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INTERNATIONAL
COUNCIL
CORRESPONDENCE

For Theory and Discussion

C O N T E N T S :

The Breathing Spell

Will there be Prosperity?

THE LENIN LEGEND

Towards State Capitalism?

(In the Resolution adopted by the Brussels Conference

PORTRAIT of the COUNTER REVOLUTION

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The period of progressive capitalist development is historically closed. The decline period of capital, a permanent condition of crisis, compels to ever greater convulsions of economy, to new imperialistic and military conflicts, to ever increasing unemployment and to general and absolute impoverishment of the workers. Thus is given the objective situation for the communist revolution in the capitalist countries. For the working class, there is only the revolutionary way out, which leads to the communist society. No one can deprive the workers of this task, which must be carried out by the class itself.

The publishers of Council Correspondence see in the acting self-initiative of the workers and in the growth of their self-consciousness the essential advance of the labor movement. We therefore combat the leadership policy of the old labor movement, and call upon the workers to take their fate in their own hands, to set aside the capitalist mode of production and themselves to administer and direct production and distribution in accordance with social rules having universal validity. As a fighting slogan and statement of goal we propose:

All power to the workers' councils! The means of production in the hands of the Workers!

The Breathing Spell

The crisis, like much else in life, is a matter of custom; the longer one lives in it, the less detestable it is found. Even tho things are bad, still one feels that they might be worse, -- much like a man who has been in an accident and considers himself lucky to have lost only his legs and not his head. Those who are fortunate enough to return home from a battle are often still more enthused than they were on going in, and the dead are if course dumb. Complaints about the general misery finally get on the nerves even of the most sober-minded and he seeks recreation in the more colorful moments of life, whether political assassinations or the first skirmishes of the coming world war. After the day's work, the baseball or football game of grownup children still offers to indifference the necessary stimulus and energy to read the boycotted Hearst press.

The newspaper economists appear to be right: the depression was a psychological phenomenon, people merely lacked the courage for prosperity. When the crisis ceased to be spoken of, it was also quite passed. The panicky state of mind which once set people demonstrating in front of the banks because their money had already been taken up by others, the strike wave which it had been so hard to bring into legal channels, the suicides of bloated capitalists and emaciated workers, the unrest of the unemployed, -- all that is forgotten and consequently the dividends mount. General Dawes, the celebrated "voice from the Middle West", pounds his absent breast and prophesies an undreamed-of prosperity, supporting his prediction on the basis of the previous analyses, which set the turning point of the crisis at

1935. Forbes writes that " Instead of facing a long, grueling period of deflation, depression and stress, Americans now face a period of recovery which should last longer than the appalling downswing. And the coming prosperity promises to be more widely shared and enjoyed than any previous spell of prosperity," -- in which he merely gives expression to the general optimism, which is made responsible for the good business balances.

Jesse H. Jones, chairman of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, speaks for thousands of other "leaders" in industry and business when he says that "recovery has been attained and that there is no longer any fear or any reason for fearing that something is going to fall down upon us, that some great failure or disaster may occur that would seriously disturb conditions". And in a letter to the newspaper king Roy W. Howard, Roosevelt proclaims for the whole nation: " the depression was (sic) the culmination of unhealthy, however innocent arrangements in agriculture, in business and in finance". And he finds it " a source of great satisfaction that at this moment conditions are such as to offer further substantial and widespread recovery".

So the depression is now just a matter of history; it was, and the upward movement has set in which has allowed the Roosevelt Administration to give business a breathing spell. And, for that matter, the breathing is fine.

If the causes for the depression were sought as well as found by different people in accordance with their various interests, temperaments and intellects, hence in the most various places, so the explanation for the approaching new prosperity are extremely manifold and contradictory. Just as it was generally agreed, after three years of depression, that there really was a crisis in the U.S.A., so it is also now agreed that in about three years prosperity will be really noticeable. The dispute is merely regarding the paternity of this coming prosperity, and the violence of the dispute is not owing merely to the circumstance of the forthcoming elections which render necessary a sharper division of minds. It is true that the crown which Roosevelt set on his head is being spattered with mud by the liberty-thirsting anti-New Dealers. In reality, however, no one knows what the dispute is about, no one knows what he is saying; the most that any of the disputants knows is the character of his audience. Since the blockhead constantly finds someone who is still more idiotic than himself, this dispute can be successfully waged by any one.

