of the gigantic masses that it clusters round it as capitalist reserves. One must soberly take into account and keep in mind not only the reality of the capitalist class front, but also the reality of the overall capitalist front, nationally and internationally, in its entire, real extent and in its entire real composition – without this real proletarian-revolutionary politics, strategy and tactics is impossible. Only someone who clearly recognises that the proletarian multi-millioned masses, who are led, misled by Social Democracy, the Stalinist party, the Labour Party, etc., and by Green, Murray, Lewis and Co., are in truth not in the proletarian class front, indeed not even in the overall proletarian front and do not fight in it, but on the contrary in actual fact constitute the outermost wing of the overall capitalist front ***against*** the proletarian revolution, ***against*** the working class, ***against*** the proletarian state, only they understand why the proletariat – despite its gigantic class power, 25 years after the victorious proletarian-socialist October Revolution of 1917 – is down on the ground so paralysed and powerless as it is today in all countries without exception, including the Stalinist 'Fatherland'; only they understand why the bourgeoisie could continue to prevail, why it could risk this monstrous war on the backs of the masses; only they understand that today the basic task – in order to set the multi-millioned masses in revolutionary motion for their own interests – is to impart the knowledge of this actual basic situation to the

advanced worker elements of all countries and to mobilise them for the basic task of tearing the masses – who are being misled by 'socialist', 'communist', 'revolutionary' and other phrases, who follow the parties of betrayal, follow the traitors – away from them and leading them over into the proletarian class front, under the leadership of the proletarian revolutionaries, the proletarian class party and the proletarian class international.

Once the working class, in a victorious revolution, smashes the capitalist state ***in one country***, wrests the decisive means of production from the capitalist exploiters' class and places them in the hands and at the collective disposal of proletarian democracy, it has thereby in no way exhausted all the various sources of strength of the bourgeoisie even in this country. On the contrary, strength continues to flow again and again to the bourgeoisie from a whole range of very important sources, even after it has been crushed and expropriated by the victorious, revolutionary proletariat. Indeed its class consciousness is increased to the utmost precisely after its revolutionary overthrow; it increases its exertions in order to regain the position it has lost and for a long time it remains not only an extremely dangerous, but also even a superior opponent of the victorious proletariat.

It is precisely this that makes it indispensably necessary that the proletarian state assumes the form of the dictatorship of proletarian democracy.

Setting aside the fact that the world bourgeoisie, whose entire power on an ***international scale*** – for a very considerable period to come – far exceeds the power of a proletariat that has been victorious in one country; only in revolutionary collaboration with the workers of all countries, with the exploited and oppressed of all countries and with the peoples from across the entire globe, who are exploited and oppressed by imperialism and are fighting it, only through consistent politics, strategy and tactics on the line of the international proletarian revolution is a revolutionary working class, which has been victorious in one country, able to maintain its state power as a ***proletarian state***, as a dictatorship of ***proletarian democracy*** and to change the relationship of forces of the classes on a world scale progressively against the world bourgeoisie and to the advantage of the world proletariat.

Let us listen to what Lenin says about this. In April 1918, he writes about the exploiters,

> who cannot at once be deprived of their wealth, of their advantages of organisation and knowledge, and consequently for a fairly long period will inevitably try to overthrow the hated rule of the poor (Lenin, 1918b, pp.43-44).
>
> For a long time after the revolution the exploiters inevitably continue to retain a number of great practical advantages: they still have money (since it is impossible to abolish money all at once); some personal property, often considerable; they still have various connections, experience in terms of organisation and management; knowledge of all the secrets (customs, methods, means and possibilities) of administration; superior education; close connections with the higher technical personnel (who live and think like the bourgeoisie); incomparably better training in military matters (and this is of the greatest importance), etc., etc. […]

[Lenin continually stresses that] in every profound revolution, the *prolonged, stubborn* and *desperate* resistance of the exploiters, who for a number of years retain a great superiority over the exploited, is the rule (Lenin, [1918] 1919, p.21).

On an international scale, capital is still stronger, both from the military and the economic standpoint, than Soviet power and the Soviet system. ***That is the fundamental premise from which we must proceed, and we must never forget it*** (Lenin, [1920] 1927a, p.113).

If you take into account the material means on the world scale, we must acknowledge that in the material respect the bourgeoisie are at present still stronger than we are (Lenin, [1919] 1925b, p.527).

The dictatorship of the proletariat means the toughest, fiercest and most ruthless war waged by the new class against a ***more powerful*** enemy, the bourgeoisie, whose resistance is increased ***tenfold*** by their overthrow (even if only in a single country), and whose power lies, not only in the power of international capital, the strength and durability of their international connections, but also in the *force of habit*, in the strength of *small-scale production.* Unfortunately, small-scale production is still widespread in the world, and small-scale production *engenders* capitalism and the bourgeoisie continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously, and on a mass scale. All these reasons make the dictatorship of the proletariat necessary, and victory over the bourgeoisie is impossible without a long, stubborn and desperate life-and-death struggle that calls for composure, discipline, firmness and a single and inflexible will.

After the first socialist revolution of the proletariat, and the overthrow of the bourgeoisie in ***one*** country, the proletariat of that country remains *for a **long time weaker*** than the bourgeoisie, simply because of the latter's extensive international links, and also because of the spontaneous and continuous restoration and regeneration of capitalism and the bourgeoisie by the small commodity producers of the country which has overthrown their bourgeoisie (Lenin, 1920b, pp.5-6, 49-50).

The class consciousness of the bourgeoisie is still superior to that of the exploited and the oppressed (Lenin, [1921] 1925b, p.667).

C. Our Main Sources of Strength

'All shades of opportunism lead, in the last analysis, to an incorrect evaluation of the revolutionary forces and potential of the proletariat' remarks Trotsky aptly (Trotzki, 1925, p.28). It is all the more necessary to check, to recognise the sources of strength of the working class as they really are.

Numerically, the world proletariat has long since been incomparably stronger than the bourgeoisie. The size of the working class is growing inexorably, in waves and spurts. The mechanism of capitalist production itself, with the pressure of its inescapable screws, presses more and more people into the proletariat, makes the workers more and more numerous and ultimately makes them into the most numerous class in human society altogether. Opportunism seeks to deny this and for this purpose it makes use of two tricks.

Firstly, the opportunists count large sections of the white-collar workers and officials as belonging to the 'new middle class'. Very many white-collar workers and officials are still filled with petty-bourgeois consciousness, something, indeed, for which above all precisely the opportunist parties are to blame. Through their opportunist politics they strengthen these strata in their petty-bourgeois mindset, hamper the awakening and unfolding of their proletarian consciousness, indeed they have even thrown back many white-collar workers and officials, who in the years since 1917-18 were beginning to awaken to proletarian consciousness, so that they again succumbed to petty bourgeoisness and ultimately to fascism. Decisively important as the question of consciousness is, and however things may appear in the heads of white-collar workers and officials, this does not alter in the slightest the fact that, in terms of their class situation, all white-collar workers and officials without exception, who in reality live by selling their labour power piecemeal, who are inevitably, enduringly dependent on hiring out their labour power, belong to the working class and therefore when estimating the objective numerical size of the proletariat must definitely be included in it.

The size of the working class grows quite unevenly in terms of time and place. Here and there, in various countries, the process of growth stops. Right away the opportunists make a permanent phenomenon out of this temporary one. Thus, they declared, for example, that in Germany and Austria after the First World War – in order to weaken the workers' consciousness of their revolutionary strength – particularly in the years of crisis, that the number of workers was no longer increasing, indeed that it was falling. In both countries the SP deliberately fostered the retro-formation of workers, white-collar workers and officials into semi-petty bourgeois (allotment gardeners), indeed into petty bourgeois (the turning of those who lost their jobs into people with of all kinds of petty-bourgeois livelihoods). Then came the fascist dictatorship – brought about by the Social Democratic and Stalinist betrayals. Now the monopoly bourgeoisie hurled these new petty bourgeois in their hundreds of thousands back into the proletariat again and, in addition to these, further hundreds of thousands of those who had already been petty bourgeois. Like all economic, political and social processes, one must also above all consider the re-grouping of the classes in the epoch of monopoly capital internationally. The growth of the working class in Germany, Austria, etc. may have temporarily come to a standstill – but in the meantime the number of wage workers in Soviet Russia, China, the Balkans, India, South America, South Africa, Egypt, the Middle East, etc. had surged.

Without the material conditions of production (land, tools, machines, raw materials and auxiliary materials, buildings, etc.) there can be no production. But even they can only cause the gigantic stream of products to flow, if and as long as they are activated by human labour power. Decisive as the objects of labour, the means of labour, the raw materials and auxiliary materials are, living human labour power is and remains the most decisive means of production of all.

