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THE FIGHT FOR BRITAIN, THE FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY, AND THE WAR AIMS OF THE WORKING CLASS.

(Prolegomena to a political discussion)

There is no better means of finding out how far we have traveled since the 19th century workers' movement collapsed in the cataclysm of the first world war than to raise the question of the war aims of the international working class today. There is nothing left in 1941 of that misleading simplicity in which for the class conscious minority of the social democratic parties of 1914 the problem of a true or false war policy resolved itself into a choice between outright betrayal and an unswerving allegiance to the revolutionary duty of an unconditional resistance to the capitalist war. The glorious example set by Liebknecht in Germany, by the Bolsheviks in Russia, and by certain other Marxist groups in Europe was admired everywhere. The adverse policies followed by the right wing and by the so-called Marxist centre were never wholeheartedly accepted by the masses of the proletarian membership, although much suffering and a full military defeat were needed to exhaust the endurance of the social democratic workers in Germany. Even when that point had been reached, the great majority of the workers were not prepared to do more than admire the new example of revolutionary consistency set by the Bolsheviks in Russia. They did not join the small groups of class conscious workers in Germany who at that time rallied round the Spartacus-Bund and the Workers Councils in an attempt to proceed from revolutionary resistance to the capitalist war to a veritable overthrow of the capitalist state and the capitalist system of production. In their actual practice, the great majority of the German workers did nothing to prevent that gigantic fraud by which the right wing leadership of the social democratic party and of the trade unions transformed its belligerent patriotism of the war period into the mock democracy of the Weimar

Republic and the mock pacifism of the League of Nations. For the next fifteen years this provided a propitious atmosphere for the lusty growth of the new anti-democratic and anti-pacifistic power of fascism. Thus the social nationalism of the social democrats of 1914 came to rest in the national socialism of 1933.

The first lesson to be learned from this short recapitulation of working class war policies is a more realistic appreciation of the intrinsic difficulties of a truly proletarian attitude toward the war. In view of the tremendous discouragement that followed the comparative optimism of the last generation of revolutionaries with respect to this task, it is worthwhile to point out that the greater part of these difficulties already existed in 1914-18. They found their expression then in the contrast between powerful working class organizations without a proletarian policy and the revolutionary slogans of an extremely powerless class conscious minority. Neither side of this contrast can be said to have embodied in itself the war policy of the German working class. We cannot even say in retrospect which of the two was in more clear agreement with the tactics recommended by Marx and Engels in the event of a European war. The further development, both in Soviet Russia where the left wing had had its way and in Germany where it had been crushed, shows clearly that the European working class as a whole had not developed a policy that enabled it to transform the capitalist war into a proletarian revolution or even to prevent the re-establishment of bourgeois class rule in a re-enforced form by the victory of the fascist counter-revolution.

II

None of the revolutionary slogans of the last war can be immediately applied to the much more intricate problems that arise from the immensely more entangled state of affairs today. There is no longer a need for the revolutionary workers of 1914 to bring about by their own consistent effort that "transformation of the capitalist war into a civil war" that was described as the ultimate aim of the working class by the most daring revolutionary slogan of 1914. The present war from its very outset (or even from its preparatory phases, the phase of the protests against Japanese aggression in Manchuria, the sanctions against the Italian conquest of Ethiopia, the "non-intervention" in Spain) has been a veritable civil war on both a European and a world-wide scale.

We do not know enough about the currents below the surface of present-day Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, Russia, Japan and other totalitarian states that might come to the top under conditions of strain and defeat. But we had ample opportunities both before and after the fact to study the conditions preceding the rape of Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium, and the collapse of France. We have no reason to believe that, with the outbreak of war or, for that matter, with the "miracle of Dunkirk", all the "appeasement" and outright pro-Nazi tendencies that up to then had been represented by the Cliveden and Chamberlain groups in England have been

wiped out in favor of a grand unanimity of purpose. (We admit suffering an invincible distrust of all forms of "sacred unions" ever since the days of the first world war.) Last and not least, we are aware of the powerful undercurrents of present-day American politics. Thus we can safely say that in every "democratic" country today the ruling class is divided within itself. So far all Hitlerian victories have been victories in a civil war. There are two Norways, two Hollands, two Frances today, and the first day of restored "peace" (with or without a previous German invasion) will show that there are also two Great Britains.

Under such conditions no slogan that could be devised for an independent war policy of the working class today can escape being tinged with the same ambiguity that is so strikingly apparent in the policy of the ruling classes. "Down with the imperialist war!" — was a plausible war aim of the proletarian class so long as the war represented the supreme form of the united will of the bourgeoisie of one country to survive and to conquer in the struggle that was waged both against the hostile competition of the other national units of the bourgeois class and against the threatening proletarian revolt. The slogan has lost all of its former revolutionary force at the present time when it fits in so perfectly with the tendencies of the bourgeois appeasers and isolationists. "Defeat of one's own country!" — was regarded as the most insidious of all the weapons of the class war when it was used as a slogan by the revolutionary defeatists in Russia and Germany in 1914. Latterly it became a practical policy of that substantial part of the ruling class in various European countries that preferred the victory of fascism to the loss of its economic and political supremacy.

Despite this apparent ambiguity of every description of the war aims of the working class that can be devised under present conditions, there is no point in turning from a strictly independent war policy of the proletarian class to one or another "classless" substitute. It is the most distressing experience of our time to see those inveterate labor leaders, who have, for almost thirty years, incessantly advised the workers to sacrifice their independent class action for the sake of their "fatherland" or for the defense of an assumedly "progressive" fraction of the bourgeoisie against an assumedly less progressive fraction of that same bourgeois class, resuming their old game with slightly modified phraseology. It is even more distressing to see those well-known people being joined today by so many formerly class-conscious socialists. Both the old professionals and the disenchanted newcomers ask the workers to subscribe to one or another kind of interventionist, anti-fascist, or "Save Democracy First" program by pointing to the defeats and frustrations that have been suffered in the past by all attempts at an independent revolutionary policy of the working class. The utter futility of this "historical proof" has been shown above. The defeat of the workers in the war and post-war period did not result from the failure of the revolutionary attempts of the minority any more than from the policies of the majority leadership. Both the genuine attempts at a revolutionary war policy and the classless substitutes for that policy have led to the same

result. No fatherland was saved from defeat through the sacrifices of the German workers in 1914-18. No democracy was preserved by the sacrifices made by the workers during the episode of the Weimar Republic. No peace was secured by the workers' acceptance of the international bourgeois policies of the League of Nations.

III

The urgent advice given to the workers from all sides today — that in order to defend themselves they have first of all to join in the common task of defending "democracy" against the murderous assaults of fascism — bears a striking resemblance to a number of other much embattled slogans of the day. It seems to have become quite fashionable to think, in this age of substitutes, that to achieve something one has first to endeavor to do something else.

There is, first, the slogan of the interventionist fraction of the American bourgeoisie: "Defend America through aiding Britain!". This seems to convey the idea that even if we take it for granted that the supreme goal for Americans is to defend America, this goal is not adequately served under present conditions, by such simple and direct methods as those advocated by the "America First" program, but can be served only by active intervention in the present war on the side of Great Britain. We are not in a position to judge the relative merits of either of these plans from a strictly strategical point of view. But we strongly suspect that the real division between the adherents of the two slogans is not based on any strategical reasons at all. They do not express two different ways of furthering the common interests of the American bourgeoisie as a whole (and even less the interests of the American people). They rather express the different material interests and ensuing political philosophies of two definite fractions of the American bourgeoisie, or two different concepts of a desirable future development of the internal and external policies of the growing American empire. It is in this internal conflict of the ruling class that one side — the interventionist side as against the isolationist side — tries further to fortify its position through another appeal, which for the purpose of this discussion is most conveniently summed up in the slogan: "Defend *democracy* through defending Britain!" (Here by the way, appears the ultimate purpose of that other slogan which asked the workers to defend their own rights by defending democracy. The credo of present-day interventionist "socialism" boils down to the same miserable substitute as that of present-day Stalinist "communism": the defense of the power politics of a particular state.)

There is one flaw in the clever device of making the present British empire the international champion of the fight for democracy (thus at the same time of the fight for socialism). It showed itself in the recent discussion of the advisability of an official announcement of the British war aims.

True friendship should be mutual. If the fight for Britain is assumed to be a fight for democracy, the British government should openly accept,

in unmistakable words, the obligations connected with this world championship. It should openly announce its democratic war aims.

This seems simple enough. (It should be noticed that nobody up to now has asked from the Churchill government anything more than a solemn declaration in words. Nobody made the help of the friends of democracy, the help of the workers for the British victory, dependent on an immediate practical step — say the long overdue "democratization" of the British rule in India.)

Yet to make their argument acceptable to a government that up to now has never betrayed any particular attachment to further progress towards democracy, the friends of democracy approached the question from another angle. (Who would have expected them to approach any question in a straight line anyhow?) They agreed that for the British the victory of Britain must be the supreme goal. But this goal, they went on, cannot be reached, under present conditions, by a mere military fight. It can be reached only by that powerful mobilization of all progressive forces of humanity that would result from the solemn announcement of a truly democratic British war program.

Even so, the plea for an early announcement of the British war aims did not prevail over the opposite reasoning which points to the possible weakening of the apparent unity of the British (and the American) public if such highly controversial question were to be openly discussed. Again it is easy to see that the real point of dispute lies deeper. The whole debate on the advisability of an open announcement of the British war aims is only an ideological expression of an altogether different division within the British (and American) bourgeoisie. The conservative British government knows full well that an important fraction of the ruling class of America is much less concerned with the lack of democracy in the present British set-up than it is interested in the assurance that the actual war aims of Great Britain will at no time assume a too "democratic" character that could endanger the security of the existing capitalistic regime. The ruling class of the fully developed capitalist countries no longer splits on such general political issues as that between "democratic progress" and "conservative power politics". If it splits at all, it will be split on the much more realistic question of conflicting material interests.

In spite of the contrary illusions of a small and comparatively powerless group of political idealists, the ultimate fate of the British empire in its present desperate struggle against the Nazi aggressors does not depend on the outcome of the present world-wide ideological fight between the "democratic" and the "fascist" principles. It will not even be decided by the comparative strength of the fighting armies or by the superior technical equipment that may result from American all-out help to Britain. The outcome of the present war depends in the first place on the degree of internal division within the ruling capitalist class in England itself that, after a temporary truce between the pre-war appeasers and the Churchillites, reasserts itself

in the beginning struggle for or against the announcement of the British war aims. It will be decided in the last instance by the repercussions that the bitter fight of conflicting capitalist groups, at present fought out both by the war and by internal struggles within each country, will produce in the hitherto immobilized third camp, the camp of the proletarian class. We do not hesitate to say that if the assumed supreme goal of humanity in our time, the defeat of Hitler and the wiping out of fascism, can be reached **at all, it will be reached in no other manner than by the independent fight of the working class for its most elementary, most narrowly defined, most concrete class aims.** Not Great Britain, not "democracy", but the proletarian class is the world champion in the revolutionary fight of humanity against the scourge of fascism.

Beta.

FROM LIBERALISM TO FASCISM

Rapid social changes affected the various layers of society in different ways, manifold opportunities opened up with the formation of capital. A belief in progress dominated the ideology of the prospering capitalist class so that even the most ruthless of the capitalist entrepreneurs were somehow convinced that the never-ending accumulation of capital would finally benefit the whole of humanity. The undeniable miseries that paralleled the increasing wealth were seen as regrettable imperfections, partly inherited from the past, which would be smoothed out to the satisfaction of all in the course of further development. Ever since Auguste Comte, bourgeois thinkers interested in social questions have been thoroughly convinced that with the ascendancy of the capitalist system of production and its liberal political structure a society has finally been established in which all existing and possible problems can be peaceably solved through the "moralization of capital".

The development of capitalism has been accompanied by the growth and decline of a number of anti-capitalistic ideas and movements. But as the ideologies dominating a historical period are those of the ruling classes, so the optimism prevalent in the early labor movement was a reflection of the "positivism" of the liberal bourgeoisie. The opponents of capitalism, too, took it for granted that the capitalistic expansion process would industrialize great parts of the world, develop international trade, and simplify **class relationships** through the increase of the proletariat. The moderate as well as the radical wings of the labor movement, adhering to various philosophical and organizational principles, were deeply convinced that with the success of capitalism the success of the laboring class was also assured. Class-consciousness and labor organizations were bound to grow with the increasing importance of large-scale industry, with the accompanying capital

concentration, and with all the related structural changes in the direction of the two-class society.

The idea that progress would serve both the capitalists and their opponents, and the latter even better than the first, was a reflection of the practical unity between labor and capital, of the continuous interplay of class forces that excluded the development of a "pure" class-consciousness and a truly consistent revolutionary practice, and was, in addition, deeply rooted in the past. Because history cannot be turned backwards, there has been no alternative for the proletarian layers of society to their support of the bourgeois revolution. Though the workers simply had to fight on the side of the rising bourgeoisie, they were made to think and were fond of believing that in fighting for the cause of capitalism they were also preparing their own emancipation.

To find capitalistic and even pre-capitalistic elements in all anti-capitalistic theories, utopias, and movements is nothing to be wondered at. Not only can they be found at the initial stages of these movements, but they have been destined to gain importance in the course of time. Modern socialism, not wishing to arrest a development considered historically necessary, tried to help it forward by remaining progressive when the bourgeoisie itself had already become conservative. Recognizing the continuity of the historical processes, which it interpreted as a series of class struggles, the proletariat was to carry on where the capitalists left off. While the bourgeoisie was satisfied with a dialectical movement that retired with the creation of the bourgeois state, Marx continued to look at the society dialectically, that is, he worked in the direction and in expectation of a proletarian revolution.