Now what has actually happened? The Roosevelt Administration attempted to combat the depression with

the following program (in the Chief's own words) : "The establishment of a wise balance in American economic life, to restore our banking system to public confidence, to protect investors in the security market, to give labor freedom to organize and protection from exploitation, to safeguard and develop our national resources, to set up protection against the vicissitudes incident to old age and unemployment, to relieve destitution and suffering, and to relieve investors and consumers from the burden of unneccary corporate machinery." And even the "healthy opposition" to the New Deal has to admit, Forbes writes, that " since the bottom of the depression, the progress made is impressive. Stock prices, a significant barometer, are the highest in four years. Re-employment is now more encouraging than at any time since the boom. The purchasing power of our agri-cultural population has increased quite substantially. Including producing capital, our durable goods have lately, for the first time, shown real revival. The steel industry has multiplied its output fivefold since it reached nadir, and steel masters predict further gains. Banks are doing 20 to 25 per cent more business than twelve months ago. The tidal wave of dividend reductions and omissions has spent its force; resumptons and increases are now becoming more and more common." Etc., etc.

Now the fact is that none of these statements involves any responsibility; every one of them is completely without substance and expresses nothing more than Mr. Forbes's optimism -- an optimism for which he is also paid, since of course it is not until optimism sets in that business gets going. And in reality this whole optimism and this prosperity cry is based on the arbitrary generalization of individual cases; for the nation as a whole, there is no sign of a coming prosperity or of an upswing. The government business chart gives a clearer picture regarding the actual conditions, a picture which leads to other conclusions than those which are favorable to business.

Each index below represents the percentage of "normal" (100) as of the years 1923-25, with the exception of prices; these latter are based on the year 1926.

Year-	Industrial Production	Factory Employment	Pay- rolls	Freight- loadings	Wholesale- prices
1929	119	104.8	109.1	106	95.3
1930	96	91.5	88.7	92	86.4
1931	81	77.4	67.5	75	73.0
1932	64	64.2	45.3	56	64.8
1933	84	78.0	59.1	60	70.8
1934	84	78.0	59.1	60	70.8

1935:	Industrial Production	Factory Employment	Pay- rolls	Freight- loadings	Wholesale- prices
Jan.	90	80.5	64.1	64	78.8
Feb.	89	81.9	69.1	65	79.5
March	88	82.4	70.7	65	79.3
April	86	82.3	70.7	61	80.1
May	85	81.2	68.5	61	80.2
June	86	79.9	66.4	63	79.8
July	86	80.4	65.3	58	79.4
Aug.	88	81.0	66.5	61	80.5

The most significant change of late has been in prices, which are higher than at any time in five years. Otherwise, however, since the beginning of 1935, since the beginning of the "new prosperity", no progress has been made in bringing industrial production back to "normal". The present depression is the longest in the entire history of capitalism.

Colonel Leonard P. Ayres, vice-president and economist of the Cleveland Trust Company, writes in his monthly review in October 1935: "During the last six months of this year the volume of industrial production has remained so nearly unchanged that in only one month has there been any variation. Production declined during the first quarter and has been almost stabilized since then. The level at which this has taken place has been almost exactly half-way between the low records made in 1932 and again in 1933 and the computed normal level. It is about the level reached in the autumn of 1930 and the spring of 1931." For four months, says Ayres, "no progress has been made in bringing industrial production back to normal", and he does not anticipate any change in the immediate future. The only thing of interest that he finds during the year 1935 is that it was the most stabilized period in American history. "It seems strange that this should be so," he declares, "for there has been this year a great increase in the output of the automotive industries and an important improvement in agriculture. In the second quarter we had the suspension of NRA, which might well have been expected to cause sudden important changes, and now we have the outbreak of war in Africa. Nevertheless, despite these portentous developments and many others of lesser consequence, the flow of general business has continued to move steadily forward in almost unchanging volume. There have been few serious labor disputes, only moderate price changes for most commodities and no minor business boomlets or intermediate collapses."