The individual worker is replaceable; the bourgeoisie can 'release', 'replace' many, very many workers, throw them out of work, but the ***working class*** is and remains ***irreplaceable***. It is the decisive factor in the process of social production and is becoming increasingly so, because ***AN EVER GREATER PART OF THE TOTAL PRODUCT OF HUMAN SOCIETY IS PRODUCED ON A CAPITALIST BASIS***, ***BY WAGE WORKERS***. Even in such periods of time when – through the introduction of new machines and new methods of production – the number of actively employed workers sinks on a world scale (whereby the size of the industrial reserve army, i.e. the number of unemployed, surges simultaneously) – even if at the same time the total social product also falls – even here too the working class produces by far the biggest and an ever bigger part of it. ***THE WORKERS ARE ALREADY TODAY THE MOST IMPORTANT CLASS FOR THE ENTIRE EXISTENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN SOCIETY ALTOGETHER AND AS TIME PASSES WILL BECOME ALL THE MORE SO***. This is an extremely important source of their class strength.

This economic and social position of the working class is even more enormously boosted by the mechanism of capitalist production – in a twofold way. The ongoing capitalist process of centralisation and concentration conglobates bigger and bigger masses of workers in the big, decisive workplaces; it increasingly conglobates the vital workplaces at the nodal points, at the centres of economic, political and social life in its entirety that are most important for every country, for the entire world, and where the main nerves of the economic, political and social body converge.

The working class objectively expresses the true, best interests of the broad masses of non-exploiting working people under capitalism. The proletariat is the only class that is revolutionary to the end. This is expressed quite particularly in the period when the bourgeois-democratic revolution is being completed. Only by means of the revolutionary working class, only by means of its help and leadership are the multi-millioned masses of small peasants/farmers and petty bourgeois in town and country able to solve their most burning questions (agrarian revolution, national independence, indeed all the bourgeois-democratic issues). Through the course of events, through the unfolding class antagonisms, through the clashing of these antagonisms, through their own lived experiences, these middle strata become convinced of this themselves and, as time passes, all the more so. Particularly in the colonies and semi-colonies, indeed in all the backward countries, countries that still face the task of completing the bourgeois-democratic revolution, this plays an extremely important role and is a source of strength of the first order for the revolutionary proletariat, precisely in conjunction with the conglobation of the working class at the economically and politically most important centres of the country.

THE STRENGTH OF THE PROLETARIAT IN ANY CAPITALIST COUNTRY IS FAR GREATER THAN THE PROPORTION IT REPRESENTS OF THE TOTAL POPULATION. THAT IS BECAUSE THE PROLETARIAT ECONOMICALLY DOMINATES THE HEART AND THE NERVES OF THE ENTIRE ECONOMIC SYSTEM OF CAPITALISM, AND ALSO BECAUSE THE PROLETARIAT

> ***EXPRESSES ECONOMICALLY AND POLITICALLY THE REAL INTERESTS OF THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF TOILING PEOPLE UNDER CAPITALISM*** (Lenin, [1919] 1920d, p.25).
>
> Even now the peasantry makes up 70% of the population (of Spain; auth.) […].
>
> > Out of a population of 23,000,000 [...] there are nearly 1,500,000 industrial, commercial and transportation workers. To them should be added an approximately equal number of agricultural workers. [...] Moreover, the historic experience of Russia succeeded in showing with sufficient clarity the specific gravity of the proletariat, united by big industry, in a backward agricultural country and enmeshed in a net of semi-feudal relations (Trotzki, 1931c, pp.3,7).

The proletariat expresses the true interests of the non-exploiting peasant/farmer and petty-bourgeois multi-millioned masses, not only with regard to completing the bourgeois-democratic revolution, but also with regard to carrying out the socialist revolution.

But this enormous source only taps into the real strength of the proletariat by means of ***proletarian*** class politics, as was the case in 1917 under Lenin and Trotsky in Russia. If this basic condition is lacking, as in China in 1925-27 through the fault of the Stalinist bureaucracy, or as in Spain in 1936-38 through the fault of the Stalinist–Social Democratic–anarchist united front, then even the strongest flow of this enormous source of strength does not work to the advantage of the proletariat.

This applies generally to all sources of proletarian power of whatever kind. Whatever the proletariat does or does not do, these sources always flow and flow more and more strongly. The motion of the capitalist economy and capitalist society itself inevitably delivers this result and delivers it to an ever greater extent. But the capitalist robbers draw on it, both directly and indirectly, be it by means of their Bonapartist and fascist henchmen or be it by means of their Social Democratic, Stalinist, Labour, centrist, anarchist and semi-anarchist lackeys. Both the main capitalist parasites, as well as the subordinate petty-bourgeois parasites of all kinds draw strength and benefit from it. ***FOR THE PROLETARIAT, THE SOURCES OF ITS STRENGTH ONLY FLOW TO THE EXTENT THAT IT ACTUALLY DEVELOPS <u>CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS</u>. CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS IS THE MOST DECISIVE SOURCE OF STRENGTH ALTOGETHER, BECAUSE ONLY PROLETARIAN CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS TRANSFORMS THE SOURCES OF PROLETARIAN CLASS STRENGTH INTO SOURCES OF STRENGTH THAT IN FACT BENEFIT THE <u>WORKING CLASS</u>***! 'The social revolution is entirely based on the growth of proletarian consciousness and the belief of the proletariat in its own strength and in the party which is leading it' (Trotzki, 1922, p.69). ***BY CLARIFYING THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE WORKER MASSES, BY AWAKENING, SPREADING AND DEEPENING THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF THE DECISIVE ROLE OF THE WORKING CLASS WITH REGARD TO ITS OWN FATE, INDEED WITH REGARD TO THE FATE OF HUMAN SOCIETY AS A WHOLE, THE PROLETARIAN CLASS PARTY TAPS MORE AND MORE INTO ALL SOURCES OF PROLETARIAN STRENGTH AND UNITES, ENHANCES THEM INTO A MORE AND MORE POWERFUL AND VICTORIOUS RIVER OF STRENGTH FOR THE <u>PROLETARIAT, FOR THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION, FOR HUMANITY</u>***. 'The chief thing in Marx's teachings is that it clarifies the world-historic role of the proletariat as the builder of socialist society' (Lenin, [1913] 1938, p.50). This applies quite especially to the period

of the revolution. Lenin stresses in particular that 'in a revolutionary period, the proletariat – I say this without any exaggeration, on the basis of the most accurate data from Russian history – ***can*** generate fighting strength a ***hundred times*** greater than in ordinary, peaceful times' (Lenin, 1925c, p.20). Because precisely what characterises revolutionary periods is that the consciousness of the multi-millioned masses, which has been suppressed, rises and unfolds in leaps and bounds and precisely through this drives all the sources of proletarian strength upwards into a raging, more and more powerfully flowing spring tide for the proletariat, for the revolution of the working class. The significance of the class-conscious elements, the class-conscious minority for the entire proletariat, their role and task – we have already highlighted these elsewhere – is underlined even more by this. It is, therefore, precisely the class-conscious workers who the bourgeoisie tries to eliminate in times of the most acute danger – with the help more and more of its henchmen and lackeys. When it comes to the murdering of proletarian revolutionaries, the fascist party is surpassed by the Cain-Stalin-Party. In Soviet Russia the Stalinist bureaucracy is murdering the class-conscious workers in their tens of thousands; in Germany, Austria, France, etc. it is handing over the revolutionary workers to the fascist torturers; in Spain, Mexico, etc., it has the proletarian revolutionaries killed off by Stalinist agents. ***CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS EXPRESSES ITSELF IN THE DEGREE OF ORGANISATION, IN CLASS-CONSCIOUS POLITICS, IN THE ORGANISING, POLITICAL MOBILISATION AND UTILISATION OF ALL SOURCES OF PROLETARIAN STRENGTH IN THE INTERESTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL PROLETARIAT, OF THE PROLETARIAN-DEMOCRATIC STATE AND OF THE INTERNATIONAL PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION***.

The proletarian revolutionaries bear a great responsibility. They must be conscious that real success, real victory for the working class, for the proletarian revolution, for the proletarian-democratic state, for Socialism, for Communism can be achieved singly and solely on the fundamental line of clarifying, raising and unfolding the proletarian cognitive abilities, the proletarian consciousness of the masses. They must remain conscious that using ***cunning with regard to the masses***, however well-meant, is never advantageous to the proletarian revolution or the working class; on the contrary, in the last analysis, it again and again inevitably harms them, even when, exceptionally, it seems to bring some temporary benefit. It cannot be otherwise. Duping the masses means distorting, twisting, falsifying the facts, the contexts, the developmental tendencies, the goals of the struggle, the methods of struggle, etc., or showing them in a false light to the masses – for example, illuminating only one side or another of a context or a political line for them, and keeping the other important sides of this context or political line in the shade or even suppressing them – in short, deceiving the masses, be it even 'with the best of intentions', means dulling their consciousness, i.e. in the last analysis hampering the masses from propelling their sources of proletarian strength upwards, setting them in motion, utilising them in the proletarian class interests. One must not ***keep two sets of books*** with regard to the masses, neither politically nor organisationally, not unconsciously and certainly not consciously: one must not 'talk Communism' and act in an anti-communist manner like the Stalinist party – one must not 'talk Socialism' and act in an anti-socialist manner like the SP, the LP, the centrists, etc. – One must not 'talk Revolution' and act in an anti-revolutionary manner like the semi-anarchist ultra-'lefts' and the fully-fledged anarchists.