The reaction fostered by the successful bourgeoisie could not be fought for long, however, with reminiscences of a revolutionary past. The farther the labor movement was removed from capitalism's *Sturm und Drang* period the less it felt inclined to re-enact the historic drama of the bourgeois revolution in proletarian make-up. Marx himself became noticeably more scientific the older he grew, and "General" Engels was forced to reject as outmoded the once beloved strategy of the barricade. The growing possibility of apparently increasing profits and wages integrated the labor movement more securely into the capitalist structure. Politically, too, the laboring class became a seemingly important factor within bourgeois democracy, at least in Western Europe. "Onward and Upward" was the slogan of all classes, and neither revolutionary science nor propaganda could counteract the new spirit. The labor movement as a whole adopted the ideologies of those very bourgeois reformers whom Marx had thought unworthy of a serious critical appraisal. Finally, the Fabian Society and Bernstein's "Revisionism" added dreary statistics to the already stale class collaboration ideology of John Stuart Mill — and called it a day.

Though it is true that the "original" Marxism contained bourgeois elements in its theory and practice, it more importantly embodied ideas and social forces quite incompatible with capitalist society. In the economic

sphere capitalistic "progress", that is, the accumulation of capital, Marxism saw as the accumulation of misery. The competitive, private-property economy was bound to meet ever-growing difficulties which it would finally not be able to overcome. The capitalist system was mortal. Its inner contradictions and outer limitations assured a rising labor movement that its hour of triumph was the nearer the more capitalism progressed. The revolutionary elements in Marxism were soon, however, either ignored or interpreted in a way that fitted them into the increasingly non-revolutionary practice of a labor movement thoroughly satisfied with capitalistic progress but in need of an ideology that camouflaged this fact. The revolutionary content of Marxism became a sort of spiritual exercise for holidays. It was brought out as compensation for the meagerness of the concessions wrested or bargained from the bourgeoisie. It served as a reminder to the ruling class not to relax in its duty towards its slaves.

The fact that attitudes, principles and activities, considered progressive at the stage of bourgeois enlightenment, entered the proletarian theory and practice is revealed also in the various concepts of what would constitute a new society. The new social structure advocated by revolutionary organizations, or the transformation of the existing order into the new one hoped for by the reformists, were very vague mental constructions. But even in their ambiguity these blue-prints of the future were as old as they were new. They often came very near to those early utopias which searched rather for the lost paradise than for a new society, as for instance when Friedrich Engels, on the strength of a questionable theory of anthropology, conceived of the new society as regaining—albeit on a higher level—a long lost primitive communism. Marx himself asked the question whether or not the precapitalistic Russian village-communes could be of use and could play a part in a socialistic reconstruction of society. Ideologies bound up with early and even pre-capitalistic conditions also found a belated revival in the theories of anarchism. The slightly altered ideas of the petty bourgeoisie reappeared in programs designed to end all monopolistic rule by ending that of the state. Decentralization, social credits, labor exchanges, syndicates and other proposals were—so to speak—not only results of an intuitive recognition that the trend of capitalist development pointed toward the totalitarian state, but were connected also with the theories and practice of the remote past. After all, Hobbes wrote his *Leviathan* in the middle of the seventeenth century and the Jacobin terror had demonstrated quite early the possible absolutistic powers of a democratic-capitalistic regime.

The vague concepts of socialism were as misleading as they were useful. As Professor Pigou once remarked, if "we are setting a nude figure, with all its blemishes patent to the eye, against a figure that is veiled, we are tilting the balance against the nude", that is, against capitalism. However, it is understandable that what the nude reveals will strongly influence any guess as to what the veil might conceal.

Capitalism developed from *laissez faire* to monopoly. *Laissez faire* itself presupposes the monopoly of the means of production in the hands of the

capitalistic class. But there was competition between individual entrepreneurs. This competition, however, was from the very beginning an imperfect one because it involved different aggregates of capital, shifts of production, variations in locality, in short, a whole series of economic, social, historical and geographical facts which had different meanings for different capitalists, and which turned all competitive "laws" into "laws" of monopolization. Capital formation was thus capital concentration, which, in turn, meant centralization of political control. Logically this whole development would end in a division of society into two groups: the owners of the means of production — which by virtue of their position ruled over all spheres of social life — and the rest of mankind. It was acknowledged, however, that this development did not need to reach its "logical conclusion"; that long before, due to the pressure of the contradictory processes involved, stagnation, social upheavals and revolutionary changes might occur. Nevertheless, the trend was towards the "General Cartel" — towards state capitalism, that is, a situation in which the state is completely taken over by capital. Accepting this whole process as inevitable, it was only consistent that the socialists should center their attention first of all on the state apparatus; the reformists by trying to gain control legally, the revolutionists by wanting to destroy the old in favor of a new state. But both were to realize fully what would have to take place anyway: the final merger of all economic and political power in the hands of a single authority. The reformists, should they control the state, would purchase the means of production from their capitalist owners; the revolutionists would expropriate them. In the *Anti-Duehring* Engels proclaimed that "the first act in which the state really comes forward as the representative of society as a whole — the seizure of the means of production in the name of society — is at the same time its last independent act as a state". After that the state will "wither away" to make room for an "administration of things". State power is thus sought to eliminate the power of the state and thereby that of capital. The concept of the workers state was not derived from a hypothesis of social control that reached into the future, but was the recognition of an inescapable necessity which was determined by the previous development of capitalism.

Necessity was turned into a virtue. Shortly before the "first workers' state" came into being, its main proponent, Lenin, began to describe socialism as "nothing but the next step forward from state capitalist monopoly, as nothing but state capitalist monopoly made to benefit the whole people". State monopoly, especially in its most obvious form obtaining during war conditions, became for Lenin "the fullest material preparation for socialism", provided the ruling personnel was changed. The whole content of the proletarian revolution was now seen as the replacement of a selfish ruling class by a beneficent state apparatus. "If Russia was ruled by 130,000 landowners", Lenin once said, there is no sense in telling us that Russia will not be able to be governed by 240,000 members of the Bolshevik Party." And long before this opportunity arose, he had insisted that "the social democrat's ideal should not be a trade-union secretary, but a tribune of the people."

To square his political "realism" with his Marxian "orthodoxy", indispensable in the struggle against the capitalist and reformist opponents of bolshevism, Lenin transformed Marx's casual statement that the socialist society as it emerges out of capitalism would look different from one with a long history of its own into the useful formula "from socialism to communism". "Socialism" was the basis for communism, just as capitalist state monopoly had been the basis for "socialism". Thus every communist must support "socialism" and favor state monopoly; he can raise no objection to the demand that until communism arrives the strictest state control over production and distribution is required.

When Engels proclaimed that the proletariat seizes the power of the state and changes the ownership of the means of production into state ownership, it is clear that he assumed that there had not been a change of ownership into state-ownership before. Otherwise he could only have said that the capitalist state monopoly must be replaced by a socialist state monopoly. Thus Lenin proceeded quite "marxistically" to capture the state, nationalize all productive property, and regulate the economy according to a plan. To fulfill the Marxian program completely there remained only for the state to "wither away". What must be noticed, however, is that where Marx and Engels dealt with the socialistic reconstruction of society in an extremely vague manner, mainly outlining a few general principles such as can be found in the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Lenin had a specific and concrete concept of the structure and character of the socialism that the bolsheviks were to institute. His model — so to speak — was to be found in the German postal service, his "socialism" was almost identical with the "socialism" of the German war-economy. To take over capitalism when it reached its highest concentration and centralization meant to Lenin to complete the socialization process that capitalism itself initiated and fostered through its own peculiar laws of development. In advanced monopolistic nations the political overthrow of the state would today suffice to turn into socialism what only yesterday operated under the false name of capitalism. In Russia it was more complicated, because there the proletariat had to both make and unmake the bourgeois revolution, since the bourgeoisie proper was no longer capable of fulfilling its historical mission, that is, preparing the ground for the socialist society.

Marx and Engels were scientists not prophets. They analyzed the capitalist system as they knew it and drew some conclusions as to its developmental tendencies, but they did not predict the future in all its details. They did not foresee the present totalitarian regimes. For them the state was essentially an instrument to secure the rule of the capitalist class. If, with the concentration of capital, the ruling body became smaller, the state would serve fewer interests and oppose larger masses. But Marx and Engels never followed their own lines of thought to the end, for they were convinced that capitalism would not be able to reach a point of development that allowed for the complete merger of state and capital, and for some kind of planned economy. Both knew that trustification and protectionism were

attempts to bring some sort of regulation into the national and international markets, but they felt sure, as Engels pointed out in a footnote to the third volume of *Capital*, that such "experiments are practicable only so long as the economic weather is relatively favorable... although production assuredly needs regulation, it is certainly not the capitalist class which is fitted for that task; the trusts have no other mission but to see to it that the little fish are swallowed by the big fish still more rapidly than before." For Marx the process of capitalist expropriation would not end in a gigantic super-trust merged with the state. Trusting in the growing powers of the working class, his concept of the capitalist accumulation ended, as he once wrote to Engels, "in the class struggle as a finale in which is found the solution of the whole smear."

For a long time to come, however, the actual class struggles merely served as incentives for a more rapid capital accumulation. Capitalism proved itself very adaptable to changing circumstances. The periodically recurring crises strengthened rather than weakened it. The class struggle became quite unimportant. The dominant issue was the changing character of capitalism itself. Trustification, cartellization, monopolization, often over-reaching national boundaries, pointed in the direction of market regulations, planned production and crisis control. A new era had seemingly begun. Capitalism, at least that capitalism of which Marx had written, neared its end. The socialist theoretician Hilferding pointed out that each capitalist must not only make profit, but must accumulate in order to remain a capitalist. But accumulation is the concentration of capital in fewer hands. Thus in pursuing his capitalistic end, each capitalist progressively destroyed the opportunities for pursuing capitalistic ends. With the concentration of all capital in "one hand", capitalism would have reached its "goal". There would then no longer be a capitalist end that could be pursued. Capital accumulation in the previous sense of the term would no longer be possible, because where all is concentrated concentration stops. Kautsky a little more timidly applied the same reasoning to problems of international relations in his theory of "Ultra-Imperialism".

At first glance all this seems quite in step with Marxism, for Marx himself was convinced that, nationally as well as internationally, "everything the bourgeoisie centralizes favors the working class". Yet this would not spare the working class the trouble of the revolution. For Marx the development from *laissez faire* to trustification was not a straight line. This development was a contradictory process of prosperity and depression, creation and destruction, centralization and decentralization, progress and reaction. The contradiction inherent in the relations of production could never be overcome by way of centralization, that is, by a mere organizing principle. It would be reproduced on an enlarged scale as production itself was enlarged and the scope of capitalist activity widened. The end of *laissez faire* was not the end of competition; it only led to the more forceful competition of monopolies. National centralization indicated a trend not towards pacification but towards imperialistic wars. There were no doubt

quantitative changes; a qualitative change, however, involves class action. As long as there were owners or controllers of the means of production on the one hand and an empty-handed laboring class on the other, all reproduction involved the reproduction of the exploitative relationship. Only that class which owned nothing could be interested in ending this relationship, and could thus stop a continuous reproduction process that involved the reproduction of all conditions connected with and determined by the existing class relations. Short of the abolition of the class relations all transformation would only be new expressions of the same old capitalist society.

The socialist reformists did not deny that the competitive struggle reproduced the inner contradictions of capitalism on a larger scale, but they thought that this process was coming to an end because of a lack of competitors. Assuming that this end would be reached, Hilferding wrote in his *Finanzkapital*, "the whole of capitalist production would be consciously regulated by one authority... it would still be a society in antagonistic form. But this antagonism would be one of distribution. The distribution itself would be consciously regulated." At this stage of development all previous capitalistic categories would lose their meaning. The single authority would arrange what should be produced and under what conditions; it would control the products, and would distribute them as it saw fit. Under such conditions, the only reason for displacing with socialists a capitalist authority, that is, the personnel brought into controlling position by the previous development, would be the conviction that the socialists knew how to serve society better. From then on the historical process would be determined by the actions of the persons comprising the single authority. It would make no difference whether these persons stemmed from the capitalist class, the middle class, or the working class; the quality of leadership would be all that mattered.

Though Lenin was a great admirer of the Marxian "orthodoxy" of Kautsky and Hilferding, he soon disagreed with them on practical issues. Independent of the question as to whether or not their theories would work in Western Europe, it was certain that they did not fit the Russian conditions. To wait for capital-concentration among the Russian peasantry simply meant asking too much. A revolution was in the making; one had to participate and adapt oneself to its specific conditions. Though Lenin did not possess the patience of the reformist who waited for the "ripening" of socialism, he enthusiastically accepted their notion that history could be made by a directorate as soon as capital was concentrated in "one hand". "State capitalism," he said at a Congress of the Bolshevik Party, "is that form of capitalism which we shall be in a position to restrict. This capitalism is bound up with the state, and the state — that is, the workers, the most advanced part of the workers, the vanguard, is ourselves, and it is we on whom the nature of this state capitalism will depend". In view of the hierarchical arrangements within the party, all that was left to say was what Louis XIV said shortly before the bourgeois revolution, "*L'etat, c'est*

moi", and what is now, at the "end" of capitalism, on the lips of a hundred million Germans, "*Hitler ist Deutschland!*"

The application of these principles in Russia was intended to do and do better what the capitalist had not succeeded in doing. It was an enormous job. There can be no doubt that Lenin and Trotsky applied the terms "traitor" and "hypocrite" to the Hilferdings and Kautsky not for competitive purposes only, but because they were really convinced that these people betrayed their own principles. After all, the essential differences between reformists and revolutionists were to be found in their struggle-for-power policies, not in their methods for building socialism. True, Russia was not "ripe", but could it not be helped along by doing consciously what in the capitalistic nations went on behind the backs of the people? The socialists had no answer. To find anti-bolshevik arguments at all they had to borrow from the white counter-revolution.

In his book "Terrorism and Communism" Trotsky wrote that "without the militarization of labor and state compulsion... socialism will remain an empty sound... There is no way to socialism except by the authoritative regulation of the economic forces and resources... ..and the centralized distribution of labor in harmony with the general state plan." This was in full accord with the ideas nourished by all socialists of the time, yet the majority of the social-democrats refused to accept the bolshevik regime as a socialistic one. Under this regime socialists and their followers went to Siberia just as they went under the Czar. But the socialists could not claim that they were opposing a capitalist regime, nor could they admit that they were out to crush socialism. What then did they oppose?