Altho in sharp contrast to the prevailing conception, Colonel Ayres's survey presents an objective picture of the actual situation, which permits of no optimism as regards the near future. This objectivity is,

however, merely owing to the fact that Ayres is still holding to old ideas; ideas which relate to the prosperity of 1928-29. In the meanwhile, however, various discoveries have been made which have led to a transformation of economic concepts. It is not merely that the times when one danced around the golden calf are today generally recognized as sinful and the jazz age regarded as abnormal; science also sees today that the conditions of 1929 could by no means be regarded as typical prosperity, but rather that the truly proper expression of capitalism is the stagnant depression. Prosperity is denoted as the abnormal, the crisis as the normal capitalist condition. Thus, when Professor Douglas, in his book Controlling Depressions, asserts that the previous depressions were overcome only thru pure chance, such a statement involves the view that the crisis condition is the normal one in the present system and that only an accident, which can not be counted upon, will help to evade it. And Professor H. Parker Willis, of Columbia University, writes in his book The Economics of Inflation: "It had been evident, for some time before 1929, that at some comparatively early period a reckoning must be expected, owing to the abnormal conditions then existing."

If those profitable conditions were abnormal, then the conditions of today must be rated as normal, and the present prosperity cry finds its justification by way of such a simple means as a reversal of concepts. With this logic, which prizes starving as the best nourishment, one can really solve all problems. Even tho it is true that the crisis did not first make its appearance in 1929, but as early as 1926 - or, in other words, even if the rate of accumulation fell in 1926, that is, did not advance as much as would have been necessary in order to continue the general upswing - and business took refuge in increased speculation, which could only end in the collapse of the unfavorable speculations, all which is only a sign of the crisis which has been held up but not averted, -- nevertheless this speculation is one of the normal manifestations of the capitalist system. The whole of the prosperity down to 1929 is just as normal for capitalism as the whole of the depression since 1929. And so we can hold conservatively with Ayres to the old concepts in order to make ourselves intelligible, and are thus not in a position to see in the stagnant depression signs of the coming prosperity. What is more: this very "freezing of the status quo" precludes, as we see it, any optimism whatever.

There is no doubt that, as we read in a Report, "the rise in business activity in recent months has naturally benefitted corporate earnings materially. Despite higher operating costs and increased taxes, it is currently estimated that aggregate industrial earnings in the first

quarter (1935) were some 40 per cent above the corresponding period last year, while in the second half of the year results are expected to be around 30 per cent above the 1934 level." The experts and advisers of Capital may write their reports triumphantly, but the sour taste in their mouth still remains. Roosevelt's monopolistic policy has helped industry to bring about necessary technical and economic reorganizations, which have increased profits. But with this there is still not much more attained than a rise of profit for the enterprises muddling thru the depression, and this rise of profit in itself is of little significance as regards the further development. The mass of profit may be greater than before and still at the same time too small to enable the necessarily accelerated accumulation which alone would bring with it a new general upswing. "The most interesting and important problem involved in the relatively static conditions of business," writes Colonel Ayres, "is the failure of the combination of great accumulated shortages of goods and accumulated surpluses of capital to stimulate new business activity. Idle funds have become so large that interest rates have fallen to the lowest levels ever recorded, and corporations are busily calling their bonds and reissuing them with lower coupons, but save in rare instances they are not creating genuinely new issues. Few new businesses are failing, and almost no new ones of importance are being started. It is a strange anomaly that huge shortages and accumulated idle capital are not being recognized as constituting opportunity." Surplus available for investment has been increasing until there is now a huge reservoir of bank deposits for credit expansion but of which no use is made. The figure for bank deposits for the week ended September 18, 1935, is \$ 20,630,000,000, which means a rise of \$ 3,320,000,000 in the last year and of \$ 6,070,000,000 from the low of July 1932. This now existing surplus is expected to bring back prosperity, but there is not the slightest sign that it will be used for new productive investments. Furthermore, some of the deposits have been created by government expenditures involving no return, so that these deposits are of no value to further capitalist accumulation. It becomes increasingly obvious that developed monopoly capitalism is a stagnant and hence at the same time a rotting capitalism. While on the one hand the NRA policy, as an instrument for temporarily bridging over the opposition of the less monopolized and less concentrated capitals and for assuring economic peace in the process of this endeavor, is now a thing of the past, the tendency which it involves for the strengthening of the monopolies and the promotion of capital concentration is carried on in the new legislation, the banking bill, the taxing program, etc. The the NRA is dead in so far as it made the pretention of being in harmony with the interests of the workers, its monopolistic character