> But we firmly believe that one must not lie to the masses and that one must not deceive them with regard to the aims and methods of their own struggle. The social revolution is entirely based upon the growth of proletarian consciousness

> and on the belief of the proletariat in its own strength and in the party which is leading it. One may use cunning against the enemies of the proletariat, but not the proletariat itself. [...]
>
> An honest revolutionary policy above all avoids throwing dust into the eyes of the masses (Trotzki, 1922, pp.69,115).
>
> Resorting to trickery in politics, all the more so in revolution, is always dangerous. You will most likely fail to dupe the enemy, but the masses who follow you may be duped instead (Trotzki, 1925, p.37).

For this reason, the working class is able to utilise trickery against the bourgeoisie only with much greater difficulty than the latter is able to do against the proletariat; this is a relative weakness of the working class in its relationship to the capitalist class enemy.

The many thousands of years of slavery, villeinage, serfdom and capitalist forced labour have bred ***weaknesses*** in many of the exploited and oppressed: servility, subservience, selfishness, a tendency to vacillate, fickleness, timidity, despondency, shortsightedness, etc. The uncertainty of the entire proletarian existence under capitalism may change in terms of its form, but it returns again and again, again and again more sharply. The unceasing pressure of capitalist rule and exploitation disintegrates, demoralises many a worker. All of this weakens the class strength of the proletariat.

> The proletariat [...] is not free from the shortcomings and weaknesses inherent in capitalist society. It is fighting for Socialism, but at the same time it is fighting against its own weaknesses (Lenin, [1919] 1920c, p.14).
>
> Until the bourgeoisie has been overthrown and, after that, until small-scale economy and small commodity production have entirely disappeared, the bourgeois environment, proprietary habits and petty-bourgeois traditions will hamper proletarian work both outside and within the proletarian movement, not only in a single field of activity – the parliamentary – but, inevitably, in every field of social activity, in all cultural and political spheres without exception (Lenin, 1920b, p.94).

Lenin leaves us in no doubt that, even after the bourgeoisie has been overthrown,

> we must – in a protracted struggle waged on the basis of the dictatorship of the proletariat – re-educate the proletarians themselves, who do not abandon their petty-bourgeois prejudices at one stroke, by a miracle, at the behest of the Virgin Mary, at the behest of a slogan, resolution or decree, but only in the course of a long and difficult mass struggle against mass petty-bourgeois influences' (ibid., pp.92-93).

All kinds of ***antagonisms in the proletarian camp*** weaken the proletarian fighting strength. As the decline of capitalism progresses the inner-proletarian differences decrease, they are more and more strongly outweighed by the continuously growing antagonism of all workers in relation to the capitalist exploiters and oppressors. ***THE POLITICS, STRATEGY AND TACTICS OF THE PETTY-BOURGEOIS 'WORKERS' PARTIES, AND THE PROLETARIAN MASS ORGANISATIONS THAT THEY MISLEAD AND MISUSE, DEEPENS, WIDENS AND***

INCREASES THE DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE WORKING CLASS AND MAKES IT EASIER FOR THE CAPITALIST CLASS TO UTILISE THESE DIFFERENCES FOR ITSELF. ONLY POLITICS, STRATEGY AND TACTICS THAT ARE IN ACTUAL FACT PROLETARIAN-REVOLUTIONARY MAKE IT MORE AND MORE DIFFICULT FOR THE BOURGEOISIE TO UTILISE THE INNER-PROLETARIAN CONTRADICTIONS FOR ITSELF.

On the other hand ***enemy differences***, inner-capitalist antagonisms, the contradictions within the overall capitalist front (the tensions between the exploiters' class and its reserves; within the capitalist reserves; among the capitalist agents, among the capitalist torturers, among the capitalist lackeys) constitute an extremely important source from which the proletariat ***can*** derive a great deal – singly and solely, however, on condition that ***proletarian*** class politics, class strategy, class tactics are pursued.

Mass Unemployment and Proletarian Class Strength

Each time there is a capitalist economic crisis, it again and again makes part of the working class unemployed for a period of time. With the advancing crisis of the capitalist system altogether, with the increasing decline of the entire capitalist structure, the cyclical crises become sharper and sharper; they extend ever further and deeper, and last longer and longer. In mounting waves ever longer-lasting unemployment threatens, and again and again grips ever greater masses of workers. The armaments boom and then the war boom of the Second (imperialist) World War have altered the form of the crisis of the capitalist system as a whole and, together with this, also the form of the economic crisis and the mass unemployment connected with it. By increasing the production of guns, munitions, warplanes, warships, etc. in leaps and bounds – whereby in the course of time an ever bigger part of the workers was pressed into uniform, in order to shoot each other down and destroy as many commodities as possible – by bringing about mass murder and wholesale destruction, by producing the tools of murder and the machines of destruction necessary for this, i.e. by means of a gigantic mass production, whose common characteristic is the non-production of the necessities required for the existence and development of humanity, mass unemployment was 'overcome' for a certain period of time. However, unless the victorious proletarian revolution intervenes, the periodic economic crisis of capital will come again after a more or less lengthy capitalist upswing for the victorious capitalists, and will indeed be far greater in size, and of a far longer duration, than the economic crisis which had begun in 1929, and this next crisis will have mass unemployment of even greater dimensions, and of even longer duration, than in the years that followed.

In the years of mass unemployment after the First World War the opportunists again and again declared to the working class: the fact that a large part of the workers are without work, have no earnings, weakens the entire proletariat and reduces the fighting strength of both the trade unions and the party, as well as the trade union and political struggle to force an improvement in the situation of the workers, and that in this situation these circumstances offered no prospect of success. In this way they alternately played off the unemployed against the employed workers, whose real wages were sinking more and more – and conversely they played off the employed workers against the unemployed, who were calling for work or at least for a higher level of unemployment support; and indeed for the entire duration of their unemployment. In this way the opportunists split, reduced and disintegrated the proletarian fighting strength; in this way they worked into the hands of the capitalist class and thus paved the way to the fascist dictatorship for the monopoly bourgeoisie.

If one adheres to the framework of capitalism, to ***capitalist*** conditions, that is to say to the property of the capitalist class[50] in the decisive means of production and to the state machine built up on a capitalist basis, then the opportunist assessment that mass unemployment weakens the capability of the proletariat to fight, and therefore the trade union and political fighting strength of the working class too, is correct. And it is precisely these conditions of struggle, ***IT IS PRECISELY TO THE CONDITIONS OF STRUGGLE DICTATED BY THE BOURGEOISIE THAT THE OPPORTUNISTS HAVE TRIED AND TRY WITH ALL AVAILABLE MEANS TO BIND, TO SHACKLE THE WORKING CLASS. THEY WANT THE LARGEST POSSIBLE 'SHARE IN CAPITALIST POWER AND IN THE CAPITALIST 'FODDER TROUGH'. THEY WANT PARTY COLLABORATION, THE 'PEOPLE'S' FRONT, A WORKING PARTNERSHIP, A COALITION WITH THE BOURGEOISIE OR WITH SECTIONS OF IT***; ***THEY ARE THEREFORE OBJECTIVELY*** (***IN EFFECT***) ***BY VIRTUE OF THEIR BASIC ATTITUDE INEVITABLY BOUND TO THE CAPITALIST CONDITIONS OF STRUGGLE, TO CAPITALIST PROPERTY, TO THE CAPITALIST STATE.*** And it is precisely for the sake of their parasitic goals that they seek to chain the proletariat to the capitalist conditions of struggle, to their opportunist politics, to party collaboration, to trade union collaboration with the class enemy of the workers, to collaboration between the co-operatives and the class enemy of the workers and to the 'struggle' for bringing about a coalition, a 'people's' front or a party alliance with the bourgeoisie or a section of the bourgeoisie.

Only proletarian-revolutionary politics provides the way out of the opportunist cycle of mistakes. In order to overcome mass unemployment, in order to secure higher real wages, a higher standard of living for the entire working class, above all for its most hard-pressed, most poorly paid strata, in order to overcome the capitalist economic crisis, to overcome the capitalist system altogether, the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the smashing of the capitalist state machine, the expropriation of the capitalist class, the establishment of the dictatorship of proletarian democracy and the transition to building Socialism are indispensably necessary. All the exertions of the working class, its smallest as well as its biggest, must without exception be directed towards and aimed at this central goal and already be prepared well in advance. Even the simplest wage struggle and the most modest struggle for increasing unemployment support and extending the period of time for which it is paid, and for employment for the unemployed, in short every trade union struggle, every co-operative-based struggle, every political struggle of whatever kind must again and again already connect the struggle for any given immediate action slogan with the preparatory, propagandistic struggle for this ultimate goal in the not-yet-revolutionary period, and all the more so in the pre-revolutionary period – in this way the opportunist chain is broken and with this the way is opened for ultimately breaking the capitalist chain too.

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[50] The capitalists own the decisive means of production (capitalist class property in the wider sense) either ***individually*** or as a ***group*** (joint-stock company, company with limited or unlimited liability, cartel, trust) or ***collectively*** (capitalist class property in the narrower sense, in the form of property 'nationalised', 'socialised', statified by the ***bourgeois state***; ***bourgeois*** democracy does not eliminate the collective property of the capitalist class; on the contrary it conceals it in a particularly effective way).