Actually the problem solves itself very easily; "theoretically" it is a little more difficult. The socialists had constructed a beautiful theory of social development; capital itself was the great "socializer". One had only to wait. Waiting was quite bearable since it schooled the masses, developed discipline, created group-solidarity, a worker's culture. In short, instead of money, as Marx had said, capitalism was sweating socialism out of all its pores. To be sure, money did not disappear altogether. Trade-union and secretarial salaries increased with the growth of the cultural requirements of the emancipated proletarians. Naturally, the emancipation could be achieved only gradually — one secretariat after another. The dimes and nickels of the millions created fortunes as well as the hundreds of thousands of any baker's dozen of capitalists. The socialists did not need to wait for Woolworth to demonstrate this fact. Every Balkan peasant knows that small animals also give manure. Lucrative jobs were waiting in governmental and labor institutions; money was made and cleverly invested. The emancipated proletarians learned to appreciate what Disraeli described as "the sweet simplicity of the three per cent." No, there was no need to search deep into the soul of man to understand why the socialists could not accept bolshevism.

Theoretically the socialist opponents could not admit the capitalistic character of the Russian social system because it applied their own theory

of socialization. Unable as socialists to fight a socialist state, they were forced to invent new definitions which fitted neither capitalistic nor socialistic ideals. At first Russia was denounced as a new variety of an eternal Asiatic barbarism. The fascization of Western Europe led to a refinement in description. Only recently Hilferding wrote in the *Sotsialisticheskyy Vestnik* that the Russian economy is neither capitalistic nor socialistic, but a "totalitarian state economy", a "personal dictatorship", Stalin's state, in which "economy no longer has its own laws, but is directed from above." In short, the centralization of all capital in "one hand" has been literally accomplished. For the present-day Hilferding this goes too far. Earlier he was quite willing to accept an economy consciously regulated by a civilized, well-meaning and, if possible, social-democratic central authority. But a personal dictatorship, especially of a Stalin, he rejects. Thus he is now convinced that the dreamed of "managing of things" may become an "unlimited domination over man", and he says that "we must change our over-simplified and schematic ideas about the inter-relationships between economy and the state."

Not only Hilferding, but most politically-minded people are now reconsidering their former conceptions of capitalism, socialism, the state, and their interrelationships. It was not the Russian Revolution that stirred them up, however, but the rise of fascism, and especially the successes of the German Nazi-state. The Russian Revolution had rather reestablished the belief in "progress" somewhat dimmed by three years of warfare. All went according to schedule: accumulation, crisis, war, revolution, socialism. But in Western Europe the new hope led to no more than the applauding of the heroic deeds of the Russian workers. A few million dead soldiers had not been able to destroy the theory of "gradualism" that dominated the pre-war ideologies. Only the so-called fascist revolutions ended the reformists' dreams by killing off the dreamers. But instead of the situation becoming clearer, now that the "dream was lost", it only became more bewildering. Less than ever do people understand the meaning of their own activities and the happenings in their world.

II.

The fascist state, and even more so the bolshevik state, are both old and new, just as all anti-capitalistic ideas have been both old and new. Thus some observers are able to see in the rise of bolshevism and fascism the beginning of a world-wide social revolution, and others can speak gloomily of a return of the Dark Ages. Indeed, it seems that ideas of the mercantilistic stage of early capitalism re-appear in national-socialistic concepts, that money-economy returns to earlier barter-schemes, that the internationality of capitalist trade yields to autarchy, that wage-workers find themselves once more in servitude. And yet, the *Blitzkrieg* changes the map of the world even faster than the imperialism of liberalism; production for whatever purpose exceeds all previous records; capital is spread to all corners of the world; populations are shifted on a scale that makes the mass emigrations

of the past appear like jaunty week-end excursions. Munitions plants in the jungles of the Dutch Indies, airplane assemblies in the woods of deepest China, death-bearing "Liberators" crossing the Atlantic in 7½ hours, engineering feats of bomb-proof dogouts for 46 divisions awaiting *Der Tag* of the invasion, enthusiastic shock-troops in field, factory and enemy territory — certainly this cannot mean that the clock has been turned back.

Can this be capitalism? Has not capitalism long been decaying? Has it not suffered under the permanent crisis, unused resources, stoppage of capital export, millions of unemployed and, worst of all, the decline of profits? And then what was the meaning of the bolshevik coup d'etat, the March on Rome, the Reichstag fire? What explains the variety of procedures of Mussolini's syndicated corporate state, in the Russia which abolished all individual property rights, in the state-controlled German economy? What do these differences mean in regard to the interests of capitalists, workers, farmers, and the middle class? What should be accepted, what rejected? An so on — endlessly.

Let us recall for a moment Hilferding's remark that in Stalin's Russia "economy no longer has its own laws." We already know that, according to Hilferding, economic laws concentrate capital into fewer hands—finally, into "one hand." Connected with these laws were other "laws" referring to the capitalist mechanism as it operates at any time during the general developmental process. With the social capital united in "one hand", these capitalistic categories would lose their force and meaning. Until then the development of capital would be determined by the "law of value", the automatic regulator of capitalist production and distribution.

The "law of value" was discovered by Marx's forerunners, the exponents of political economy. It served to show that the capitalistic market mechanism benefitted the whole of society; an "invisible hand" guided all dispersed individual activity towards the common goal — an economic equilibrium in which each one receives his proper share either in the form of profits, interests, or wages. For Marx the definition of value in terms of labor meant something other than what it meant for classical economy. "In the haphazard and continually fluctuating relations of exchange between the various products of labor," he said, "the labor time socially necessary for their production forcibly asserts itself as a regulating natural law just as the law of gravity does when the house collapses over our heads." It is only in its conceptional form that Marx's "law of value" is connected with that of the classicists. It is distinguished from the latter through its close connection with the social conditions underlying the capitalist economy. In 1868 in a letter to Dr. Kugelman, Marx wrote, "Even if there were no chapter on 'value' in my book, the analysis of the real relationships which I give would contain the proof and demonstration of the *real value relations*.... Every child knows that a country which ceases to work, I will not say for a year, but for a few weeks, would die. Every child knows, too, that the mass of products corresponding to the different needs require

different and quantitatively determined masses of the total labor of society. That this necessity of distributing social labor in definite proportions cannot be done away with by the *particular form* of social production, but can only change the *form it assumes*, is self-evident. No natural laws can be done away with. What can change, in changing historical circumstances, is the *form* in which these laws operate."

In other words, the social division of labor entails some form of co-ordination of all individual operations to satisfy human needs. But private-property capitalism has no co-ordinating agency. That function is supposedly fulfilled by the exchange process. Human necessities must first be translated into value relations before they can be realized. The value relations appear as "economic laws" only by virtue of the fact that capitalists pursue individual ends in a society based on social labor. But the atomized activity of capitalist producers is only a historical fact, not an economic necessity. Capitalism emerged as a new class society out of another class society. It thus developed further the social labor process without being able to make it really social, that is, without being able to co-ordinate all partial functions in such a manner that the whole of society could participate in the progress connected with an increasing productivity.

Marx argued within the conceptional framework of classical economy in order to fight the bourgeois economists on their own ground, to show that their ideas failed to convince even in their peculiar fetishistic setting. But in doing so, he only translated into bourgeois-economic terms existing social relationships, that is, the actual fight between human beings and between classes to gain their separate ends without regard to any economic law or social necessity. He showed that no mysterious "invisible hand" was guiding society, but that it was "regulated" by the defeats and successes of groups and individuals in the relentless permanent social war. This war appears as the ordinary economic activity in which people engage; it is a war, nevertheless. The "economic laws" were exposed as relations between persons and classes in the productive process, and in social life generally.

The "economic laws" of capitalism, which have now supposedly culminated in the "directed economy," were of a fetishistic nature. Their end can only lay bare the real relationship they covered up. In other words, the end of these "economic laws" does not prove the existence of a new type of society, but only robs the capitalist society of its disguises. Behind all capitalistic categories there finally stands nothing but the exploitation of the many by the few. Because for historical reasons capitalist society started out as an aggregate of numerous large or small units, the accumulation of capital resulted from the quasi-independent activity of individual capitalists, profits and wages appeared to be regulated by market laws. For historical reasons, too, the state began as an executive organ for all capitalistic interests and was thus the property of none.

To the capitalist mind for which its own society was the final product of all social development and class relations were natural necessities — the capitalist relationships in production and exchange appeared as real

economic laws which determined and limited the behavior of men. To improve society it was only necessary to understand these laws better. However, all "scientific" economic theory remained mere ideology; though as an ideology it was forceful and well served the capitalist ends. As an ideology it entered even anti-capitalistic theories and mystified all social questions the simpler they became. The rise of the totalitarian state cannot be understood, nor its character grasped, by people unable to free themselves from this ideology which speaks of "economic laws" when it describes no more than the exploitation of men by men within a particular historical setting and at a certain developmental stage of social production and technique. However, fascism's "ending" of the assumed "economic laws" — which are now exposed as no more than a special *form* in which, within the atomized capitalist society, certain natural necessities assert themselves despite class and profits needs does not prove that there are no economic laws at all; it only shows that such laws can have nothing in common with those relationships the bourgeois economists describe as economic laws. The claim that fascism has brought to an end the "economic laws" which "regulated" capitalist society cannot be taken seriously, for one cannot end something that does not exist.

What the fascists are doing is to *react* differently to the inescapable need for distributing the social labor in such proportions that society can exist at all. That is, they have within given territories developed methods of doing consciously what hitherto was left to chance. The results of the struggle of all against all and of class against class, fought out in the sphere of exchange, disguised these real struggles as peaceful automatic exchange relations. What the fascists have done is to bring into daylight what had been hidden behind economic terms. They could not help unmasking the exchange relations as the relation between classes — one controlling, the other controlled — because they themselves rose to power by political struggles, not by grace of an economic law.

The law of value in the Marxian sense asserts itself by way of crisis and revolution. Under conditions of production and exchange in charge of a large number of relatively small enterprisers, and the existence of a variety of class interests and group interests within the classes, that is, in the so called laissez-faire period of capitalism, each class, each group, each capitalist had only a limited power to violate the interests of others. In bourgeois-economic terms this situation was seen, or could be expressed, as prices tending towards their value. The unequal development of the powers possessed by capitalists and classes, because of unequal beginnings and opportunities, and the inequality of social position meant that development took place as concentration of capital and centralization of political power. The strong could violate the weak in increasing measure. The distribution of social labor in definite proportions became ever more a distribution according to the needs of the determining capitalistic groups. If the contradictions between capital and social needs became too great, a crisis occurred. The crisis enforced re-organizations in the capital structure

so that the capitalists could continue to serve exclusively their own needs without inviting punishment. The day of reckoning was postponed, and has been postponed until now. In this very process, however, the face of capitalistic society has changed continuously.

All this can be expressed in economic terms, that is, can be described as the "law of accumulation", the "changing organic composition of capital", the "tendency of the rates of profit to decline", and in many other ways, as it is actually done in various crisis theories. But all these formulations only say in different words that on the basis of the existing divisions of labor, modern technique, and the prevailing class structure, more and more power is given to the successful groups to enforce their will upon society. This led to the conclusion that if one single group should usurp complete control over all capital, it would depend on the character of this group whether it would use its powers to distribute the social labor with a view of pleasing everybody, or use it to satisfy its own desires at whatever cost to society. It was not to be expected, however, that the cartellized monopolists would on their own part use their power to harmonize the social needs with the social division of labor. They either would have to be forced to do so, by more socially-inclined groups, or to be replaced by a socialistic regime. Thus not the working class, but separate organizations, parties as they had developed within the liberal structure, were thought of as the realizers of socialism.

Each political party, serving not the limited interests of one or another group within the accepted framework of capitalism, but aspiring to control society completely in order to realize one or another social theory, had thus to develop as a dictatorially-inclined party. Whatever parties claimed to favor democracy, that is, the democracy that existed, were destined to disappear, because the concentration process in society deprived them of their basis of existence. But the question which of a number of such organizations will finally gain power depends on a great complex of circumstances. There is no general formula for gaining power except that which says you have to take it. The composition of the group which becomes the single authority and its road to power may be quite different in every case. It is nonsense to address a particular group as one which, because of its special position or function in society, is scheduled to rule. No generalization can here approach realities. To explain the rise of Bolshevism in Russia a separate study is needed, to explain the rise of German fascism another is necessary. But to understand why the capitalist development tends to wind up in the dictatorship of one group over the whole of society it is only necessary to recognize the class character of society and to understand how this class nature determines the peculiar character of the developing economic and political structure of capitalism as one which concentrates, in the hands of a few, all that is created and belongs to the labor of all.

The successful party controls both the state and capital. But a state can under certain circumstances transform itself into a "party" and combine political and economic power in its dictatorship. Many roads lead to Rome.

The old idea that monopoly capital would control for its purposes the state apparatus has proved an illusion. This much only is clear. The old idea was the result of the generally accepted belief in capitalistic progress as determined by its "economic laws" of motion. There were no such economic laws; hence "progress" could take another course. But the stubborn insistence that old theories are truer than new facts, an insistence connected both with material group interests and the psychological difficulty of admitting defeat, still allows for wide-spread discussions as to what constitutes the difference between, say, Russia, Germany, and the United States. Those subjected to the fetishistic laws of capital have certainly lost a world with the establishment of the totalitarian states. Those adhering to the frozen ideology of bolshevism indeed see differences between fascism and bolshevism as great as between day and night. And every child can see that neither Russia nor Germany can be compared with the United States. Differences between these nations cannot be denied, but only a blind fanaticism could insist that Hitler serves a group of independent monopolists, that Stalin plans or fosters the resurrection of private property in the old laissez-faire sense, that Roosevelt's policies have as their basis the desires of the dominating groups of capitalists. It is also senseless to find a decisive difference between two systems in the fact that in Russia a party came to power illegally, and in Germany legally, or to distinguish between them, because in the one capital was expropriated at once and in the other only gradually. Neither is there any sense in distinguishing between a rising and an existing fascist regime, that is, between the latter and the "democracies", unless one has the power to turn events away from their present direction. To call one economic system capitalistic, another socialistic, and the third nothing for lack of terms, does not solve any question. Instead of arguing about names, one should describe in concrete terms the actual relations between men and men in the productive process, and their position in relation to the extra-economic sources of power. When one does that, all discernable differences become quite unimportant. In essentials all these systems are alike. In each a separate group controls all power sources and hence controls the rest of society.