lives on and compels the weaker capitals to ever recurrent protests, which can not, however, hold up the eventual ruin already announced in the economic stagnation. The big monopolies have to accumulate on an expanded scale, and that is the very thing which they find to be neither profitable nor possible. In order to hold what they have, their own stagnation has to be made a universal affair, and manifests itself in the strangling of the initiative of the smaller capitals, which - however paradoxical it may sound - precisely by reason of their weakness, still have possibilities of accumulation in conditions which preclude accumulation for the big monopolies. Still, the strangle-hold of the monopolies does not allow the smaller capitals to actualize their opportunities. Until the monopolies are able further to accumulate, economic stagnation is the only economic possibility, even tho at the same time it involves the slow destruction of the weaker capitals and must increasingly impoverish the workers. The breathing spell spoken of today can be appraised only within the capitalist blind alley. Whatever the arivel in the labor press about high profits, the fact is that they are not high enough to continue the accumulation of monopoly capital at the necessary tempo. The whole enormous reorganization of capital with a view to better profitability has resulted in nothing more than the maintenance of a certain crisis level. Factors which at an earlier date would have enabled overcoming the crisis merely suffice today to hold up the too rapid descent and offer nothing more than the possibility of temporary stabilization at a given point of crisis. This state of affairs has only one future: the sharpening of the crisis and eventually a new temporary stabilization at a still lower level.

The prospects offered monopoly capital by this breathing spell are those of seeking in new military encounters a redistribution of the sources of profit, conforming better to the profit needs. But under the present conditions each imperialist nation can assure and better its existence only at the cost of other nations, since a general world-wide upswing thru imperialistic reorganization is not to be expected; and this is equivalent to saying that the military attempts at overcoming can only lead to the sharpening of the world crisis. The only visible prospects for the small capitals are their destruction by way of bankruptcies. The middle class likewise is confronted only with its further pauperization, and it is only for the smaller part of the class that the pauperization is alleviated thru fascism. Fascism, which would grant parts of the middle class temporary concessions at the expense of the workers, defers the pauperization of the middle class without averting it. The hopelessness of the whole situation becomes extremely clear in the now concluded

investigation of the Brookings Institution on "Income and Social Progress", which sees as the only solution of the present difficulties a lowering of commodity prices without further restriction of mass purchasing power. This innocent position contains the whole capitalistic dilemma, and this in spite of the fact that it is a false statement of the problem. The really essential thing in capitalism is the capitalist purchasing power, which has to be increased, but which can only be increased thru the restriction of "mass purchasing power". In other words, the lowering of commodity prices means nothing more than the continuance of accumulation. So that Moulton says for the Brookings Institution practically only this: In order to attain prosperity, we have to prosper. To bring this wisdom to light, the Institution has expended \$ 150,000 for research purposes.