In the case of opportunist 'struggle', the fighting strength of the working class ***falls***, must fall, not in consequence of mass unemployment, but in consequence of the ***opportunist***, anti-proletarian line, in consequence of party collaboration, trade union collaboration and collaboration on the part of the cooperatives with the class enemy, in consequence of working towards this collaboration, in consequence of chaining the workers to the capitalist conditions of struggle, to capitalist property, to the capitalist state machine. In contrast, ***revolutionary*** struggle ***increases*** the fighting strength of the working class: it is precisely the fact of mass unemployment, a fact that is crying out to heaven that makes the workers more receptive, more ready to listen and more clear-sighted with regard to the real basic causes of their sufferings; it sharpens their recognition of the fact that their miserable slave's lot is due both to the sources of human life being the property of the capitalist exploiters and to the capitalist state machine, with which the capitalist parasites protect their exploiters' property; it is precisely all this that makes them more prepared for a determined struggle to tear out and abolish the basic roots of their misery and to build up an economic and social order in which all workers, all exploited toilers and ultimately all human beings can live in a way that is worthy of human beings. The opportunist 'struggle against mass unemployment' leads to fascist dictatorship by the bourgeoisie; the proletarian-revolutionary struggle against mass unemployment ***at the same time*** mobilises the masses, ever greater masses for the revolutionary struggle against the source of their sufferings, prepares the proletarian revolution, leads the struggle of the worker masses and the unified struggle of the factory workers and the unemployed ultimately to revolutionary victory.

It is not mass unemployment ***per se*** that weakens the strength of the working class, but the politics of the ***opportunists***, the politics of the opportunist parties and of the trade unions, the cooperatives, etc. led by these parties on an opportunist basis and misused by them that makes mass unemployment an ever greater source of weakness for the working class, ***because it, i.e. opportunist politics, lowers and disintegrates the consciousness of the proletariat.*** In the case of passivity or of opportunist 'struggle', the weakening tendencies of mass unemployment take effect without restraint, indeed they depress the proletarian fighting strength more and more. In contrast, ***revolutionary*** struggle by the Party, the trade unions, the cooperatives, etc. takes precisely the terrible injustice of mass unemployment as a starting point in order – by means of their terrible personal experience of unemployment – to bring forth in the worker masses, the most decisive source of their strength, i.e. ***proletarian class consciousness***, proletarian-revolutionary consciousness, this source of all sources of proletarian strength, which makes all other sources of proletarian class strength pour forth, pour forth more and more strongly. In this way revolutionary politics makes the struggle against mass unemployment into a major lever in order to counterpose much more powerful, strengthening, and more and more strengthening tendencies to the weakening tendencies of mass unemployment, hurling the former against the latter. In this way, and only in this way, does revolutionary politics make the struggle against mass unemployment into a source of strength for the proletariat, does it create the pre-requisites for overcoming mass unemployment, indeed in the last analysis for ending the sufferings caused by capitalism for all workers, indeed for all those who work.

The Marxist Theory of Immiseration

Prolonged poverty ***per se*** does not revolutionise the worker masses; on the contrary it wears them down, disintegrates and crushes them. The screws of capitalist production press the

worker masses down deeper and deeper, but this takes place in a peculiar way. Like the entire capitalist economy, the process of immiseration, which is inevitably bound up with it, does not move in any way evenly; on the contrary, it moves extremely unevenly, in the alternating ups and downs of the economic cycle. Certainly, the cyclical phases of prosperity are becoming ever shorter and the cyclical depressions ever longer and deeper, nevertheless there are again and again periods where things improve to a certain extent, even if their magnitude progressively diminishes.

It is not so much sustained poverty that characterises the situation of the modern proletarian, but the continual and continually increasing uncertainty of existence of every single wage worker. This already has the effect of galvanizing them.

In capitalism the growth of mass poverty at one pole goes hand in hand with the continuous increase in the enormous wealth of the capitalist minority at the other pole. This class antagonism, which, inevitably, through the movement of capitalism, is becoming ever starker, again and again drives the masses ever more widely and sharply to indignation, to struggle. Immiseration per se does not revolutionise, but capitalist immiseration, by virtue of the ***sharpening of the class antagonisms*** that inevitably goes hand in hand with it, awakens the ***will to fight*** in the masses, presses, drives and pushes them more and more towards ***revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie***. Hence, although the facts more and more obviously and starkly demonstrate the immiseration of the worker masses, the Marxist theory of immiseration is furiously disputed by the bourgeoisie and all its henchmen, including the opportunists.

It is precisely the task of the opportunists to distance the masses from revolutionary struggle – and keep them from it. They therefore deploy no small measure of astuteness, cunning and trickery, in order to again and again ‘prove’ that it is possible to seriously improve the situation of the workers in capitalism, admittedly only gradually, but by and large on an upward path; that it is in fact improving; that there is no question of an actual immiseration of the working class in capitalism; that the Marxist theory of immiseration is incorrect and belongs on the scrapheap. The tricks and ruses that the opportunists make use of here boil down to three main tricks, tricks that they also combine as required.

Firstly, at best they mainly examine only money wages and prices (material wages), while more or less ‘overlooking’ the other extremely important sides of the problem (in particular the ***intensity of labour***!).

Secondly, they mostly examine the movement of money wages and material wages, only over a relatively short period of time or even if it is for a longer period of time, they only compare hourly, daily, or at best weekly wages, whereby a completely inadequate, indeed an incorrect picture arises (by doing this no account is taken of the losses of the workers through unemployment, illness, accident, deterioration of the quality of commodities, etc.).

Thirdly, they confine their description to the money wages and the material wages for only one branch of industry, at best for all the workers of a country. Green & Co. are just as indifferent to the fact that the higher wages of the AFL-workers’ aristocracy are achieved among other things at the expense of the wages of the multi-millioned masses of workers in the USA as the leaders of the British trade unions are to the fact that the higher wages of the British

workers' aristocracy are achieved at the expense of the British worker masses and the Indian masses. Just as all the opportunist trade union leaders are the greatest masters in denying and clouding capitalist impoverishment. The 'improvement' in the situation of the workers, in the main of the workers' aristocracy of one country at the expense of the world masses, in particular the colonial masses, does not do away with the immiseration of the world working class, but on the contrary intensifies it.

Because the opportunists collaborate via their parties, trade unions and cooperatives – with the capitalist class or sections of it – collaborating with the class enemy of the workers against the working class, because they again and again seek, strive for, work towards this collaboration ('people's' front, working partnership, coalition, economic democracy, etc.), they ***have to*** – whatever their 'socialist', 'communist' or 'revolutionary' words – in actual fact reject, sabotage and fight against the class struggle against the bourgeoisie, reject, sabotage and fight against the proletarian-revolutionary struggle; they ***have to*** – whatever their phrases – in actual fact conceal, deny the growing class antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie; they must – whatever stories they tell – in fact obscure, dispute the capitalist immiseration of the masses.

Whoever judges the opportunists by their 'socialist', 'communist', 'revolutionary', 'Marxist', 'Leninist' talk, writings and posturing and not by their actual actions or inaction, not by the inevitable effects of their actions or inaction for the world proletariat, for the proletarian-democratic state, for the international proletarian revolution, will surely fall for the opportunist deception.

The Stalinist bureaucracy operates with the same means of deception, with which the opportunists in the capitalist countries cloud the real situation of the workers, in order to deceive people about the ***real situation of the Russian workers***. In the Soviet Union, the workers were and are being raised from the level of Tsarist times more and more to the level of the working and living conditions of the workers of the most advanced capitalist countries; the Stalinist bureaucracy gives out the fulfilling of this ***pre***-socialist task to be 'socialism', or even 'nearly completed socialism'. As much as the Russian workers have undoubtedly been raised by the Russian Revolution out of the backward working and living conditions under feudalism and above the depths of Tsarist times, whereby – and the gigantic Stalinist parasites are to blame for this – they have still not yet reached the level of the real wages and living standards of the wage workers of the most advanced capitalist countries, it is just as undoubtedly the case that the Stalinist bureaucracy carries on its ***relative*** immiseration of the Russian workers – namely in comparison to the overall position of the degenerated Stalinist workers' bureaucracy, workers' aristocracy and to the new Russian capitalist elements, who are still camouflaging themselves – just as cunningly as the Fords & Co. in all the bourgeois countries, together with their Lewis, Green, Murray & Co., together with their Labour, Social Democratic, Stalinist, anarchist and other helpers.

Every improvement in the situation of an individual worker, of an individual group of workers or stratum of workers, achieved at the expense of the mass of the workers, at best changes the distribution of the total wages of the working class as a whole among its individual members and thus leaves the situation of the class per se unchanged; in reality the situation of the proletariat in relation to the bourgeoisie is thereby considerably worsened, because the class is ***split*** and weakened, which is precisely the purpose of these capitalist, opportunist 'wage increases'. We

are examining the situation of the working ***class***: ***A PARTIAL WAGE INCREASE, A REDUCTION IN LABOUR TIME, ETC. COUNTS FOR US***, ***AND IS A REAL IMPROVEMENT ONLY IF IT IS NOT AT THE EXPENSE OF THE WORKER MASSES, THAT IT IN FACT MEANS AN IMPROVEMENT IN THE SITUATION OF THE WORKING CLASS IN ITS ENTIRETY, I.E. OF THE WORKERS OF THE WHOLE WORLD***.