The rule of a party as state, or of a state as party, and their control over the society, results from previous happenings. Advancing capitalization displaced individual capitalists with autonomous capitalist groups, individual workers with trade and political organizations. There arose — as it were — within the state a number of smaller "states" which interfered with the successful functioning of the state just as much as the monopolies interfered with the competitive rule of the market. Economic crisis conditions were accompanied by the crisis of democracy. To "solve" the first, the second had to be taken care of. But just as the bourgeoisie was unable to overcome the economic crisis, so it was unable to solve the political one. If a party could take state-power, or a state abolish all parties, it could "end" the political crisis. It could thus, unhampered, attempt to reorganize the economic structure. In fully developed capitalist nations a party may not need a real revolution to accomplish this task, nor does a state have to wait

for such a party. Only in backward nations are revolutions necessary for this purpose.

Although the growing influence of the state in capitalist society has been directly identified with its increasing monopolization, the apparent parallelism discernible here has to be understood not as a process in which one hand washes the other — that is, as if the monopolistic units themselves were fostering the power of the state, and the latter exercised this power in the exclusive interest of the monopolists,— but must be seen in connection with and within the setting of the general national and international competitive process. The state, essentially a monopolistic enterprise like any other, developed its own vested interests and had a better opportunity to defend them within the permanent international crisis conditions. It could with the help of social movements become the most important monopoly and within the framework of imperialistic rivalries combine all power in society in one hand, and thus begin to “plan” the nation.

From this point of view state rule over the economy and therewith totalitarianism is but another step in the concentration process which accompanied the whole development of capital. It is a new phase in the history of the capitalistic social and international division of labor based on the divorce of the producers from the means of production. Like any previous re-organization of the capitalist structure in the wake of a crisis, this new reorganization, expressed in a limited “planning”, succeeded at first in overcoming an existing stagnation. These initial successes, however, only obscure the real character of its “planning”, just as previously a new prosperity based on re-organization processes that took place during the crisis had given rise to hopes that now at last the philosopher’s stone had been found. In reality, as the spreading of the war shows only too clearly, the anarchy of the market has been replaced by the anarchy of “planning”. By gearing the whole economy to the needs of war all crisis symptoms disappear as they disappeared under war conditions in the liberalistic age. But the very existence of this war indicates that the separate interests of the diverse state-apparatuses — each of which comprises a group of privileged people — clash with the real needs of the social world just as violently, if not more so, as did the private-property interests of times past. All capitalistic categories today are reproduced not in their fetishistic form but in their actual character; they are reproduced on a still greater scale, violating more than ever the needs of mankind.

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REVOLUTION FOR WHAT?

A critical comment on Jan Valtin’s “Out of the Night”

“Soiled with mire from top to toe, and oozing blood from every pore”, a seafaring man emerges on this side of the Atlantic to tell a weird story of intrigue and conspiracy, of spying and counter-spying, of treason, torture, and murder. It is a true story, a reliable record of tangible facts, albeit mostly of facts that remind one of the “stranger than fiction” columns. Yet there is the difference that they are not isolated facts which seem unbelievable only because they do not fit into the common assumptions derived from everyday experience. Valtin’s book reveals a whole world of well-connected facts that retain their intrinsic quality of unreality even after their non-fictitious character has been established. It is a veritable underworld that lies below the surface of present-day society; yet unlike the various disconnected underworlds of crime, it is a coherent world with its own type of human actions and sufferings, situations and personalities, allegiances and apostasies, upheavals and cataclysms.

It may well be that the claim of publishers and reviewers that “Out of the Night” is “unlike any other book”, and a “mile-stone in the history of literature” is justified, though in quite another sense than theirs. It has probably never happened before that a man of 36 years with “a face of exceptional boyishness” (publisher’s advertisement) has told such a gruesome story, dealing not with his individual adventures but with an important part of world history, not with events long past but with things that happen just the other day and that may still be going on in a very similar way right now.

The title of this book is utterly misleading. Who came out of the night? When and where and for whom did the new day begin? What right have the publishers to claim that this man Valtin is “a symbol of hope in this dark hour, a symbol of a generation which came back from a long trek in the wilderness, to build civilization all over again”? The only thing that his career as an OGPU spy and a Gestapo spy who finally commuted between both of them as a spy’s spy until even this became utterly impossible might symbolize is the final petering-out in a sort of ambiguous alliance of the competitive fight between German nazism and Russian bolshevism. How many of the readers, who today after fellow-traveling with bolshevism feel elated in the belief that, like Valtin, they have come back from a long trek in the wilderness to build civilization (“defend democracy”) all over again, are aware of the fact that with them, as with their hero, nothing has changed but the external situation? Like Valtin, they never

dreamed of the possibility that one day in August, 1939, the two mutually opposed world-powers of fascism and bolshevism would come to terms, after which neither party would need the particular services they had rendered in exchange for that certain amount of "security" or "protection" which in the world as it is, results from the connection with any organization of power — holy or unholy. (This applies to the particular services rendered by professors and other intellectuals just as much as it applies to the services of spies, forgers, killers, and to other menial services.)

On the part of Valtin himself there is not much of an attempt to conceal this woeful state of affairs. In this respect he still towers, despite all we have said and shall say about him, high above some of his fervent admirers within the recently established Defense-of-Democracy Front (formerly "Popular Front") of the repenting American intellectuals. Although he makes his bow to American democracy — the law of the land of his last refuge — he does not dissemble his essentially different faith. He reveals rather clearly the state of mind that he had reached when after some years of torture in the Nazi concentration camp he finally made a well-prepared gesture of repudiating communism and accepting the program of "Mein Kampf". He does not pretend that in explaining the reasons for this step to his torturers he was speaking entirely against his true internal conviction: "Many of the things I said were not lies; they were conclusions I had arrived at in the self-searching and digging which many thousand lonely hours had invited." (p. 657) Even now, as an American resident in 1939, he comments on the revolutionary internationalism of his youth in much the same vein as when he had still to prove his recent conversion to "healthy nationalism" to Inspector Kraus in the concentration camp. (pp. 3, 659). Signing the pledge for Nazism carried conviction because he explained to his torturers that he "joined the C. P. as a boy out of the same motives which brought other youths into the ranks of the Hitler movement." (657). His preference from the outset, if he had had a choice, might well have been in the direction of the more whole-heartedly violent of the two anti-democratic post-war movements. He faithfully reports the sensation he experienced when as a youth of barely 14 years he, for the first time, "saw a man lose his life". The man was an officer in field-gray who came out of a station surrounded by mutineers during the revolt of the sailors in Bremen on November 7, 1918:— "He was slow in giving up his arms and epaulettes. He made no more than a motion to draw his pistol when they were on top of him. Rifle butts flew through the air above him. *Fascinated I watched from a little way off.** Then the sailors turned away to saunter back to their trucks. I had seen dead people before. But death by violence and the fury that accompanied it were something new. The officer did not move. I marvelled how easily a man could be killed. — I rode away on my bicycle. I fevered with a strange sense of power." (p.10)

*) *Emphasis by reviewer.*

Similar scenes were to occur again and again throughout the next fifteen years — and though no longer an innocent by-stander, he was still invariably watching the scene from a little way off, "fascinated" and fevered with a "strange sense of power." (There was one glorious exception that will be discussed below.) He was "fascinated" again when in 1931 he heard the first speech of Captain Goering:— "I tried to be cool, tried to take notes on what I intended to say after Captain Goering had finished, but soon gave it up. *The man fascinated me.*"** (p. 243)

Thus there is not much of a "gospel for democracy" in this story of an unrepenting adherent of an anti-democratic faith. Valtin's escape to the country of "democracy" is a mere external occurrence. There was no room left for him between the fascist hammer and the communist anvil. He thus symbolizes not the sentimentalized but the real story of those people who, after the German-Russian treaty of 1939 and more particularly after the collapse of Holland, Belgium, France, found themselves in a trap and are still desperately looking for an escape. It is a hypocritical and self-defeating attempt to sell this gruesome but true story of Valtin to the American public as an uplifting report on the redemption of a sinner from the damnation of anti-democratic communism and nazism.

It is equally ridiculous to ask us, as does the January Book-of-the-Month-Club News, to believe that this book is "first of all an autobiography and it should be read as such." The reason that Valtin's book appeared in this country with the approval of the F.B.I., was the February choice of the Book-of-the-Month Club, has climbed to the top of the non-fiction best-seller list, was advertised on the radio, reprinted in excerpts through two issues of *Life* and condensed for the March issue of the *Reader's Digest*, is not its literary quality but its usefulness as war propaganda against both Nazi Germany and its virtual ally, Communist Russia. We, too, think that the book has merits from a literary point of view. There is a genuine epic quality in the story told in Chapters 18 and 19 ("Soviet Skipper") and in all parts of the book that deal with ships and harbors and seafaring folk. There is, furthermore, throughout the book an impressive show of that quality of the author's which impressed even his Nazi torturer when he said to him, "You have *Weltkenntnis*." There are other parts of the book, including the pathetic story of "Firelei", which might be said to betray too much of a lyrical effort; but here the reviewer would like to withhold judgment as it is often difficult to draw a line between genuine emotion and melodramatic display of sentiment. What concerns us, however, is the question of the book's political importance.

What does it contribute to our knowledge of that great revolutionary movement of the working classes of Europe that threw the whole traditional system of powers and privileges out of balance,— so much so that even in its ultimate defeat it engendered a new and apparently more formidable

**) *Emphasis by reviewer.*

threat to the existing system — the unconquerable economic crisis, the fascist revolution, and a new world war? What does the book teach us about the mistakes that led to the failure and self-destruction of the revolutionary movements of the last two decades, and what can be learned from it for avoiding similar mistakes in the future?

Before attempting an answer we might consider how much of a contribution to far-reaching political problems we can expect from a book like this. It would be unreasonable to expect much political judgment from a man who was fourteen years old when he was drawn into the maelstrom of the German revolution and later spent the best part of his life in the strict seclusion of the professional conspirator and spy, not counting a three years' term in an American prison and four years' detention in a Nazi concentration camp. Apart from the contacts with real human beings that he gained on ships and in ports on his numerous travels over the seven seas, there was in his long life as a revolutionary just one short period — lasting from May to October, 1923 — during which he had a chance to put in some actual fighting with the rank and file. This period culminated in, and was concluded by, his active participation in the famous uprising of the military organization of the C.P. in Hamburg in October, 1923. Thereafter he left the scene for another period of traveling abroad, performing odd services for the Party, and did not return to Europe and Germany for any length of time until the beginning of 1930. Only then was he charged with more important work under the immediate control of the inner circles of the Comintern; only then did he get a chance to observe events and developments from a point of view broader than that of the secret agent committed to a specific, and for him often meaningless task. His misfortune was that the international communist movement had in the meantime lost all of its former independent significance. It had been transformed into a mere instrument of the Russian State. Even in this capacity it no longer fulfilled any political function, but was restricted to organizational and conspiratorial activities. The national units of the Comintern (the C.P.'s of the various countries) had been virtually transformed into detached sections of the Russian Intelligence Service. In name only were they directed by their political leaders; in actual fact they were controlled by the divers agents of the OGPU. Thus, during the first part of Valtin's career there was a political movement of which he got only the most casual glimpses; and during the latter part, all that was left of the former political character of the C.P.'s was a mere semblance and pretence of a genuine political movement.

This summary of Valtin's personal history explains both the usefulness and the shortcomings of his contribution to the political history of the revolution. He does not understand much, even today, of the very different character that the communist workers' movement in Germany and in other European countries showed in its earlier phases; he accepts its later conspiratorial character as the inevitable character of a revolutionary movement. Such a tragic misunderstanding results, in his case, from a peculiar conjunction of different causes. His extreme youth during the formative

phase of the Communist Party, 1919-1923, the particular conditions along the "water-front" and more especially in Hamburg, that in many ways anticipated a much later phase of the general development of the Party, his own impetuous, enthusiastic, reckless nature that from the outset designed him for the role of a "professional revolutionist" in the Leninist sense of the term, his particular usefulness as a "real sailor" (p. 107) in a field that was of outstanding importance both for international revolutionary politics and for the specific aims of Russian power politics:— all this contributed to deprive him of his full share in the "normal" experience of the class struggle long before the split between the masses of workers and a secret inner circle became a typical feature of the communist movement all over the world. When he joined the party in May, 1923, he was at once singled out for "special" duties as a member of one of the "activist" brigades in the harbor of Hamburg, as a military leader, and as a "courier" for the exchange of messages between the known leaders of the German party and their Russian military advisers. It was by sheer instinct and good luck that he did not get involved in the first amateurish activities of the terror groups that were then introduced into German revolutionary politics by the secret agents sent from Russia for this purpose.

It is easy to show how little Valtin really understood of the daring ambiguities of the Russian "communist" interferences in the revolutionary struggle of the German workers. To this day he believes in most of the romantic stories that were then whispered from mouth to mouth about the various important "generals" who had been secretly sent by the Soviet government to handle the military end of the planned insurrection. It is true that a number of Russian officers had been sent, that they had advised the German Party leaders, and that they were, in fact, responsible for such fantastic schemes as that of the assassination of General von Seeckt, head of the German Reichswehr, by the T-groups of the ill-famed Felix Neumann, who later betrayed the whole crew of the T-units and their secret leaders, the Russian officers, to the German police. But it is equally true that the Russian officers had come to Germany in a double capacity. While the Soviet government was assisting the German C.P. in preparing the insurrection, it was at the same time engaged in secret negotiations with the same General von Seeckt whom its Tchekist emissaries planned to assassinate. These negotiations with the militarist and reactionary clique — the forerunners of Nazism in the Weimar Republic — were conducted with a view to preparing a Russo-German alliance against France and England, who had at that time invaded the Rhine and Ruhr territories of Germany. The negotiations led to a number of military agreements and paved the way for the treaty that was actually concluded between Germany and Russia in the spring of 1926.