Capital knows only one way out of the crisis: more profit. And this more can only be driven out of the workers. Since the NRA went under, more than 20,000 firms have cut wages, lengthened the working day, increased the intensity of the labor process. Unemployment has not essentially decreased. This years relief grants have been set at \$ 1,227,973,573, as compared with \$ 1,013,069,738 in the corresponding ten months of last year. Today relief is being cut everywhere, often more than 10 per cent. The unemployed on relief jobs receive wages which are only a little more than the relief rates. The more the workers are impoverished, however, the more talk is heard of social security: hope is to take the place of bread. But the capitalists know, better than all the social reformers, what is really going on, and one such social reformer recently received from Henry Ford the ironic but no less pertinent answer: " You can't make security one-sided; who is going to secure the securities ? " And since the "securities" are still the lords of the world, there can hardly be any question that they will first make themselves **secure**.

Factory employment since March 1935 is estimated to have dropped 1.4 points and pay rolls to have declined 4.2 points. In view of this difference, capital breathes for the moment somewhat more freely. But the breathing spell is brief; soon capitalism will again strike about itself like a drowning man, and one will be very patriotic and speak enthusiastically of a new world war.

T H F L E N I N L E G E N D .

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The yellower and more leatherly the skin of the mummified Lenin grows, and the higher the statistically determined number of visitors to the Lenin Mausoleum climbs, the less are people concerned about the real Lenin and his historical significance. More and more monuments are erected to his memory, more and more motion pictures turned out in which he is the central figure, more and more books written about him, and the Russian confectioners mold sweetmeats in forms which bear his features. And yet the fadedness of the faces on the chocolate Lenins is matched by the unclarity and the improbability of the stories which are told about him. Though the Lenin Institute in Moscow may publish his collected works, they no longer have any meaning beside the fantastic legends which have formed around his name. As soon as people began to concern themselves with Lenin's collar-buttons, they also ceased to bother about his ideas. Everyone then fashions his own Lenin, and if not after his own image, at any rate after his own desires. What the Napoleonic legend is to France, and the legend of Fredricus Rex to Germany, the Lenin legend is to the new Russia. Just as people once absolutely refused to believe in the death of Napoleon, and just as they hoped for the resurrection of Fredricus Rex, so in Russia still today there are peasants to whom the new "little father Czar" has not died, but continues to indulge his insatiable appetite in demanding from them ever fresh tribute. Others light eternal lamps under the picture of Lenin; to them he is a saint, a redeemer to whom one prays for aid. Millions of eyes stare at millions of these pictures, and see in Lenin the Russian Moses, St. George, Ulysses, Hercules, God or Devil. The Lenin cult has become a new religion before which even the atheistic communists gladly bend the knee; it makes life easier in every respect. Lenin appears to them as the father of the Soviet Republic, the man who made victory possible for the revolution, the great leader without whom they themselves would not exist. But not only in Russia and not only in popular legend, but also to a large part of the Marxist intelligentsia throughout the world, the Russian Revolution has become a world event so closely bound up with the genius of Lenin that one gets the impression that without him that revolution and hence also world history might possibly have taken an essentially different course. A truly objective analysis of the Russian Revolution, however, will at once reveal the untenability of such an idea.

"The assertion that history is made by great men is from a theoretical standpoint wholly unfounded". Such are the

words in which Lenin himself turns on the legend which insists on making him alone responsible for the success of the Russian Revolution. He considered the World War determining as regards the direct cause of its outbreak and for the time of its occurrence. Yes, without that war, he says, "the revolution would possibly have been postponed for decades longer". The idea that the outbreak and the course of the Russian Revolution depended in very large measure on Lenin necessarily implies a complete identification of the revolution with the taking over of power by the Bolsheviks. Trotsky has made a remark to the effect that the entire credit for the success of the October uprising belongs to Lenin; against the opposition of almost all his party friends, the resolution for insurrection was carried by him alone. But the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks did not give to the revolution the spirit of Lenin; on the contrary, Lenin had so completely adapted himself to the necessities of the revolution that practically he fulfilled the task of that class which he ostensibly combatted. Of course it is often asserted that with the taking over of state power by the Bolsheviks, the originally bourgeois-democratic revolution was forthwith converted into the socialist-proletarian one. But is it really possible for anyone seriously to believe that a single political act is capable of taking the place of a whole historical development; that seven months--from February to October--sufficed to form the economic presuppositions of a socialist revolution in a country which was just engaged in getting rid of its feudal and absolutistic fetters, in order to give freer play to the forces of modern capitalism?