The concept of '***real wages***', true wages, must be conceived of much more broadly. It is insufficient to take into account the money wages and the commodity prices (the material wages) and in doing so to take labour time merely as a purely extensive quantity, because under advanced capitalist exploitation, increasing the ***intensity of labour*** plays an ever bigger role.

> By increasing the intensity of labour, a worker can be made to expend as much vital force in one hour as he formerly did in two (Marx, [1865] 1910, p.40).
>
> Increased expenditure of labour in a given time, heightened tension of labour power, and closer filling up of the pores of the labour time, or condensation of labour […]. This condensation of a greater mass of labour into a given period thenceforward counts for what it really is, a greater quantity of labour. In addition to a measure of its 'extension', i.e., duration, labour time now acquires a measure of its intensity (Marx, [1867] 1914b, p.354).
>
> As soon as the shortening of the working day becomes legally compulsory, it initially creates the subjective condition for the condensation of labour, namely the ability of the worker to make more power fluid in a given period of time, the machine in the hands of capital becomes an objective and systematically applied means for squeezing out more labour in a given period of time. This is effected in two ways: by increasing the speed of the machinery and by giving the same worker more machines to tend or expanding their sphere of labour (ibid., p.356).

Intensifying, 'condensing' labour is the ***modern form*** in which developed capitalism carries out the ***lengthening of the working day***.

> When the working day is prolonged, the price of labour power (the wage; auth.) may fall below its value, although that price be nominally unchanged or even rise. The value of a day's labour power is… estimated from its normal average duration, or from the normal duration of life among the workers and from corresponding normal transformations of organised bodily matter into motion in conformity with the nature of human beings. Up to a certain point, the increased wear and tear of labour power, inseparable from a lengthened working day, may be compensated by higher wages. But beyond this point wear and tear increases in geometrical progression, and at the same time every condition suitable for the normal reproduction and functions of labour power is suppressed. The price of labour power and the degree of its exploitation cease to be commensurable quantities (ibid., p.464).

This applies too of course also when the lengthening of the working day is carried out by the 'condensing', by the intensification of labour!

Even with a reduction of labour time, exploitation can increase and in actual fact increases in capitalism. In the period of Rationalisation, in particular in 1925, the leaders of the Social Democratic Party and the trade union leaders held up the 'more far-sighted' American entrepreneurs as a model to the 'short-sighted' European entrepreneurs. 'Ford wages' was their slogan at that time for many years. However, the wage increases of this capitalist 'philanthropist' were and are nothing but a cunning deception: the money wages are raised, for example, by 10% and the labour time shortened, for example, by 10%. The capitalists and the opportunists applaud – they 'merely' forget to report two trifles: that, prior to the carrying out of this 'great feat', part of the workforce was laid off, while for the remainder of the workforce labour intensity is increased, for example, by 25%, whereby the 'philanthropist' Ford increased his profits by millions. The costs of this are paid by the workers who were made unemployed, but also by the employed workers, because, despite shortened labour time, they have to expend more muscle energy, nerve energy and vital energy than the 'wage increase' represents; the costs are borne by the working class.

In any case ***capitalist*** shortening of labour time again and again brings merely a ***transient*** advantage to those strata of workers that benefit from it, and mostly only at the very start. In the course of time it is again and again devalued more and more by the various methods used in the never-ceasing capitalist offensive: by increasing prices, taxes, rents, etc., above all, however, by systematically increasing the intensity of labour. More than a hundred years ago the workers were exploited (*ausgeschunden*) for 16 hours a day; today it is 'merely' for eight hours. But in the course of these decades the exploiters have more than doubled the intensity of labour!!! Those who sing the praises of capitalist progress keep quiet about this. The worker of today – by means of the continuous threat of unemployment and hunger – is whipped and forced to expend more muscle energy and nerve energy, in short vital energy, during one hour's work than a worker say in 1800 did in 2 hours of work. If one takes into account the intensity of labour, then under capitalist conditions (the property of the bourgeoisie in the decisive means of production and the capitalist state machine built up on a class basis) all shortening of labour time in the last analysis, in reality, has the effect of lengthening the working day.

If the worker makes use of the freedom gained through the shortened working day ***only*** to recover physically, to become stronger or to improve job performance, etc., then under ***capitalist*** conditions they make themselves into physically and qualitatively more suitable objects of exploitation that can be drawn in for the purpose of exerting their labour power even more, are in fact drawn in, and compelled to do this; in the last analysis the benefit of this goes entirely to the capitalist class.

Only ***against*** the will of the bourgeoisie, its henchmen and its lackeys does the capitalist shortening of labour time actually benefit the working class – if and insofar as the workers utilise the freedom gained in order to raise their ***proletarian class consciousness***, in a word if and insofar as they make use of the free time gained ***against*** the bourgeoisie and its helpers of all kinds, because in this way they increase the proletarian class strength, the proletarian fighting strength, the basic pre-requisite for seriously improving the situation of the working class.

Whoever, by using a comparison of hourly, daily or weekly wages, indeed even of monthly or yearly wages, wants to prove in monetary terms that the situation of the workers has improved over a certain period of time, must first of all prove that all other essential circumstances have at least remained unchanged during the period of time taken as the basis of the comparison; in

particular the commodity prices, the taxes, the rents, the duration of labour, the intensity of labour, the value of money, etc. In reality here too there still remains a very big hole, through which short-time working and ***unemployment*** leer. In order to depict the real situation of the working class, therefore, wages must always be calculated – taking into account all the above circumstances – over at least one industrial cycle, that is say over 7-10 years; in this ***decade-wage***, as we would call it, loss of wages as a result of short-time working and unemployment (and besides this, illness and accidents too) is included. Only on this basis then can the ***real*** weekly, daily, hourly wage be calculated – which in truth for every worker is far smaller than that which is paraded in the capitalist and opportunist reports and statistics. Indeed more correctly, even three decades must taken as the basis of the calculation (the ***three-decade-wage***), because 'we know that the daily value of labour power is calculated upon a certain length of the worker's life, to which, again, corresponds a certain length of working day' (ibid., p.475). Only then – calculated on the basis of the three-decade-wage (i.e. including in the calculation the total losses suffered during this period by the worker through unemployment, short-time working, illness, accidents, etc.) – would the comparison of the hourly, daily, weekly and monthly wages in this way correctly show the movement of the real wages.

The income workers receive from social insurance can be described as the ***social wage***. It is in no way something extra that the working class receives somehow over and above its total wage. On the contrary it is a ***part of the total wage*** that the working class receives in addition to what it receives in the form of an individual wage. A part of the total wage is administered and distributed 'socially' (directly or indirectly) by the capitalist class, that's all. The 'self-administration' by the social insurance institutions in the capitalist state does not change this in essence at all. A part of the social income is provided directly from deductions from the wages. The capitalists pay the other part, but only as a particular form of a part of the wage; the social insurance contributions of the employers effectively form a portion of their wage account. In as far as the capitalist state contributes, it supplies this contribution mainly from the pockets of the workers by means of various capitalist transmission belts; insofar as it at first draws these contributions from the pockets of the employers, they too are effectively only the form that a part of the wages takes. However confusing the picture may be, as long as one only looks at the individual worker, the picture becomes clear when it is examined for the ***class*** as a whole. Regardless of the name, regardless of the form it takes, under no circumstances does the capitalist class pay the working class any more in total than the amount that capitalist profit allows as a wage at any given time. It is precisely this prevailing maximum that the working class receives at any given time from the bourgeoisie for its entire labour power, for its expenditure of labour and comprises both the sum of all individual wages and the sum of all social wages.

The best social insurance provided by the bourgeois state (and the social insurance, modelled on this, provided by the degenerated proletarian state led and administrated by the Stalinist bureaucracy) only replaces the losses that a worker is 'insured' against to a small extent.

The real losses suffered by the individual worker through illness, accident, unemployment, etc. are far greater. If these are calculated for the entire working class the result is an enormous total loss, which is of great importance for the real wage and the process of immiseration.

It is precisely the comparison between the movement of (real) wages and the movement of (real) profits that demonstrates the fact of the immiseration of the working class particularly clearly.

> We thus see that even if we *keep ourselves within the relation of capital and wage labour*, ***THE INTERESTS OF CAPITAL AND THE INTERESTS OF WAGE LABOUR ARE DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSED TO EACH OTHER***. […]
>
> Even the *most favourable situation* for the working class, namely, the *most rapid growth of capital*, however much it may improve the material life of the worker, does not abolish the antagonism between his interests and the interests of the bourgeois, the interests of the capitalists. ***Profits and wages*** remain as before, in inverse proportion.
>
> If capital grows rapidly, wages may rise, but the profit of capital rises disproportionately faster. The material situation of the worker has improved, but at the cost of his social position. The social chasm that separates him from the capitalists has widened (Marx, [1849] 1921, pp.32-33, 33).

And in declining capitalism the phases that provide the most favourable situation for wages, the phases of prosperity, become ever shorter; in contrast the phases of depression become ever longer!