All the Russian officers who had been tried and sentenced to death penalties and long prison terms in the so-called Tcheka-trial at Leipzig in 1924, were shortly afterwards returned to Russia. The underlying diplomatic procedure was screened by the arrest and trial of a few otherwise

unknown German students by the GPU in Moscow on the charge of espionage. They were convicted and afterwards exchanged for "General" Skoblevsky (alias Helmut, alias Wolf) and the other Russian officers captured in Germany. In reporting his version of these events, Valtin still naively believes in the story which was then spread by the German and Russian governments and was at the time widely accepted by the workers. Felix Djerjinsky, the "supreme chief of the GPU", he tells us, had silently inaugurated the drive against the German students and thus compelled the German authorities to return the Russian officers who had plotted against the life of von Seeckt and had nearly succeeded in organizing a revolutionary overthrow of the German state.

We have discussed this particular question at length not for the purpose of exposing the naivety of Valtin's report, but for a more important end — namely, to show the distortion that the whole history of the class-struggle undergoes if it is regarded from the restricted viewpoint of the technical "expert", the professional conspirator and spy. This distortion is inherent in the whole of Valtin's report on those earlier phases when the communist movement was still to a greater or lesser extent a genuine political movement, a true expression of the underlying class-struggle.

Unfortunately, the same objection cannot be raised against Valtin's report on the later phases of the communist movement. By that time the distortion of a genuine political movement to a mere conspiratorial organization had become a *historical fact*: After 1923 and again after 1928, 1933, and ultimately after 1939, the so-called Communist Party became what Valtin assumed it had been at all times — a mere technical instrument in the hands of a secret leadership, paid and controlled exclusively by the Russian State, entirely independent of any control by its membership or by the working class at large.

Thus the greater part of Valtin's book presents a most valuable description of the real distortions that must befall a revolutionary movement that becomes estranged from its original purpose and from its roots in the class-struggle. There is no doubt that Valtin has given a realistic description of this historical process and of its ultimate outcome. He has presented the facts without reserve, with no perceptible sparing of other persons and very little sparing of himself. He has recorded the characteristic features of persons, events, and localities with a rare gift both of memory and of accurate detailed description. He has thus revealed the complete inside story of an immense plot, whose details — by a carefully devised and rigidly observed procedure — were known only to a minimum number of immediately involved persons, most of whom have died in the meantime without recording their memories. Thus in his factual report he traces to the bitter end the working of one of the processes that contributed to the utter defeat of the most revolutionary movement of our time and to the temporary eclipse of all independent workers' movements in a twilight of despair, loss of class-consciousness, and cynical acceptance of the counter-revolutionary substitute for a genuine workers' revolution.

Yet it cannot be said that Valtin has presented the story of the degeneration of the communist movement in a manner in which it would be most fruitful for the politically interested among his readers. We must supplement his tale with two additions. We must point out the subtle process by which the first germs of the later decay were introduced into the revolutionary movement; and we must try to understand the whole of the historical development that from those inconspicuous beginnings led to the present complete corruption of a once-revolutionary movement.

Little did the masses of the Independent Social Democratic Party of Germany know what they were in for when at their convention in Halle in the fall of 1920 they accepted, along with twenty other "Conditions of Admission to the Communist International", the necessity for a secret "illegal activity" in addition to the regular activities of a revolutionary party. They had had some experience in "illegal action" during 1914-18. They had built up a secret organization of Workers' Councils, and ultimately, of Workers' and Soldiers' Councils to end the war and to organize the socialist revolution. They had become used to periods when all legal activities of the revolutionary parties (outside of the still formally respected parliamentary sphere) were suppressed, their leaders persecuted, their institutions destroyed and thus, for a certain time, the whole party "forced into illegality". Thus they imagined that nothing was at issue in the 1920 discussion but this indispensable element of any genuine revolutionary action — an element that is present even under the most normal conditions of the class struggle (e. g., in the organization of an ordinary strike). They suspected the right-wingers who opposed all the twenty-one conditions of a malicious plot against this inevitable form of maintaining the revolutionary movement through the critical periods immediately preceding its decisive victory or following its temporary defeats. They were for this reason unable to listen to the warnings of the left-radical communists who, adhering to the tradition of Liebknecht and Luxemburg, emphasized the spontaneity of revolutionary mass action from the bottom up as against the supremacy of an uncontrolled leadership from the top down. They did not, and from their historical experience could not, anticipate the fact that from then on a steadily increasing part — and ultimately all of their organization and politics, tactics and strategies, their choice of foes and allies, their theoretical convictions, language and mores, in fact the whole of their behavior — would depend on secret orders received from the often suspicious agents of unknown superiors without the slightest possibility of influence or control on the part of the members. (This is what became known in communist circles by the beautiful name of "democratic centralism").

Already in the next year, the "March-putsch" of 1921 gave a first impression of the disease that from then on was to destroy the healthy growth of the revolutionary movement of the German workers. It was the first of a long series of events in which the elite of the most valiant and the most devoted workers was sacrificed for an insane enterprise that was not based on a spontaneous movement from below nor on a critical

condition of the existing economic and political system. It was planned, and led to defeat, entirely by a secret semi-military organization. The same game was repeated under similar conditions, and invariably with the most destructive consequences, through all subsequent phases until it actually fulfilled the ultimate purpose that had been inherent in the procedure from the outset. It was used not to arouse the workers, but to restrain them from the decisive fight against the advancing forces of Nazism because (as Manuilsky said at the Eleventh Session of the Executive Committee of the Comintern in 1932): "It is not true that Fascism of the Hitler type represents the chief enemy". When this was said, however, the conspiratorial idea of the revolution had already nearly run its full course, although an aftermath was still to come. The period of the so-called Popular Front, inaugurated after 1933, brought many new phases until the Communist Party reached the utter debasement which is illustrated by the "communist" staff member of the City College of New York who was so conspiratorial that in helping to edit and put out the Communist campus paper he wore gloves in order to prevent his leaving fingerprints, because he had "an inordinate fear of detection."***

A final objection that might be raised against Valtin's picture of the degeneration of the Communist Party is that he does not discuss the manner in which Lenin's concept of the conspiratorial revolution is closely related to other parts of Lenin's theory—namely, to his concept of the party and the state, to his assumption on the role of the various classes, and even of whole nations, in the "uneven development" of the proletarian revolution and, last not least, to his theory of the "dictatorship of the proletariat". Here again an apparent shortcoming of the book is due less to the restricted technical outlook of the author than to the fact that none of those wider political concepts of the Leninist theory exerted the slightest effect on the action and omissions recorded in his book. During those later phases of the Comintern to which his report is mainly devoted, all the high-sounding terms of the original theory had long since degenerated into empty phrases without any bearing on the practical behavior of the "revolutionary" conspirators. All that the people described by Valtin needed of those Leninist theories was the cheerful acceptance of an unrestricted use of all forms of violence both against the existing powers and against those proletarian critics of an assumedly infallible leadership who had been described by Lenin and were described up to the end in ever new and more poisonous terms as the "agents of the bourgeoisie within the ranks of the proletarian class", the "agents of the counter-revolution", of "Social-Fascism", of "Trotskyism", etc., etc.

There was no longer any connection between the various forms and degrees of violence applied and the different tasks to be solved at the different stages of the revolutionary development. In fact, Valtin's uncritical report could be used to demonstrate an *inverse relation* by which the use of violence became the more unrestricted the more the movement lost its

original revolutionary character and became a mere intelligence service at the command and in the pay of the external and internal power politics of the Stalin government in Russia. For example, an indiscriminate use of sabotage had been repudiated by the early communists in accordance with all other Marxist parties. In the later phases, as is most impressively revealed by Valtin, all conceivable forms of sabotage were commonly used and had long ceased to involve any theoretical problems. Again the famous "purge" of non-conformist party members was applied originally in the form of disciplinary measures culminating in expulsion from the party; it was later developed into methodical character-assassination and, ultimately, into outright assassination of individuals and whole groups, party members and non-members, both inside and outside Russia. (The murder of Trotsky by the GPU in Mexico was only the most conspicuous example of an almost "normal" procedure that scarcely interested a wider public as long as it was restricted to the extinction of present or former revolutionists).

In conclusion, one word against those inspired people who want to minimize the significance of Valtin's book by pointing out that the author was never "an important communist". It is indeed remarkable that this most ferocious attack against the present-day usurpers of the name of revolutionary communism should have come, not from one of the people high up in the party, but from one of those ordinary workers who were forever misused and sacrificed for the higher purposes of the gods. Here is a fitting symbol of the form in which the last stroke against the counter-revolutionary power entrenched in Stalin's Russia is bound to come:— the rebellion of the masses.

L. H.

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*** See the testimony of Mr. Canning in the New York Times of March 3rd, 1941.

MAN AND SOCIETY IN AN AGE OF RECONSTRUCTION

Sociologists, who for professional reasons are more disturbed than other scientists by the unsocial behavior of men, find their greatest challenge in present-day reality. On the one hand there is an enormous advance in science and production, and on the other an almost complete inability to apply them to the advantage of society as a whole. This paradox leads sociologists once more to turn from their cherished pre-occupation with isolated sociological data to new attempts at formulating comprehensive theories designed to influence and direct social change.

It must be noted, however, that the vaunted empiricist formula was used so extensively not only for reasons of objectivity but also because it served as a sort of escape-device for scientists unwilling to make political decisions. Sociologists could not help noticing that all their findings led to conclusions which in one way or another were directed against the ruling interests in society. But though it was not difficult to maintain "neutrality" in the name of science, that was not enough. Whatever their attitude, the scientists are now dragged out into the open to "take their stand". Thus the recent tendencies in sociology are both a series of "confessions" and a militant defense of the scientists' position in society.

Although prosperity and depression, war and peace relieve one another, all that can really alternate in the course of social development is the *emphasis* upon one or the other side of this singular but double-faced process; for in the prevailing society productive forces are simultaneously destructive ones. This fact explains why, in an atmosphere suggesting war and reflecting general disorder, hopeful investigations are made and optimistic proposals offered to preserve peace and to re-establish order. Unless precluded by the requirements of warfare the search for sociality in the "unsocial" society is continued even in the midst of war. In this respect *Karl Mannheim's* new book *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction*¹⁾ must be regarded as an important contribution to contemporary social thought.

1) Kegan Paul, London. Harcourt, Brace & Company, New York. (469 pp., 16s.6d.—\$3.50) 1940.

The book, which carries the subtitle "Studies in Modern Social Structure," is divided into six parts dealing with rational and irrational elements in contemporary society, the social causes of the crisis in culture, the questions of crisis, dictatorship and war, with thought at the level of planning and with questions of planning and freedom. It contains, besides an introduction, a 72-page bibliography and indices of names and subject matter.

It should be clear that the reviewer will hardly be able to do justice to the whole

I

For Mannheim the present social crisis is not a temporary affair but a transition period to a new social order. The principle of *laissez faire* and its paralleling social structure resulted in chaos; a new principle, "planning for freedom", and a new social structure must evolve and lead to a higher social level which incorporates in itself former types of action, thought, and freedom compatible with the new society, and at the same time guards against exaggerated dogmatism in planning. Instead of despairing over the birthpangs of the emerging "mass-society", instead of longing for the irrevocable past, we should accept the *new* reality and help to realize a *new* freedom, *new* security, and *new* progress.

Since in Mannheim's opinion radical solutions of the existing social problems are out of the question, and since we have to be content with gradually altering small details within the framework of established relationships" (381)²⁾ we must, independent of our preferences, "use all our intellectual energy towards finding a combination of social controls which would determine how far individual liberties should be left unrestricted in order to preserve both the freedom of the individual and the efficiency of the community" (8). He, too, would prefer, he says, to live in a period "in which the social order and the technique of control did not allow one group of people to force its conception of the 'good life' upon another. But we have no power to choose the social order and its technique of control. They are already in existence, and the most we can do is to combine and mold them to the best advantage" (7). As there is no longer "a choice between planning and *laissez faire*, but only between good planning and bad" (6), and as the "planners can recruit themselves only from already existing groups, everything will depend on which of these groups with their existing outlooks will produce the energy, the decisiveness, and the capacity to master the vast social machinery of modern life" (75).

All this is quite in keeping with the spirit of the time, for it must be obvious by now that that kind of "planning" and social ordering initiated on a national scale by the Bolsheviks, adopted by the Fascists and Nazis in a somewhat modified form and with partly different means because of different conditions, is now under pressure of crisis and war being brought in a steadily increasing measure into the structure of those nations still paying lip-service to democracy and free-trade. In one respect, and with

content of this ambitious work, embodying as it does its author's reflections over a period of six years.. He will not deal with its social epistemology and its sociological analysis of ideas otherwise than indirectly. He feels justified in so doing because of the fact that the issues neglected were widely dealt with at the time of the appearance of Dr. Mannheim's previous book "Ideology and Utopia". Attaching more importance to the political than to the sociological aspects of the work, the reviewer concerns himself only with its main theses and its "message" as regards existing social problems.

2) All figures in parantheses refer to pages in Dr. Mannheim's book.

much more right than Harcourt who in 1901 said that "we are all socialists now", one could say that "we are all fascists today". A comparison between the various fascistic proposals and practices in regard to social problems and those brought forth by the reformists of the socialistic and liberalistic schools would suffice to justify such a remark. In view of this situation, Mannheim's book may also be appreciated for its attempt to reconcile social theory and practice, and for its recognition of the fact that whatever stand we may take in regard to fascism, our future activity has to be based on that social necessity which led to the rise of the totalitarian state.