Up until the Revolution, and in very large measure even yet today, the decisive role in the economic and social development of Russia was played by the agrarian question. Of the 174 million inhabitants prior to War, only 24 million lived in cities. In each thousand of the gainfully employed, 719 were engaged in agriculture. In spite of their enormous economic importance, the majority of the peasants still led a wretched existence. The cause of their deplorable situation was the insufficiency of soil. State, nobility and large landed proprietors assured to themselves with Asiatic brutality an unconscionable exploitation of the population.

Since the abolition of serfdom (1861) the scarcity of land for the peasant masses had constantly been the question around which all others revolved in Russian domestic politics. It formed the main object of all reform endeavors, which saw in it the driving power of the approaching revolution, which had to be turned aside. The financial policy of the czarist regime, with its ever new levies of indirect taxes, worsened the situation of the

peasants still more. The expenditures for the army, the fleet, the state apparatus, attained gigantic proportions. The greater part of the State budget went for unproductive purposes, which totally ruined the economic foundation of agriculture.

"Freedom and Land" was thus the necessary revolutionary demand of the peasants. Under this watchword occurred a series of peasant uprisings which soon, in the period from 1902 to 1906, assumed significant scope. In combination with the mass strike movements of the workers taking place at the same time, they produced such a violent commotion in the heart of Czarism that that period may in truth be denoted as a "dress rehearsal" for the revolution of 1917. The way in which Czarism reacted to these rebellions is best illustrated by the expression of the then vice-governor of Tambiövska, Bogdanovitch: "Few arrested, the more shot". And one of the officers who had taken part in the suppression of the insurrections wrote: "All around us, bloodshed; everything going up in flames; we shoot, strike down, stab". It was in this sea of blood and flames that the revolution of 1917 was born.

Notwithstanding the defeats, the pressure of the peasants grew more and more menacing. It led to the Stolypin reforms, which, however, were only empty gestures, stopped short with promises and in reality brought the agrarian question not a single step forward. But once the little finger has had to be extended, there will soon be snatching for the whole hand. The further worsening of the peasants' situation during the war, the defeat of the czarist armies on the fronts, the growing revolt in the cities, the chaotic czarist policy in which all reason was thrown overboard, the general dilemma resulting to all classes of society, led to the February revolution, which first of all finally brought about the violent solution of the agrarian question, which had been a burning one during the past half century. Its political character, however, was not impressed upon this revolution by the peasant movement; this movement merely gave it its great power. In the first announcements of the central executive committee of the Petersburg workers' and soldiers' councils, the agrarian question was not even mentioned. But the peasants soon forced themselves upon the attention of the new government. Tired of waiting for it to take action in the agrarian question, in April and May of 1917 the disappointed peasant masses began to appropriate the land for themselves. The soldiers on the fronts, fearful of failing to get their proper share in the new distribution, abandoned the trenches and hurried back to their villages. They took their weapons with them, however, and thus offered the new government no possibility of restraining them. All its appeals to the sentiment of nationality and the sacredness of Russian interests

were of no avail against the urge of the masses to provide at last for their own economic needs. And those needs were embraced in peace and land. It was related at the time that peasants who were implored to remain on the front, as otherwise the Germans would occupy Moscow, were quite puzzled and answered the government emissaries: "And what's that to us? Why, we're from the Tamboff Government".