It is the gigantic growth of profits that makes it particularly clear to workers how their social position is worsening, how they are becoming impoverished. The profits, especially those of the big capitalists, increase so enormously that they have developed an entire science in order to conceal, to hide from the working class as large a portion as possible of the profits (the distribution of profits in the form of particularly high salaries, *tantièmes*[51] and such like; secret reserves of all kinds, for example, in the form of accelerated depreciation; distribution of profits by means of bonus shares or diluted capital stock by means of bonus shares, in order to artificially reduce the rate of profit for outward appearances; secret reserves by creating fictitious, artificial creditors; gigantic 'private profits' on the stock exchange as a result of the information monopoly held by the real rulers of the businesses, who alone know their true position, etc., etc.). The famous '***profit freeze***' that the capitalist state and its helpers brandish, in order to make the very real ***wage freeze*** more palatable to the workers is based on the achievements of this science. In reality, the profit freeze is a deception, which is all the more secretive, because behind it even growing profits are hidden, profits it helps to hide – and this is the case both in the fascist-capitalist state and in the democratic-capitalist state.

Given capitalist conditions (capitalist class property in the decisive means of production and the capitalist state machine built up on a class basis), the bourgeoisie as a ***class*** again and again recoups any kind of improvement in the situation of the workers over the course of a certain period of time by means of increasing exploitation in all kinds of forms. Nevertheless, the capitalists are consistently against every increase in real wages, every real reduction in labour time, indeed against every real improvement in working conditions. Why? For economic

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[51] Bonuses based on a percentage share of the profits; trans.

reasons: because depressing the wages, lengthening or intensifying labour time, indeed all worsening of the working conditions, is one of the main means of the capitalist class to increase its profits. In addition to this there is the following consideration for ***individual*** capitalists, in particular the weaker ones: every wage increase, for example, if not combined with a worsening of the working conditions in other ways that outweigh the wage increase, does in fact ***temporarily*** bring a certain improvement in the material situation of the workers concerned; the individual capitalist, however, who has to pay this higher wage, does not know in advance whether they will survive in the competitive struggle, whether and to what extent and over what period of time they will in fact be able to recoup the costs of the wage increase, one way or another.

For political reasons: because of the social side effects; every real improvement in their situation that the workers gain through struggle – even if this improvement is only temporary – increases the consciousness of their own strength, increases the ***opportunity*** for them to think about things, to establish stronger links with their class comrades and to organise, in short, to increase their ***proletarian consciousness***; but this endangers the position of the capitalist property owners, exploiters, rulers as a class altogether.

Every struggle ***under capitalist*** conditions is only able to improve the situation of the working class ***within the limits that capitalism permits*** (bourgeois property in the decisive means of production, production for the purpose of profit and the capitalist state apparatus). This applies in particular, too, to the ***trade union struggle***.

> Thereupon the workers begin to form combinations (trade unions) against the bourgeois; they come together in order to keep up the wage rate; they found permanent associations in order to make provision beforehand for these occasional revolts. Here and there, the struggle breaks out into riots.
>
> Now and then the workers are victorious, but ***only for a time. THE REAL FRUIT OF THEIR BATTLES LIES, NOT IN THE IMMEDIATE SUCCESS, BUT IN THE EVER EXPANDING UNION OF THE WORKERS***. […] It was just this contact that was needed to centralise the numerous local struggles, all of the same character, into one national ***struggle between classes***. But every class struggle is a ***political struggle*** (*Das Kommunistische Manifest*, [1848] 1891, pp.15-16).
>
> Firstly, the favourable effects of the resisting trade associations are limited to the periods of average and brisk business; in periods of stagnation and crisis they regularly fail; […] And secondly – ignoring other less important restrictions – neither the protection legislation nor the resistance of the trade associations removes the main thing which needs to be abolished: ***capitalist relations***, which continually reproduce the contradiction between the capitalist class and the class of wage workers. The mass of wage workers remains condemned to lifelong wage labour; the gap between them and the capitalists becomes ever deeper and wider the more modern large-scale industry takes over all branches of production (Engels, [1891] 1931, p.156).

A struggle that ties itself to the capitalist framework, in short, ***every reformist, nationally-restricted struggle, indeed any opportunist*** struggle is ***never*** able to lead the workers out of the elastic, steely ring of capitalist exploitation. For the milch cows of the capitalist class this struggle is at most able to gain somewhat more fodder, cleaner, roomier, lighter, airier, nicer stalls with a water supply, electric light, etc., etc. However, this changes absolutely nothing in the basic fact that the workers remain milch cows of the capitalist class; that they are more and more thoroughly milked and exploited (all '***improvements***' ***within the framework of capitalism*** have of course exclusively the ultimate purpose of extracting more milk from the cows, more surplus value from the workers and exploiting the workers even more thoroughly than hitherto!); that the cows have to give considerably more and increasingly more milk than the improvements in their fodder, their stalls, etc., etc. constitute; that the capitalist exploiters of these cows increasingly benefit, the proletarian milch cows, on the other hand, doubtlessly ***benefit transiently***, but in reality are at a ***lasting***, ***perpetually increasing disadvantage***, remain perpetually exploited, and are exploited more and more severely; that therefore the social gulf between the capitalist bloodsuckers and the proletarian 'milch cows' is becoming ever bigger and that above all the workers remain milch cows, working animals in human form, ***work beasts and not human beings among human beings***! Never ever are reformist, nationally-limited, in short, opportunist politics able to turn wage-slaves into human beings, who work and live in freedom and equality together with all other human beings.

Only politics that ***on principle*** does not tie itself to the limits drawn by the capitalist robbers – something that does not exclude, but on the contrary includes the fact that they take into account ***tactically*** all the conditions of struggle altogether, including the capitalist conditions of struggle – only the proletarian revolutionaries, only proletarian international politics, only ***proletarian class politics*** is able to break the capitalist yoke.

Certainly, proletarian class politics, too – as long as it has not yet succeeded in doing this, as long, therefore, as the basic conditions of struggle imposed by the capitalist class on the working class, indeed on all the exploited, exist – can at most, in the ***immediate future*** gain improvements – and even these only ***temporarily*** – that are possible within the limits of the capitalist conditions of exploitation, profit and struggle; but in the struggle for these immediate (transitory) improvements, it awakens, raises and increases ***at the same time*** the proletarian consciousness and the will of the masses to act, it increasingly mobilises their revolutionary fighting strength; it thus creates in this struggle for immediate goals simultaneously, indirectly the basic pre-requisite for ***ultimately*** bursting open the capitalist framework altogether, for transforming the, at best, somewhat better nourished, somewhat better clothed, etc. human beasts into human beings, into real human beings, who, together with all other human beings, are, in freedom and equality, now able to raise their entire standard of living materially, mentally and culturally ever higher, to develop it more and more comprehensively, permanently.

Absolute impoverishment, that means that in capitalism the situation of the working class ***in comparison to its own situation*** has worsened and worsens within a period of time – ***relative*** impoverishment, that means that the situation of the proletariat ***in comparison to the situation of the bourgeoisie*** becomes worse and worse, that the capitalist class's portion of the social new value – i.e. of the total social value after the replacement of the value of the consumed material means of production – and all the more so of the total social value, of the total social

product, becomes bigger and bigger, while the working class's portion of it, however, becomes smaller and smaller. What is the standpoint of Marxist theory on this?

> Hence, the cost of production of a worker is restricted, almost entirely, to the means of subsistence that they require for maintenance, and for the propagation of their race. But the price of a commodity, and therefore also of labour (more accurately: of labour power; auth.) is equal to its cost of production. In the same measure, therefore, as the repulsiveness of the work increases, the wage decreases. Even more, in the same measure as the use of machinery and division of labour increases, the quantity of work exacted also increases proportionately, whether by prolongation of the working hours, by increasing the work exacted in a given time or by increased speed of machinery, etc. […]
>
> The modern worker […], instead of rising with the progress of industry, ***sinks deeper and deeper below the conditions of existence of his own class.*** The worker becomes a pauper, and pauperism ***develops*** more rapidly than population and wealth. […] It (the bourgeoisie; auth.) is unfit to rule because it is incapable of assuring an existence to its slave even within their slavery, because it cannot help letting them sink into such a state, that it has to feed them, instead of being fed by them. […]
>
> The average price of wage-labour is the minimum wage, i.e. that quantum of the means of subsistence that is required to keep the worker alive as a worker. What, therefore, the wage-worker appropriates by means of their labour, merely suffices to reproduce a bare existence (*Das Kommunistische Manifest*, [1848] 1908, pp.28, 31-32, 33).
>
> But with the development of industry, the proletariat not only increases in number, it becomes concentrated in greater masses, its strength grows, and it feels that strength more. […] The collisions between individual workers and individual bourgeois take on more and more the character of collisions between two classes. […]
>
> But it was just this contact that was needed to centralise the numerous local struggles, all of the same character, into a national struggle, a struggle between classes. But every class struggle is a political struggle. […]
>
> The advance of industry […] replaces the isolation of the workers, due to competition, with revolutionary unification by means of association. […]
>
> *Proletarians of All Countries Unite*! (ibid., pp.29, 30, 32, 46).
>
> If capital grows rapidly, wages may rise; but the profit of capital rises disproportionately faster. The material position of the worker has improved, but at the cost of their ***social*** position. The social chasm that separates them from the capitalists has widened (Marx, [1849] 1921, p.33).