II.

Mannheim's *central* theme is formed by the problem "of how psychological, intellectual, and moral developments are related to the social process (15). He wants to show the connection between the changes in human beings and the great contemporary changes in the social system. The Marxian method of "contemplating our inner life in the light of economic processes does not exhaust all the possibilities of interpreting the mind in relation to contemporary society" (19). Relationships which are neither economic nor political, but social, "form the real center of the drama in which social changes are directly transformed into psychological changes" (21). Psychology, aesthetics, and jurisprudence are no more able than economics to deal sufficiently with the problems of mind and society. The isolated sciences have their usefulness, but they will have to translate their separate conclusions into sociological terms. Though until today we had no historical or sociological psychology, we now have to begin "to perceive the social aspect of every psychological phenomenon, and to interpret it in terms of a continual interaction between the individual and society" (17).

Mannheim points out that the number of sociological relationships and processes which affect the psychology of man is much greater than is usually supposed. To make this clear, he selects out of the variety of present-day social relationships "the conflicting principles of competition and regulation". He says "that not only in economics, but in every sphere of life the principle of regulation is replacing the principle of competition" (21). Because of the particular trend of thought which prevailed in those social sciences reflecting the rise of industry, it happened that the principle of competition was first discovered in the economic field. It had, nevertheless, universal validity. (There is competition in love, in art, in politics, etc.) Today, too, though the change from competition to regulation has economic causes, it also has a significance of its own; its influence is felt in every kind of social activity (22).

Mannheim's first attempt to forge a link between psychology and the social sciences serves to lay bare the "various sociological factors which could explain why civilization is collapsing before our eyes" (15). He points out that reason and order exist only under certain conditions. Belief in the progress of reason has lately been shattered; "groups which have hitherto ruled society and which, at least since the *Age of Reason*, have given our

culture its special tone" (40), have suddenly lost power. Thus it has become necessary to include in the "picture of historical development the recent experiences of the power of the irrational... It is the task of sociology to show at which points in a given society these irrationalities are expressed and which social functions and forms they assume" (63).

As points of departure Mannheim advances the theses that "the unfolding of reason, the ordering of impulses, and the form taken by morality are not accidental... but depend on the problems set by the existing social order. Societies of earlier epochs could afford a certain disproportion in the distribution of rationality and moral power. The contemporary society, however, must collapse if rational social control and the individual's mastery over his impulses do not keep step with technical development" (43). This latter disproportion proves — in the long run — to be incompatible with the industrial society because this society leads to a growing *social interdependence* and a *fundamental democratization*. Since there exists a "general disproportion in the development of human capacities", because "modern technical mastery over nature is miles ahead of the development of the knowledge and the moral powers of man", and also a "social disproportion" in the distribution of rational and moral capacities, because of the class and functional divisions in society, it happens that as soon as the masses "enter in one way or another into politics, their intellectual shortcomings and more especially their political shortcomings are of general concern and even threaten the elites" (45). To be sure there is today no more irrationality than in the past, but "hitherto it has found an outlet in narrower social circles and in private life" (45). As long as democracy was only a "pseudo-democracy", Mannheim goes on to explain, it allowed for the growth of rationality, but since "democracy became effective, i. e., since all classes played an active part in it, it has been increasingly transformed into a 'democracy of emotions'." (45).

At this point it is necessary to explain in what sense Mannheim employs the terms "rational" and "irrational". He speaks of *substantial* and *functional* rationality and irrationality. A substantial rational act of thought "reveals intelligent insight into the inter-relations of events in a given situation. Every thing else which either is false or not an act of thought at all (drives, impulses, wishes, feelings) is substantially irrational. Functional rationality or irrationality he uses in the way it is usually employed in regard to rationalization processes in an industry or administration, that is, where a "series of actions is organized in such a way that it leads to a previously defined goal" (53). "The more industrialized a society is", Mannheim explains, "and the more advanced its division of labor and organization, the greater will be the number of spheres of human activity which will be functionally rational and hence also calculable in advance" (55). This increased functional rationality does not, however, promote to the same extent substantial rationality. Rather, functional rationalization has a paralysing effect on the capacity for rational judgment, as crises and revolutions so amply testify.

In earlier societies "the individual acted only occasionally and in limited spheres in a functionally rational manner; in contemporary society he is compelled to act in this way in more and more spheres of life". Most intimately connected with the functional rationalization of conduct is the phenomenon of self-rationalization, that is, the individual's systematic control of his impulses. However, since in a functionally rationalized society the thinking out of a complex series of actions is confined to a few organizers — men in key positions — the average man's capacity for rational judgment declines steadily. This leads to a growing distance between the elite and the masses, thus to the 'appeal to the leader'. Self-rationalization becomes increasingly more difficult. "When the rationalized mechanism of social life collapses in times of crisis, the individual cannot repair it by his own insight. Instead his own impotence reduces him to a state of terrified helplessness" (59).

The origins of the rational and irrational elements in modern society are thus traceable to the fact that ours is not only an industrial but also a mass society. As an industrial society "it creates a whole series of actions which are rationally calculable... and which depend on a whole series of repressions and renunciations of impulse satisfactions. As a mass society, it produces all the irrationalities and emotional outbreaks which are characteristic of amorphous human agglomerations" (61).

The "irrational", however, "is not always harmful ,...it is among the most valuable powers in man's possession when it acts as a driving force towards rational and objective ends" (62). It is harmful when it is not integrated into the social structure and enters the political life in a society in which the masses tend to dominate. This is so "dangerous because the selective apparatus of mass democracy opens the door to irrationalities in those places where rational direction is indispensable" (63). In short and to be specific, irrationalities are still an asset in France and England, but of course very bad in Germany.

III

It might be well to interrupt our exposition of Mannheim's studies and to select for discussion the following ideas:

- 1) Society is in a transition from *laissez faire* to planning. The character of ruling elites is decisive for future events.
- 2) To understand the actions and ideas of men the "multi-dimensional" nature of social events must be considered.
- 3) A civilization is collapsing; the belief in progress is gone; irrationality is on the increase. The last must be understood as the result of the contradictory development of "social interdependence" and "fundamental democratization", the more rapid growth of the *functional* as compared to the *substantial* rationality in industrial mass society.

To deal with the question of transition: It is essential for an understanding of Mannheim's thought to observe that his book has been influenced by "experiences in Germany and later by the English way of thinking, and

is an attempt at reconciling the two" (4). The democracies, Mannheim says, "have not yet found a formula to determine which aspects of the social process can be controlled by regulation, and the dictatorships cannot see that interfering with everything is not planning" (14). He favors neither of them, but a social policy which successfully merges what is good in both; everything depends finally on "whether we can find ways of transferring democratic parliamentary control to a planned society" (380). The political character of Mannheim's work is here revealed. Although somewhat hidden by a benevolent acknowledgment of Marx's contribution to social science, it is nevertheless an attack upon the idea of revolutionary change. Though convinced of the necessity of many of the fascistic reforms, Mannheim is thoroughly frightened by their social consequences. He favors a middle-way, that is, he favors the political attitude prevailing in the so-called democratic nations which are in opposition to the new German imperialism.

Mannheim is convinced that "if the groups engaged in politics still refuse to look beyond their own immediate interests, society will be doomed" (15). It is difficult to see more than rhetoric in this statement, for one or another group may be doomed (whatever that may mean), but why society? It is still more difficult to understand this because Mannheim does not believe "that the great theme of our time is the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie" (215). He admits that at an earlier time the class-struggle idea appeared to be quite realistic, but now it has to be recognized as a "distorted perspective". It is no longer true, he says, "that class antagonisms are the principal characters" in the social drama, because "new classes grew up which cannot be placed in the same category as the bourgeoisie, the proletariat, or the military caste; party organizations have been created which ignore the economic division between workers and industrialists. These issues dwarf the significance of the continued class tensions" (251).

If class issues are of "secondary importance" today they cannot be made responsible for the continuation of the present social crisis. If Mannheim nevertheless speaks of group frictions as responsible for the present chaos, this must be understood in the light of his conviction that "party organizations ignore the division between workers and industrialists". What "dooms" society is the struggle between party organizations and industry, between fascism and private-property capitalism. Mannheim's quest for ending group frictions to "save society" is an appeal to both fascist and "anti-fascists" to end their struggle and find a compromise solution which satisfies both, — a plea which simultaneously assumes that the proletariat as an independent force is already out of the way.

It is from this view that Mannheim's claims that most of the bad symptoms of our time are due to the transition from *laissez faire* to planning, from a limited democracy to mass society, and to the changes in social technique accompanying this process, must be understood. These principles appear to him as more important than the Marxian principles of class conflict and the struggle for power whose "concrete patterns are much too change-

able to be accepted as the eternal frame-work of future events"(251). He considers his principles more fundamental because they are more abstract, because "they sufficiently explain a large number of changes which will endure after the special class patterns have been modified"(252).

Though principles which will endure and transcend the narrower problems of the present are all right so far as they go, they are not "superior" and do not relegate the less abstract problems of the present into "secondary categories". To say that most of the symptoms of our time are due to its transitional character is to repeat — only in other words — that they are due to the actual struggle between party organizations and industrialists. Thus Mannheim has not replaced less abstract with more abstract principles. He has only narrowed down still further the class struggle principle by accepting — in concreto — one of its phases, that is, the present struggle between party organizations and industrialists, as of greater importance than the class struggle itself.

It might be difficult to recognize in the present struggles between fascism and private-property capitalism the old struggle between those who control the sources of economic and social power and those controlled by them because of the fact that the emphasis has now been shifted from the so-called economic into the political sphere. It is easier to discard the whole problem and to concentrate on issues which apparently transcend both the class struggles in their former and in their present disguises. In that case one cannot help assuming that society is already in the process of transition towards planning. Thus for Mannheim all present social tensions and difficulties result from the side-by-side existence of *laissez faire* and planning. But here a new difficulty arises, for Mannheim himself says, that so far we are "only in that stage of development where each of the dominant social groups is intent on capturing for itself the chance of planning and controlling society in order to turn its power against rival groups"(70). He thinks that up to the present "history has not produced genuine attempts at planning, since the experiments of which we know are blended with the spirit³ either of oriental despotism or military dictatorial traditions"(7).

For Mannheim real planning does not exist; but real planning should exist. The *new principle* is not practiced, but it should be practiced. Since this real planning does not exist, the present miserable state of affairs cannot be attributed to the side-by-side existence of new and old principles, that is, *laissez faire* and planning, democracy and dictatorship. The less so, since the *old principle* was in force only in the same sense as the new principle

3) We might as well leave the "spirits" out of it as Mannheim is aware of the fact that not only in the countries thus beset, but in all highly industrial states a "transition is taking place because all are suffering from the same dislocation of their normal existence". The fact "that some show obvious symptoms of the crisis and others are experiencing similar changes at slower speed under cover of social peace," he says "is due merely to an uneven distribution of pressure on different states, and to the existence of greater mental and material resources in certain countries" (12).

is in force now, not really, not socially, but only to favor some dominant social group, just as the new planning principle now favors other dominant groups. That both the democracies and the dictatorships, in Mannheim's opinion, fall short — although at different poles — of doing what he deems socially necessary is explained by the fact that both systems, despite all their differences, are still capitalistic regimes at different stages of development and within different settings. Both by performing apparently opposite movements nevertheless reach identical results, a process that finally may reestablish a new capitalistic "unity", a relative uniformity of behavior, the fusion of the "good" to be found in both the old and the new for which Mannheim hopes. From this point of view, Mannheim's book merely reflects what is now in the process of development, i. e., the social re-organization of the prevailing society in accordance with recent economic and class changes.

Mannheim's assertion — based on the ever-existing parallelism of old and new social patterns, techniques and principles, and their bewildering influences — that the present social crisis is a transitional period leading over to a new society is not convincing. From such a point of view all societies are always in transition, and though in one sense this is true, such a statement is not sufficient to explain social phenomena, nor can it serve any practical purpose.

Throughout capitalistic development, planning and *laissez faire*, democracy and dictatorship have always been two sides of the same coin. The planning of individual enterprises, which is now extended to national planning, and dictatorship over the working class, which now embraces all layers of society, are indications of the "maturity" of a society whose development has been determined by the characteristics of its embryonic stage, that is, by specific production — and class-relations that allowed for "progress" only in terms of capital concentration and power centralization.

No doubt one could very well speak of the present as a "transition period" in distinction to a period where fascism was not as yet fascism but merely a tendency expressed in the growth of monopolies, where dictatorial control over the workers' life did not extend beyond the factory, the barrack, the relief station and additional compulsives of the wage system. One could, that is, — to use an analogy — arbitrarily refer to the ripening period of fruit as its transitory stage, and to its previous growth as its "real," "normal", or "healthy" stage. Transition to what? Though there is no reason why one should not distinguish between different developmental stages of one particular societal form, yet all that transition could mean here is the transition toward decay. Distinctions have to be made between different developmental stages in a certain society and between one society and other societies. Though the birth of capitalism preceded the capitalist revolution, nevertheless the transition from feudalism to capitalism must still be regarded as a revolutionary act, as the result of class struggles. And though the transition to a new society need not and will not copy the transition from feudalism to capitalism, still it cannot be a mere "reconstruction" of the prevailing society. It would then still be the prevailing society, however changed.

Even if one follows Mannheim's advice and concentrates his attention "not on the contrast between evolution and revolution but on the content of the changes themselves" (12), it still has to be established whether those changes constitute a real social revolution, that is, abolish one kind of class rule in favor of another, or abolish class rule altogether — the criterion for which rests in the socio-economic field. Of course the latter query is of importance only to the class interested in revolutionary change. But disinterest in the problem does not eliminate it. Here, however, lies the crux of the matter, for Mannheim is convinced that "revolutions" can no longer be anything other than good or bad "reconstructions" of the *existing* society. He is satisfied with a very limited program, which as a matter of fact is so limited that it has already been overtaken by recent events. In the economic sphere, for example, he pleads for no more than a minor transformation of property concepts,⁴ for he is convinced that "entirely new principles of construction can often be found in trivial microscopic processes, provided they are integrated in a certain manner. Thus major principles are not infrequently concealed behind the mask of petty details" (12). However, fascism has meanwhile shown us what "major principle" was behind the "petty detail" of the "transformation of property concepts". The petty details which in the society thus changed, are supposed to secure "freedom for individual adjustment", on which Mannheim bases his hopes for a better future, suggest, as we shall see later, principles quite as unsatisfactory — at least for the large mass of individuals.