Lenin and the Bolsheviks did not invent the winning slogan, "Land to the peasants"; rather, they accepted the real peasant revolution going on independently of them. Taking advantage of the vacillating attitude of the Kerensky regime, which still hoped to be able to settle the agrarian question by way of peaceful discussion, the Bolsheviks won the good-will of the peasants and were thus enabled to drive the Kerensky government out and take over the power themselves. But this was possible for them only as agents of the peasants' will, by sanctioning their appropriation of land, and it was only through their support that the Bolsheviks were able to maintain themselves in power.

The slogan "Land to the peasants" has nothing to do with communist principles. The cutting up of the large estates into a great number of small independent farming enterprises was a measure directly opposed to socialism, and which could be justified only on the ground of tactical necessity. The subsequent changes in the peasant policy of Lenin and the Bolsheviks were powerless to effect any change in the necessary consequences of this original opportunistic policy. In spite of all the collectivizing, which up to now is largely limited to the technical side of the productive process, Russian agriculture is still today basically determined by private economic interests and motives. And this involves the impossibility, in the industrial field as well, of arriving at more than a state-capitalist economy. Even though this state capitalism aims at transforming the farming population completely into exploitable agricultural wage workers, this goal is not at all likely to be attained in view of the new revolutionary encounters bound up with such a venture. The present collectivizing cannot be regarded as the fulfillment of socialism. This becomes clear when one considers that observers of the Russian scene such as Maurice Hindus hold it possible that "even if the Soviets were to collapse, Russian agriculture would remain collectivized, with control more perhaps in the hands of the peasants than of the government". However, even if the bolshevist agricultural policy were to lead to the desired end, even a state capitalism extending to all branches of national economy, the situation of the workers would still remain unchanged. Nor could such a consummation be regarded as a transition to real socialism, since those elements of the population

now privileged by the state capitalism would defend their privileges against all changes in exactly the same way as did the private owners previously at the time of the 1917 revolution.

The industrial workers still formed a very small minority of the population, and were accordingly unable to impress upon the Russian Revolution a character in keeping with their own needs. The bourgeois elements which likewise were combatting Czarism, soon recoiled before the nature of their own tasks. They could not accede to the revolutionary solution of the agrarian question, since a general expropriation of land might all too easily bring in its train the expropriation of industry. Neither the peasants nor the workers followed them and the fate of the bourgeoisie was decided by the temporary alliance between these latter groups. It was not the bourgeoisie but the workers who brought the bourgeois revolution to its conclusion; the place of the capitalists was taken over by the bolshevist state apparatus under the Leninist slogan: "If capitalism anyhow, then let's make it". Of course the workers in the cities had overthrown capitalism, but only in order now to convert the bolshevist party apparatus into their new masters. In the industrial cities the workers' struggle went on under socialist demands, seemingly independent of the peasant revolution under way at the same time and yet in a decisive sense determined by this latter. The original revolutionary demands of the workers were objectively incapable of being carried thru. To be sure, the workers were able, with the aid of the peasants, to win the state power for their party, but this new State soon took a position directly opposed to the workers' interests. An opposition which even today has assumed forms which actually make it possible to speak of a "Red Czarism": suppression of strikes, deportations, mass executions, and hence also the coming to life of new illegal organizations which are conducting a communist revolt against the present bogus socialism. The talk just now about an extension of democracy in Russia, the thought of introducing a sort of parliamentarism, the resolution at the last soviet congress about dismantling the dictatorship, all this is merely a tactical manoeuvre designed to compensate for the governments latest acts of violence against the opposition. These promises are not to be taken seriously, but are an outgrowth of the Leninist practice, which was always well calculated to work both ways at the same time in the interest of its own stability and security. The zigzag course of the Leninist policy springs from the necessity of conforming constantly to the shiftings of class forces in Russia in such manner that the government may always remain master of the situation. And so there is accepted today what was rejected the day before, or vice versa; unprincipledness has been elevated into a principle, and the Leninist

party is concerned with only one thing, namely, the exercise of state power at any price.