In 1850, Marx emphasised

the truth that the slightest improvement in its (the proletariat's; auth.) position remains a *utopia within* the bourgeois republic, a utopia that becomes a crime as soon it wants to become a reality. In place of the demands, exuberant in form, but still limited and even ***bourgeois*** in content, whose concession the proletariat wanted to wring from the February Republic, there appeared the bold slogan of revolutionary struggle: ***Overthrow of the bourgeoisie! Dictatorship of the working class***! (Marx, [1850] 1895, p.40).

Everywhere the great mass of the working class is sinking deeper into poverty, at least ***in relation to the ascent of the classes that are above them on the social scale.*** And so in all countries it has now become a truth demonstrable to every unprejudiced mind and only denied by those who have an interest in misleading others by false expectations that ***NO IMPROVEMENT OF MACHINERY, NO APPLIANCE OF SCIENCE TO PRODUCTION, NO IMPROVEMENT OF THE MEANS OF TRANSPORT, NO NEW COLONIES, NO EMIGRATION, NO OPENING OF NEW MARKETS, NO FREE TRADE, NOR ALL THESE THINGS TAKEN TOGETHER, WILL DO AWAY WITH THE POVERTY OF THE TOILING MASSES; BUT THAT, ON THE PRESENT FALSE BASIS, EVERY NEW DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRODUCTIVE POWER OF LABOUR IS BOUND TO LEAD TO A DEEPENING OF THE SOCIAL DIFFERENCES AND TO A SHARPENING OF THE SOCIAL ANTAGONISMS*** (Marx, [1864] 1922, pp.24-25).

By virtue of the increased productivity of labour, the same average amount of daily necessities might sink in price from three to two shillings, or only four hours of the working day, instead of six, be required in order to reproduce the equivalent for the value of the daily necessities. The worker would now be able to buy with two shillings as many necessities as he did before with three shillings. The value of labour (more accurately: of labour power; auth.) would in actual fact have sunk; but this diminished value would command the same amount of commodities as before. Then profits would rise from three to four shillings, and the rate of profit (what is meant is the rate of surplus value; auth.) from 100% to 200%. Although the worker's ***absolute standard of living*** would have remained the ***same***, his ***relative wages*** and with this his ***relative social position***, as compared with that of the capitalist would have been ***lowered*** (Marx, [1865] 1910, pp.37-38).

As to profits, there exists no law that determines their minimum. […] The maximum of profit is therefore limited by the physical minimum of wages and the physical maximum of the working day. […] Determining its real level is only settled by the continuous struggle between capital and labour: ***THE CAPITALIST WORKS CONSTANTLY AT REDUCING WAGES TO THEIR PHYSICAL MINIMUM AND AT EXTENDING THE WORKING DAY TO ITS PHYSICAL MAXIMUM, WHILE THE WORKER CONSTANTLY PRESSES IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION***.

The matter resolves itself into a question of the relative strengths of the combatants (ibid., pp.43-44).

The application of machinery is but one of the many methods for increasing the productive powers of labour. The very same development that makes ordinary labour superfluous, on the other hand, simplifies skilled labour and thus depreciates it.

The same law asserts itself in another form. […] ***WITH THE PROGRESS OF ACCUMULATION A PROGRESSIVE CHANGE IN THE COMPOSITION OF CAPITAL TAKES PLACE***. […]

WITH THE PROGRESS OF INDUSTRY THE DEMAND FOR LABOUR DOES NOT, ***THEREFORE***, ***KEEP PACE WITH THE ACCUMULATION OF CAPITAL. IT WILL STILL INCREASE, BUT IN A CONSTANTLY DIMINISHING RATIO AS COMPARED WITH THE INCREASE OF CAPITAL***.

These few indications will suffice to show that the very development of modern industry must gradually tip the scales in favour of the capitalist against the worker and that consequently ***THE GENERAL TENDENCY OF CAPITALIST PRODUCTION IS NOT TO RAISE***, ***BUT TO LOWER THE AVERAGE LEVEL OF WAGES***, ***i.e. to push down the value of labour*** (more accurately: labour power; auth.) ***more or less to its minimum limit***. But if this is the tendency of things in this system, does this mean that the working class ought to renounce its resistance against the attacks of capital, and abandon its attempts at making the best of the occasional opportunities for ***temporary*** improvements? If it did, it would be pressed down to an undifferentiated mass of broken starvlings who are beyond help. I think I have shown that their struggles for decent wages are events inseparable from the whole wages system, that in ***NINETY-NINE CASES OUT OF A HUNDRED THEIR EFFORTS AT RAISING WAGES ARE ONLY EFFORTS AT MAINTAINING THE GIVEN VALUE OF LABOUR*** (***MORE ACCURATELY***: ***LABOUR POWER***; auth.), ***and that the necessity of disputing its price with the capitalist is inherent in their situation of having to sell themselves as commodities***. […]

At the same time, and quite apart from the general servitude connected to the wage system, the workers ought not to ***exaggerate to themselves the ultimate result of these daily struggles.*** They ought not to forget that they are fighting against the effects and not the causes of these effects; ***THAT THEY ARE RETARDING THE DOWNWARD MOVEMENT, BUT NOT CHANGING ITS DIRECTION***; that they are applying palliatives, not curing the malady. They ought, therefore, not to be exclusively absorbed in these inevitable guerilla struggles that are brought about incessantly by the never ceasing attacks of capital and changes in the market situation. They ought to understand that, with all the poverty it imposes upon them, the present system simultaneously produces the material conditions and the social forms necessary for an economic reconstruction of society. Instead of the conservative motto: 'A fair day's wage for a fair day's work!' they ought to inscribe on their banner the revolutionary slogan: '***Abolition of the wages system***'. […]

THE GENERAL TENDENCY OF CAPITALIST PRODUCTION IS NOT TO RAISE, BUT TO LOWER THE AVERAGE LEVEL OF WAGES. […]

Trade unions work well as centres of resistance against the attacks of capital. They prove to be ineffective partially in consequence of an injudicious use of their power. ***THEY FAIL GENERALLY IN THEIR PURPOSE, BY LIMITING THEMSELVES TO A GUERILLA WAR AGAINST THE EFFECTS OF THE EXISTING SYSTEM, INSTEAD OF SIMULTANEOUSLY WORKING TOWARDS CHANGING IT AND USING THEIR ORGANISED FORCES AS A LEVER FOR THE FINAL EMANCIPATION OF THE WORKING CLASS, THAT IS TO SAY THE ULTIMATE ABOLITION OF THE WAGES SYSTEM*** (ibid., pp.44-46).

In his systematic analysis of the process of capitalist production, Marx proves irrefutably that

> in the same measure as capital accumulates, the ***lot of the worker***, regardless of whether their payment is high or low, is bound to grow worse. The law, finally, that always equilibrates the relative surplus population or industrial reserve army, to the extent and energy of accumulation, this law rivets the worker to capital more firmly than the wedges of Hephaestus[52] did Prometheus to the rock. It establishes an accumulation of poverty corresponding with the accumulation of capital. ***ACCUMULATION OF WEALTH AT ONE POLE IS, THEREFORE, AT THE SAME TIME ACCUMULATION OF POVERTY, AGONY OF TOIL, SLAVERY, IGNORANCE, BRUTALITY AND MORAL DEGRADATION, AT THE OPPOSITE POLE, I.E. ON THE SIDE OF THE CLASS THAT PRODUCES ITS OWN PRODUCT IN THE FORM OF CAPITAL*** (Marx, [1867] 1914b, pp.582-583).
>
> Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolise all advantages of this process of transformation, ***GROWS THE MASS OF POVERTY, OPPRESSION, SLAVERY, DEGENERATION AND EXPLOITATION***; but with this too grows the revolt of the working class, an ever expanding ***class***, ***educated, united and organised*** by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself. The monopoly of capital becomes a shackle upon the mode of production that has sprung up and flourished along with, and under it. Centralisation of the means of production and socialisation of labour reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The death knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated (ibid., pp.690-691).
>
> That the ***situation of the workers*** has in general become ***materially worse*** since the introduction of capitalist production on a large scale, is doubted only by the bourgeois (Engels, [1872] 1887, p.16).
>
> 'The number and the ***poverty*** of the proletarians, is increasing ***continuously***'. This is ***incorrect*** when put in such a ***categorical way***. The organisation of the

[52] The equivalent of the Roman god Vulcan (trans.).

> workers and their constantly growing resistance will possibly check the growth of *poverty* to a certain extent. However, what ***certainly does increase***, is the ***insecurity of existence*** (Engels, [1891] 1928b, p.59).
>
> *At the present time* (after the First [imperialist] World War; auth.) this ***impoverishment***, no longer only ***social,*** but also ***physiological*** and ***biological***, *confronts us* in all its shocking reality (Kommunistische Internationale, 1919, p.50).