IV

Mannheim, who sees a real transformation of one type of society into another in the metamorphoses of democracy into dictatorship, of *laissez faire* into *monopolistic laissez faire*, of imperfect competition into imperfect regulation, maintains that the outcome of the process depends on the character of the elite which gives it direction. We must recall that in Mannheim's opinion democracy in capitalism is possible only as a "pseudo-democracy", which grants power to a small propertied and educated group. With the development of capitalism, i. e., with the concentration of economic, political and military forces, "irrationality" grows and democracies change into dictatorships because it is not possible "to bring everyone to more or less similar levels of understanding" (46).

4) "It is becoming more and more obvious", Mannheim says, "that the enjoyment of income and interests and the right to dispose of capital are two different things.. It is possible that in the future things will so develop that by appropriate taxation and compulsory charity this unrestricted use could be curtailed, and the disposition of capital could be guided from the centre by credit control. Fascism is making unwillingly an interesting experiment in its unacknowledged expropriation of the capitalists. It has managed to socialize the power of disposition without ejecting the former industrial elite from their posts. Transformation of the original form of capitalism does not consist in abolishing the claims of property, but in withdrawing certain functions of the ownership of capital from the competence of the capitalists" (350).

What Mannheim here describes has in a different sense been stated before in Marx's laconic remark that the "democratic swindle" is over as soon as it endangers the ruling class, and by William Graham Sumner who said that democracy serves as an impetus for class conflict, which finally forces industry to become plutocratic in order to survive. What is new in Mannheim is the peculiar way in which he attempts to show that it was not the sharpening of class frictions in the course of capital formation that led to the end of democracy, but the extension of democracy, that is, the quantitative growth of democratic political processes that led to the qualitative change into dictatorship. An exaggerated democracy leads to fascism. Thus the "democratic nations" fight the fascist nations today because there was too much democracy in the latter and too little in the former.

Let us recall once more Mannheim's explanation of the growth of irrationality. There are always fewer positions, he says, from which the major structural connection between different activities can be perceived. The broad masses become increasingly unable to understand what occurs. Their actions disturb the smooth working of society if the men in key positions are not able properly to integrate those activities into social life. "Primitive types" of men in key positions endanger the whole society. The "primitive type" has a chance to reach those positions because of the existing democracy. "The first negative consequence of the modern widening of opportunities for social advancement through education", Mannheim says, "is the proletarianization of the intelligentsia. There are more persons on the intellectual labor market than society as it is requires for carrying out its intellectual work. The glut of intellectuals decreases the value of the intellectuals and of intellectual culture itself" (100).

This kind of argument seems familiar. There is, for instance, Hitler's observation that there are too many Jews in the intellectual professions, more than is good for German culture. Jewish intellectuals become in Mannheim's language just intellectuals, German culture, simply culture. This attitude is common to all separately organized groups with vested interests within the capitalistic structure. Essentially it expresses no more than the never-ending fear of the "arrived" of losing their positions to the "up-starts" in society "as it is", that is, in the relatively stagnating capitalistic society. But Mannheim says more. He asserts that if the "primitive type" worms or fights his way into the intellectual positions, he — the primitive type — reduces the whole intellectual level to his own. There is still another important assumption: If culture is no longer determined by the really cultured, who are to be copied with more or less success by the rest of the population, culture will be distorted. The specific economic and class outlook of the proletariat, for instance, which stresses the importance of technological development because by so doing it raises its own importance, may lead to an over-emphasis of the technological aspects of culture. "In Russia where the proletariat possesses exclusive political power," Mannheim says, "the proletariat carries this principle so far, that even if for no other reason, it continues to accumulate and to invest in order to expand itself as a social

class as against the peasantry" (105). If this is so, then all capitalistic development must have been carried out by a "ruling proletariat". Capitalism advanced so rapidly because it accumulated for the sake of accumulation and for the sake of transforming, if possible, the whole population — excluding the capitalists — into exploitable wage workers. Thus the Russian workers would seem to have taken power only to carry on the good, if one-sided work, from that point where the capitalists lost their breath. This overemphasis on accumulation under the direction of the capitalist, however, did not interfere with the creation of that civilization which Mannheim now sees endangered. Mannheim's rather grotesque example illustrates his point quite well however. Even in the "best case", so he thinks, class-rule determined by a class point of view leads to distortions. Consequently, the regulation and direction of society, in order to be intelligent and appropriate to social needs, must from his point of view be carried out by an elite which stands above classes and groups and knows what is good for the whole.

We do not think that the "democratization" of society is in any way responsible for the glut of the intellectual labor market. The existing "over-supply" is true of all kinds of labor, not of any particular kind. This indicates that the present crisis is not caused by maladjustments or disproportions between different branches of production which may be eliminated by way of a planning that reestablishes a lost workable "equilibrium", but is a fundamental crisis of the whole capitalistic system — a crisis that affects all branches of production and thus the whole of the labor market. The question of the intellectuals could no more be solved by rearrangements in the labor market than could a mere readjustment in the productive process overcome the economic crisis. As a matter of fact what adjustments and rearrangements are possible have already been accomplished, as the wide-spread destruction of capital and the proletarianization of the intellectuals bear witness.

From a different point of view than that which still accepts society "as it is" when speaking of the future, the glut of the labor market is meaningless. If class and profit considerations were eliminated and the productive forces of society really released, an "over-supply" of labor could not arise. There would remain the problem of how it might be possible to live better with less labor with the existing labor force and its possible improvement, and thus how to "intellectualize" the masses still further. This question has nothing in common with the present problems of the disequilibrium and disproportionality and the planning needs associated therewith. There is also no bridge leading from the latter kind of "planning theories", designed for a society in which class issues have been forced into the background because one likes to keep them there, to planning in a society in which class considerations have actually ceased to determine the productive and distributive processes.

Mannheim's position, which assumes the possibility of planning without fundamental changes in the social structure of the process of production, offers little choice as to the way in which his theories might be worked out. Essentially everything boils down to a demand for a better-selected and more

secure elite which wisely and justly puts everybody where he belongs, even in labor camps a la Hitler, if necessary.⁵ We will have to return to this point when dealing with Mannheim's suggestions for the planning of society.

V

In regard to the *second point* selected for discussion, namely that social events are of a multi-dimensional nature, we would like to say at once that no one could disagree with this observation. We will also admit — using Mannheim's example — that the principle of competition has "universal" validity. There is no problem here — only the problem of where to begin. The selection of points of departure is decisive for any social analysis, since all social phenomena are not of equal importance, nor equally accessible for investigation. Mannheim, who conceives Marxism as a theory which "regards the economic and political factors as absolute" and thus "makes it impossible to proceed to the sociological factors proper" (21), misrepresents the theory he criticizes. Though it is true that Marx's science of society is first of all economic research this does not limit its comprehensiveness. It is not the fault of Marxism that other branches of the social sciences are less amenable to *scientific* investigation, that they become the less scientific the further they are removed from economic relationships. To remain scientific, Marxism starts where scientific research is possible. It is not Marxism but society which is responsible for the overwhelming importance of economics and politics.

Mannheim prefers to concentrate on the "usually disregarded psychological effects of the more elementary processes", such as occur "in other than economic surroundings ...in which men struggle or co-operate". He is concerned with questions such as "how and when and why people meet, how power and influence, risk and responsibility are distributed, whether men act spontaneously or under orders, what social controls are possible", because "all these things, taken individually and collectively, decide what is said, how it is said, what is consciously suppressed, or repressed into the unconscious, and within what limits the dictates of public morality are regarded as binding for all or as valid only within certain groups". He wants to deal with relationships like "authority and subordination, distancing and isolation, prestige and leadership, and their effect on psychological expression and culture in different social settings" (20), and so forth.

To judge from the results of Mannheim's studies one cannot help wondering if a less ambitious goal might not have been better. The ideas he advances do not reveal the "social changes underlying the psychological and cultural changes" any better than the more restricted investigations of Marx.

5) In the magazine *MASS UND WERT* (October 1937; p. 113) Mannheim wrote: "The fascist labor camps, though not a pleasant solution for the crisis under which the permanently unemployed suffer, are nevertheless, from the view point of social technique, a better method if compared with those of liberalism which tried to solve the social-psychological problem of unemployment by way of the dole."

Rather the opposite is true, for Marx goes much further than Mannheim, and on the question of competition, for instance, shows that its "universality" remains bound to the specific form of capitalistic economic competition; that the general can only be grasped with reference to the particular. Competitions in love, in art, in politics, though having in one sense a "significance of their own", really attain their own significance only by way of the economic process. The influence they exert upon society on their "own account" gain *social significance* only by winning importance economically. Otherwise, that is, in so far as they really show independent forms, they remain outside the field of social science, which like anything else has its limitations. In short, considerations of an infinite number of social relationships will not lead to useful generalizations. The latter are bound to a definite number of social relationships. To increase that number by way of social research, and thus to improve the reliability of accepted generalizations, or to change those generalizations, is a worthwhile undertaking, but its success has to be measured by the knowledge already gained and the applicability of that knowledge.

It is impossible here to compare all, or even the more important, findings of Mannheim with those of Marx. Any careful Marxian reader of Mannheim's book is bound to notice that Mannheim — in spite of himself — relies almost exclusively on economic phenomena to interpret social and psychological facts. The extra-economic relationships that "form the real center of the drama" in which social are translated into psychological changes play in his own exposition as small a role as they played in Marx, who granted their existence in order to leave them alone. Thus the Marxian reader of Mannheim's work will often find himself on familiar ground. However the Marxian raises to be found in this large cake of many ingredients⁶⁾ must not lead to the assumption that the differences between Marx and Mannheim are merely verbal, or that we have to deal here with a new attempt to bring Marx up-to-date. Whenever Mannheim draws from Marx, he empties him. Yet, whatever content this book possesses it owes to that "Marxism" that it declares to be insufficient for the purposes of modern sociology.

It may be in order at this moment to draw attention to Mannheim's dialectic which never fails to regard at least two sides of each and every problem he presents. As irrationality and rationality have their negative and positive aspects, so has mass-democracy and pseudo-democracy, so has competition and regulation, so has the restricted Marxian view and the more abstract sociological approach of Mannheim himself. Though generally the class war is regarded as a secondary issue, Mannheim at times admits that his "discussion of it does not aim at proving that there is no real chance of the class war becoming stronger than any other consideration" (341). This, however, is "only one alternative". "The question of primacy, though an

6) Adler, Dewey, Durkheim, Freud, Durbin, Hegel, Hobson, Gumplovicz, Le Bon, Michels, Mill, Nietzsche, Oppenheimer, Pareto, Pavlov, Sorel, Spengler, Scheler, Summer, Tawney, Veblen, Weber, and others.

important one", he says, "in no way alters the fact that in some periods emphasis may be shifted from one mechanism to another, and this in itself may depend on the changing nature of social techniques" (308). Thus everything is possible and Mannheim actually succeeds in giving an idea of the "real", that is to say, the "multidimensional nature of social events".

But with this idea of the "real" nothing real can be undertaken. A bewildering picture emerges and it still remains to extract what is recognizable in it in order to reach conclusions. Mannheim in offering this picture stands nowhere and everywhere; as the saying goes, he cannot be "pinned down". There is not one position from which he cannot withdraw. He is never at a loss for explanations which would justify both his old and any new position. His comparatively constant principles such as the transition from competition to regulation as well as the others therewith connected, allow for a great variety of interpretations. The constant principles are vague enough. Events could never prove or disprove their validity.

His own proposals for the reconstruction of society and the remaking of man have no connection with reality. The "multi-dimensional" nature of his reality excludes both a fruitful empiricism and convincing theories. The latter remain idealistic demands not at all based on the empirical research accompanying them. His search fails to yield results because it is spread out over too large a field; because it consistently refuses to deal with society as it is and prefers instead to deal with society as it should be. Mannheim thus bears witness once more to the fact that a "sociological science" attempting to deal with *society* is an impossibility in a *class* society. In dealing with social issues in a class society one has to deal with class issues. But this Mannheim refuses to do. He does not see that so long as classes exist, class interests necessarily co-exist. He wants to have the first without having the second, or rather he believes that classes cannot be changed, but that class interests may be dealt with independently.

As thought and actions in the capitalist society do not stem directly from actual social relationships but must, in order to assert themselves, first be transformed into value relations in the exchange process, thought and action within the capitalist society can only be interpreted in connection with the prevailing fetishism in the capitalist economy. As all social actions bear upon economics because of the interrelation of all social phenomena, it is first of all necessary in order then to discover how non-economic social changes are transformed into psychological — to find out how far these changes and their psychological results are ruled by the fetishism valid for all spheres and all aspects of social life. This means that no investigation can yield results unless it starts from the social relationships that underlie all economic and extra-economic relations, that is, the class structure and the class problems of society. The fascistic concentration of capital "simplified" exchange relations but did not do away with them. Within certain territories the maze of the market is displaced by an open antagonism between the controllers and the controlled in the production and distribution process. The ideologies that to a large extent spring — so to speak — "automatically"

from the exchange relations, are now planfully constructed and take on outspokenly political characteristics. If it was previously necessary to deal with thought and action in the "round-about" manner enforced by market relations, which made the economic interpretation of social phenomena quite difficult, it is now much easier to discover behind every social phenomenon the actual determining social relations, that is, the exploitation of the non-possessing class by the class, group, or individuals that control the means of production by way of a monopoly over all the social control institutions.