At this place, however, we are interested only in making clear that the Russian Revolution was not dependent on Lenin or on the Bolsheviks, but that the decisive element in it was the revolt of the peasants. And for that matter Zinoviev, still in power at the time and on Lenin's side, had stated as late as the 11th Bolshevik Party Congress (March-April 1921): "It was not the proletarian vanguard on our side, but the coming over to us of the army, because we demanded peace, which was the decisive factor in our victory. The army, however, consisted of peasants. If we had not been supported by the millions of peasant soldiers, our victory over the bourgeoisie would have been out of the question". The great interest of the peasants in the matter of land, the slight interest with reference to the question of government, enabled the Bolsheviks to conduct a victorious struggle for the government. The peasants were quite willing to leave the Kremlin to the Bolsheviks, provided only that they themselves were not interfered with in their own struggle against the large estate owners.

But even in the cities, Lenin was not the decisive factor in the conflicts between capital and labor. On the contrary, he was helplessly drawn along in the wake of the workers, who in their demands and actual measures went far beyond the Bolsheviks. It was not Lenin who conducted the revolution, but the revolution conducted him. Though as late as the October uprising, Lenin restricted his earlier and more thorough-going demands to that for control of production, and wished to stop short with the socialization of the banks and transportation facilities, without the general abolition of private ownership, the workers paid no further attention to his views and expropriated all enterprises. It is interesting to recall that the first decree of the Bolshevik government was directed against the wild, unauthorized expropriations of factories through the workers' councils. But these soviets were still stronger than the party apparatus, and they compelled Lenin to issue the decree for the nationalization of all industrial enterprises. It was only under the pressure brought to bear by the workers that the Bolsheviks consented to this change in their own plans. Gradually, through the extension of state power, the influence of the soviets became weakened, until today they no longer serve more than decorative purposes.

During the first years of the revolution, up to the introduction of the New Economic Policy (1921), there was actually of course some experimentation in Russia in the communist sense. This is not, however, to be set down to the account of Lenin, but of those forces which made of

him a political chameleon who at one time assumed a reactionary and at another a revolutionary color. New peasant uprisings against the Bolsheviks first drive Lenin to a more radical policy, a stronger emphasis upon the interests of the workers and the poor peasants who had come off short-handed in connection with the first distribution of land. But then this policy proves a failure since the poor peasants whose interests are thus preferred refuse to support the Bolsheviks and Lenin "turns the face again to the middle peasants". In such a case, Lenin has no scruples about strengthening the private-capitalist elements anew, and the earlier allies, who have now grown uncomfortable, are shot down with cannon, as was the case in Kronstadt.

The power, and nothing but the power; it is to this that the whole political wisdom of Lenin finally reduces. The fact that the paths along which it is attained, the means which lead to it, determine in their turn the manner in which that power is applied, was a matter with which he had very little concern. Socialism, to him, was in the last instance merely a kind of state capitalism, after the "model of the German postal service". And this state capitalism he overtook on his way, for in fact there was nothing else to be overtaken. It was merely a question of who was to be the beneficiary of the state capitalism, and here Lenin gave precedence to none. And so George Bernard Shaw, returning from Russia, was quite correct when, in a lecture before the Fabian Society in London, he stated that "the Russian communism is nothing more than the putting into practice of the Fabian program which we have been preaching the last forty years".

No one, however, has yet suspected the Fabians of containing a world-revolutionary force. And Lenin is, of course, first of all acclaimed as a world revolutionary, notwithstanding the fact that the present Russian government, by which his "estate" is administered, issues emphatic denial when the press publishes reports of Russian toasts to the world revolution, as happened recently in connection with reports of the New York Times on the All-Russian Congress of Soviets. The legend of the world-revolutionary significance of Lenin receives its nourishment from his consistent international position during the World War. It was quite impossible for Lenin at that time to conceive that a Russian revolution would have no further repercussions and be abandoned to itself. There were two reasons for this view: first, because such a thought was in contradiction with the objective situation resulting from the World War; and secondly, he assumed that the onslaught of the imperialist nations against the Bolsheviks would break the back of the Russian Revolution if the proletariat of Western Europe failed to come to the rescue. Lenin's call for the world revolution was