Shortly before the Second (imperialist) World War, the Fourth International pointed to the present

> epoch of decaying capitalism, when there can be no question at all of systematic social reforms and the raising of the living standards of the masses; when the bourgeoisie every time takes back again with the right hand double what it grants with the left hand (taxes, customs duties, inflation, 'deflation', high prices, unemployment, the police regimentation of strikes, etc.), when every serious demand of the proletariat and even every progressive demand of the petty bourgeoisie inevitably goes beyond the limits of capitalist property relations and of the bourgeois state (Trotzki, 1938, p.4).

The capitalist mode of production passes through three great epochs.

Firstly, the ***epoch of upcoming capitalism***. Capital increasingly takes possession of production, wiping out more and more of the handicraft commodity producers. The wage workers, still devoid of any proletarian consciousness or any organisation and left completely defenceless against capitalist exploitation, sink beneath the weight of it more and more – they become paupers. ***Absolute*** impoverishment of the worker masses is the tendency throughout this first capitalist epoch.

Secondly, ***the epoch of ascending capitalism***. This is the period of increasing, by and large continuous all-round capitalist upswing that takes place in a wave-like trajectory, the period of by and large continuous growth in capitalist profits – again in a wave-like trajectory. It is true, the economic crises return periodically again and again, but in relative terms they do not last long and act like a cleansing thunderstorm, unemployment is an exceptional phenomenon and after every crisis comes a big and ever bigger upswing.

The mechanism of the capitalist economy 'automatically' overcomes every crisis, above all by extending ever more broadly the conquest of new markets, by ruining the pre-capitalist producers there (but also by means of beating weaker competitors in world markets that have already been opened up). In this way capital advances victoriously across the globe. The workers have begun to organise themselves, their organisations are growing and making use of periods of increasing profits and the waves of prosperity, in order to fight for higher wages, shorter labour time and better working conditions. The tendency towards pauperisation gradually ebbs away somewhat, indeed growing sections of the working class are able to improve their material position overall, but exploitation and profits grow even more. ***Relative immiseration*** of the worker masses is the dominant tendency of the second capitalist epoch.

Thirdly, the ***epoch of declining capitalism***. The world market has been conquered. The possibility of overcoming the cyclical crises 'automatically' – above all by means of opening up and conquering new markets – has disappeared. Only the strong, ever stronger capitalists are still able to 'extend' their market, but only by eliminating the weaker capitalists through competition, bringing them down and ruining them. Free capitalist competition changes more and more into capitalist monopoly. The coercive law of capitalist competition, which has become more intense in this way, intensifies capitalist exploitation to the utmost degree and at the same time increases the difficulty in selling commodities profitably. The periodic economic crises become longer, more severe and more burdensome; on the other hand, the periodic waves of prosperity on the whole become shorter and weaker. Mass unemployment takes on gigantic, ever bigger proportions, it becomes an enduring phenomenon. Only the upper stratum of the working class, the workers' aristocracy (the workers' bureaucracy included) improves its situation at the expense of the masses, but this too always only temporarily, within an ever narrower sphere and with ever greater difficulties. ***PROGRESSIVELY ACCELERATING RELATIVE IMMISERATION OF THE WORKER MASSES AND AT THE SAME TIME A GROWING ABSOLUTE IMMISERATION OF AN EVER BROADER SECTION OF THE WORKING CLASS***: ***THIS IS THE LAW OF THE THIRD CAPITALIST EPOCH***, of the epoch of advancing capitalist decay, on whose front entrance the alternative blazes in flaming characters: forwards to Communism or – literally, backwards to barbarism, ever more deeply back to barbarism. This became more and more apparent after the First (imperialist) World War and most tangibly in the enormous capitalist world economic crisis that began in 1929. The Second (imperialist) World War seeks to hide this under mountains of human corpses, under entire mountain ranges of destroyed possessions, and over and above this, seeks 'to create an expanded market', at least for the victorious capitalists, by bringing down and destroying competitors on a national scale. This at best means, however, postponing by a few years the outbreak of an even more enormous world economic crisis, of mass unemployment on an even larger scale, an even more enormous increase in pauperism, of even greater poverty of the masses as a whole.

Immiseration of the working class is the ***constant*** tendency of the entire capitalist mode of production. However, this ***general*** tendency, governing the entire capitalist era, assumes a ***specific form*** in every epoch through which capitalist development passes. This applies by the way to all general tendencies (laws) of the capitalist mode of production. It is precisely by 'overlooking' or ignoring this change in form that anti-Marxists of all kinds falsely attribute 'mistakes', 'errors' to Marxism and by means of which they seek to shake, cloud and swindle away precisely the ***general*** capitalist tendencies that Marx had analysed.

The sinking value of labour power can, as a result of increasing productivity of labour, also be expressed in an equal, indeed a bigger quantity or amount of use value. However, this does not in any way eliminate the impoverishment tendencies in capitalism, i.e. the fact that the ***share*** of the working class in the social new value, and even more so in the total social value, ***falls*** continuously in relative terms (namely in comparison to the share of the capitalist class) and that in declining capitalism an ever broader section of the working class sinks into poverty in ***absolute terms*** (i.e. sinks ever deeper in comparison to its own earlier situation).

Only the international revolutionary struggle and the victory of the working class leads to the overcoming of the basic immanent tendency in the capitalist economic system, the tendency of

the progressively increasing immiseration of the working class – through the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisie; through expropriation of the capitalist class; through the establishment of the dictatorship of proletarian democracy, ultimately on a world scale; and, through the construction of Socialism.

The Proletarian Class Front – The Proletarian Reserves

Taken together, all the workers – nationally and internationally – constitute the ***proletarian class front***. We have already shown that the opportunist parties (the SP, LP, StP, etc.) together with Green, Murray, Lewis & Co., together with mass organisations (like the trade unions, etc.), which are misled by the opportunists, do not fight in the proletarian class front, not even on its right wing, that they do not fight with the proletariat in its struggle against the bourgeoisie at all; but that, precisely on the contrary, they fight on the extreme left wing of the whole capitalist front against the proletarian revolution, against the world proletariat, against the proletarian state; indeed, in some cases they even look to the right wing of the whole capitalist front, like Lewis & Co. in the USA and – depending on the needs of Russian nationalism – the Stalinist bureaucracy, the Stalinist party too.

The working class groups all its ***reserves*** around the proletarian class front. Enormous reserve forces are at its disposal – the overwhelming majority of human society in its entirety: the many small-peasant/small-farmer, petty-bourgeois masses in their hundreds of millions, the exploited and oppressed peoples, in particular the colonial and semi-colonial peoples, in their hundreds of millions. Over and above this it has an enormous reserve in the antagonisms – which inevitably sharpen more and more in declining capitalism – within the camp of the capitalist class, within the whole capitalist front and among the capitalist reserves, between the capitalist henchmen and the capitalist lackeys, among the capitalist henchmen themselves and among the capitalist lackeys themselves.

All these reserves without exception are at the disposal of the working class to an ever greater extent, but singly and solely, if it always and again and again steadfastly fulfils the indispensable basic condition for this: if it pursues strictly consistent proletarian class politics and at the same time the correct proletarian-revolutionary, proletarian-international class strategy and class tactics.

The proletarian class front combined with the proletarian reserves constitutes the ***proletarian front as a whole***.

After Victory in one Country

> After the first socialist revolution of the proletariat and the overthrow of the bourgeoisie in ***one*** country, the proletariat of that country remains ***for a long time*** weaker than the bourgeoisie, simply because of the latter's extensive international links and also because of the power of the spontaneous and continuous restoration and regeneration of capitalism and the bourgeoisie by the small commodity producers […] of that country (Lenin, 1920b, pp.49-50).

The proletariat in one country can singly and solely maintain and extend its victory for the world proletariat, including for itself, if, and for as long as, it regards and in actual fact treats the position of power it has conquered and the proletarian state it has built up in one country ***above***

all, i.e. first and foremost, as a consolidated ***starting point*** for carrying the international proletarian-revolutionary struggle, the proletarian revolution further. If the proletarian state established in one country does not in actual fact serve the international proletarian revolution, if – for whatever well-meant reason – it gives precedence first and foremost to ***nationally-limited*** tasks of whatever kind ('socialism in one country', 'revolution in one country', party collaboration with the bourgeoisie or sections of the bourgeoisie by means of social 'fascism', 'people's' front, social-patriotism, etc.) then the politics, which have been forced upon the degenerating proletarian state in this way by the petty-bourgeoisifying, petty-bourgeoisified workers' bureaucracy and workers' aristocracy becomes ***A MAIN WEAKNESS OF THE ENTIRE PROLETARIAT OF ALL COUNTRIES, OF THE PROLETARIAT OF THE COUNTRY IN QUESTION ITSELF, AS WELL AS THE PROLETARIAN STATE***. The immense additional strength flowing from the fact that a proletarian state exists and acts, flows to the proletarian class strength singly and solely on the line of the world proletarian world revolution, if and as long as the proletarian state is consistently led in actual fact according to the battle cry of the Communist Manifesto: 'Proletarians of all countries, unite!' – unite for the struggle against your exploiters and oppressors, against the class enemy of all workers without exception, against the bourgeoisie of ***all*** countries, against the international bourgeoisie, against the world bourgeoisie and all its helpers!

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[58] Published in English under the title: Between Red and White; trans.

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