There is no way of saying anything of importance in regard to the manifold social and psychological problems, unless they are seen from the point of view of existing class relations. By relegating class issues to the background and by concentrating on the infinite number of extra-class, that is, extra-economic phenomena, Mannheim can only mystify once more the real social issues of today. In brief, he only helps to formulate new ideologies for securing the rule of fascistic regimes.

VI

Before dealing with the *third point* selected for discussion it should be said that Mannheim's distinction between *substantial* and *functional* rationality is a devious one, because in reality all rationality is functional. The distinction between the two forms of rationality is based on the assumption that the changes in human beings are something other than social changes, an assumption closely connected with the old idea of the invariability of human nature. Mannheim, however, does not go that far; he only assumes that human nature changes less rapidly than society. He explains this with the principle of the "contemporaneity of the non-contemporaneous". "What is the significance of the bomb-dropping aviator?" Mannheim asks. He answers himself: "It is that human beings are able to make use of the most modern products of inventive genius to satisfy primitive impulses and motives" (42).

We do not share Mannheim's concept of the contradictory character of human nature. For us the whole problem of rationality raised by him seems artificial. But we will continue to argue on his own theoretical ground. Mannheim needs the contradictions in human nature of which he speaks in order to justify his own ideas of planning. Though he knows that war, for example, "is not the outcome of some invariable instinct like aggressiveness, but partly of the faulty elaboration of the psychological tendencies through institutions, and partly of the desperate flight of people into collective aggression when un-coordinated institutions clash and bring about a feeling of general insecurity" (141), he also sees that at "the present stage of centralized propaganda new patterns of thought and behavior can be popularized in a much shorter time and on a much larger scale than was formerly possible" (24). Under the new conditions, he says, "leaders enjoy the possibility of raising hatred on one day and appeasing it on the next" (137). Under such conditions it seems indeed important what kind of elite rules society.

It is true that we live in an age that produces ideologies, emotions, and activities in the same way that it produces cheese or any other commodity. It is an age where what was formerly considered "subjective" is now "objective". We have reached a stage in which all and everything has been perfectly capitalized and robbed of its last remnant of individuality. Except for "sports" there are no longer inventors, but factories for invention; no longer politicians — except clowns — but "machine-politicians". Each and everyone today, regardless of his specific qualities or shortcomings, can be all or nothing, because — if need be — consent can be produced at will. In short, there is no longer an individual and private sphere, because there have been developed, with modern technique, instruments of control powerful enough to rob the powerless in society not only of part of the products of their labor, but also completely of themselves.

Under such conditions, however, it becomes quite fantastic to follow Mannheim in his attempt to trace the twofold nature of man "right back to prehistory" (64), to search among the investigations of the ethnologists for clues which may explain down to the last details the reason for irrationality in men. Why all this effort? The cause of the "irrationalities" in the present day society is quite clear. If Mannheim states that the same "persons who, in their working life in the sphere of industrial organization are extensively rationalized, can at any moment turn into machine wreckers and ruthless warriors" (64), it is obvious that only if they are ordered to do so can they do one or the other. Because of their contradictory nature" they could only become wreckers and warriors if they were given a chance to escape the physical and psychological control to which they have to submit today. But Mannheim thinks that "the concentration of military instruments lessens the chances of any type of insurrection and revolution, as well as of the execution of the democratic mass will" (48). Then where do the "primitive motives" enter in? The aviator does not drop bombs because of some "primitive impulses". In so far as "primitive impulses" may play a part they are quite meaningless as regards the aviator's various activities. He drops the bomb for the clear-cut reason that risking death and killing belong to the capitalistic way of existence. Thus the sociologists do not need to "discover" the "social mechanism" which determines when and in what form in "human society" rational and irrational forces occur. All they have to discover is what lies open before their eyes. All that has to be seen is the class nature of the present — not "human" society, which forces the powerless to serve in manifold ways the singular need of the ruling class to keep itself on top.

According to Mannheim the "negative" side of mass-democracy under conditions of modern industry must be seen in the growth of irrationality and the break-down of morality. The intellectual and moral lag Mannheim deplores accompanied the whole of the capitalist development, but only recently did it assume disastrous proportions. Capitalist development, "progressive" as it was in terms of increasing productivity, necessarily lifted the intellectual level of the masses. According to Mannheim, however, functional rationality increased to the detriment of substantial rationality. His

proof is the economic crisis and the accompanying political outburst which he considers irrational.

The question arises: Would there have been no crisis if substantial rationality had not suffered as Mannheim thinks it did, if it had been sufficiently increased together with functional rationality? If for the sake of argument one accepts Mannheim's distinction with regard to rationality, even then it could be said that an inapplicability of substantial rationality is no proof for its nonexistence, or rather, that an insufficiently practiced rationality of this sort is no sign of its decrease. To us it seems obvious that whatever substantial rationality existed in men other than those in key positions, this could not change the fact that because of the peculiar characteristic of the capitalistic production process all that could be employed was functional rationality.

It is not so much the necessary functional division in social production as it is a question of class relations which puts some men in key positions and transforms others into living robots. The men in key positions may then point out that it is precisely the absence of substantial rationality on the part of the masses which forces them to serve society from key positions that give them insight into the interrelations of things. This whole argument of Mannheim's reminds us of the "white man's burden", which he transfers from the colonies to the world at large. Furthermore, the men in key positions are not there because they possess greater insight, nor does their position give them such insight. They, also, are restricted to that unfortunate functional rationality because their whole activity despite all possible insight and consideration for the interdependence of all social phenomena — must serve the interests of just one particular group which struggles against all others. Mannheim himself says that "what is economically irrational for a whole nation may still be profitable to particular groups" (136). We might improve upon this sentence in our own way and say: What is *profitable* for a particular group is necessarily irrational for the whole of the nation — if this nation is seen from a viewpoint from which class issues are no longer decisive. Otherwise the whole problem of rationality and irrationality as posed by Mannheim becomes senseless. Rational for whom and in relation to what? To avoid such questions Mannheim must necessarily assume the existence of a society in which class issues are no longer of importance.

If it were true that, relative to functional rationality, substantial rationality declines in the course of technological development, then in times of long-drawn depressions which decrease the tempo and scope of technological advances there should be less, not more, irrationality in the world. And if the masses actually enter politics by way of the democratic mechanism, the decrease in irrationality should also make itself felt in the political sphere. Just what is the proper proportion between technological and intellectual-moral development? When and for what specific reasons does the alleged disproportion become dangerous to society? When is a mass-democracy incompatible with an industrial society and when not? How much democracy must exist, how far advanced must industry be? What kind of intensity of mass-

influx turns the trick? At what point can the irrationalities no longer enter narrow circles? For all this and more, Mannheim has always just one answer: at the point when the crisis begins. The crisis explains all his assertions. But what explains the crisis? His assertions of course.

What is forcing its way today "in the arena of public life" is not however, that "irrationality" which hitherto found an outlet in "narrower circles and in private life", but the quite "rational" actions of oppressed people to preserve their lives with all their irrationalities. That their activities appear "irrational" to the ruling groups in society is due to the rulers' fear of losing control over the ruled. These "irrationalities" appear quite "rational" to new controllers, for it brings them to power. This transfer of power-positions from one group to another within the prevailing social structure neither increases or decreases, nor expresses such increase or decrease, of rationality or irrationality. Irrational it is that group which loses power — not only "irrational" but "doomed". The only "rationality" there is for any ruling class or group is that which preserves its rule. The only "rationality" there is for the powerless is the "irrationality" which destroys the ruling "rationality".

As long as it is possible within a particular social pattern to satisfy the essential needs of the masses, the masses will acquiesce and their behavior will appear "rational". If the situation changes decisively, as it does in capitalism's long depressions, the ideologies bound to other situations lose their force. The enforced search for new ideas and activities that ensues leads to movements in opposition to the ruling rationality. If the ruling class entrusted with and interested in the maintenance of the existing social relations is unable for one or another reason to adapt its control measures to the new situation in time, it will be replaced by other groups striving for control and better able to adapt their methods to the new situation — by virtue of the fact that they are less hampered by vested interests and given to a greater flexibility. The "rationality" of the old ruling group is fought by the "irrationality" rationally employed by the new, which in turn, as soon as it is in power, makes the ideologies serving its purposes the ruling ones and the acquiescence in their rule the norm for rational behavior.

As long as the new rulers are able to remove some of the causes which previously disturbed the "social peace" or to transfer the social unrest to another setting by engaging in warfare or simply by creating during the interval between the expectations connected with the political change and the disappointment which may follow, a new control machinery able to force the masses into acquiescence, social "unity" is re-established. This in turn forces the masses to create on their part new methods of struggle and weapons for mass-pressure. This may take time. A period of social peace is granted to the new rulers. There arises a period in which the behavior of the masses appears once again quite "rational". It has not yet found out how to be "irrational" under the new situation.

The *Age of Reason* was based on the absence of "reason" in the economic sphere whose "unreasonable automatic" functioning has since been disturbed

by the capitalistic accumulation process, that is, by increased concentration, centralization and monopolization. It finds its end as soon as reason threatens to be applied in that sphere. However, there was in evidence less mass-pressure and thus less "irrationality" in Mannheim's sense, during capitalism's ascendancy than during its period of depression. But it was not mass-democracy, nor any kind of disproportion between technique and intellect, which led to a growing "irrationality" in capitalism. This historical form of society developed from a "rational" into an "irrational" dictatorship because of economic occurrences which led to mass movements and their exploitation by groups competing for power within the capitalistic production relations. Democracy was rational for the liberal bourgeoisie; fascism is rational for the fascists. From the point of view of a class-less society, both the "rational" liberalistic society and the "irrational" fascist society of which Mannheim speaks are equally rational as far as capitalism is concerned. Both are irrational as far as the hypothetical class-less society is concerned.

VII

To work with concepts such as social interdependence vs. fundamental democratization, substantial vs. functional rationality, etc. Mannheim needs a society in which other than economic and class forces are determinant. He must discover "transition belts" that lead over from one into another social structure, culture and psychology. Thus he must not only consider the "negative" but also the "positive" aspects in the present process of social disintegration. The new vigor of the masses, caused by the process of "fundamental democratization" and expressed in the "growing irrationality" may also be looked upon, he says, "as the first stage in a general process of enlightenment in which, for the first time, broad human groups are drawn into the field of political experiment and so gradually learn to understand the structure of political life" (199). Due to changes in the sphere of morality⁷ in the industrial society, a "superindividual group solidarity" develops which must be considered a positive element in the existing mass-society. "Our world", writes Mannheim, "is one of the large groups in which individuals who until now have been increasingly separated from one

7) Because there exists for Mannheim "a complete parallel between the factors making for the growth and collapse of rationality in the intellectual sphere and those making for the growth and collapse of morality" (66) we need not deal especially with the questions of morality raised in his book. With certain modifications — of little concern for our purpose — Mannheim uses again in the sphere of moral discipline the distinction between the functional and substantial points of view. "The functional aspect of a given type of moral discipline consists of those standards which, when realized in conduct, guarantee the smooth working of society. Substantial morality consists of certain concrete values, such as dictates of faith and different kinds of feelings, standards which may be completely irrational in quality. The more modern society is functionally rationalized the more it tends to neutralize substantial morality, or side-track it into the private sphere."

The dual-morality (moralistic in private life — violent in the public sphere), thus far the privilege of the ruling classes, may be adopted by the masses. "Once the

another are compelled to renounce their private interests and to subordinate themselves to the interests of the larger social units" (69). Capital is combined into large industrial organizations, workers learn solidarity in trade unions; and thus competition creates group unity. By this process, Mannheim thinks, man "realizes gradually that by resigning partial advantages, he helps to save the social and economic system and thereby also his own interests" (70). He learns to understand better the interdependence of events and develops a consciousness of the need for planning. Although till now "the individual thinks not in terms of the welfare of the community or mankind as a whole, but in terms of that of his own particular group, yet this whole process tends to train the individual to take a progressively longer view; it tends at the same time to inculcate in him the faculty of considered judgment and to fit him for sharing responsibility in planning the whole course of events in the society in which he moves" (70).

What Mannheim here describes as positive elements in the existing competitive mass society cannot, however, serve regulative principles. The labor organizations, for instance, which he introduces to illustrate his position were formed and controlled in accordance with capitalistic organization and control principles. They were themselves as little "democratic" as the "democracy" with which they were connected. They interfered successfully in the process of "fundamental democratization" and prevented a "mass-influx" into the political life. A new capitalistic institution, the labor bureaucracy, arose, which secured its existence by serving class society. The transformation of these organizations into fascistic control instruments is not a special case of the suppression of labor and democracy but part of the general transformation of the half-dictatorial into the full-dictatorial capitalist society. These organizations were not suppressed, or rather modified, because they contained positive elements in contradiction to fascist needs. In order to serve the fascist needs better, they were more closely integrated into the social life-process of fascistic society. What "positive" elements they had, here found their application. At that moment when — despite all capitalistic control techniques — the economic crisis and large-scale unemployment endangered the whole of capitalistic society, they were reformed together with all other capitalistic institutions and control techniques in order to cope with the new situation. At this moment, not because of a long process of "fundamental democratization", but through the suddenly arising and not so suddenly disappearing economic and political crisis there arose the pos-

acceptance of violence becomes the general principle of social morality, the fruits of long moral training in the sphere of labor and competition will be destroyed almost automatically" (72). The fruits so destroyed were results of the stage of "superindividual group solidarity" dealt with in the text above. In other words, morality collapses when the masses meet their rulers on their own ground and thus destroy the class-value of the dual-morality. They may become as immoral as their masters, and may even disregard the good work of their organizations which helped to maintain the dual-morality by strengthening the illusion that group solidarity is possible in the capitalistic world.

sibility of a democratization of society. Under conditions as they were and are a real democratic participation in the political life on the part of the broad masses is possible only in the form of rebellion against all rationality, mores, institutions, and labor organizations and all their "positive" elements as they exist in the prevailing society. To speak of mass-democracy is to speak of a proletarian revolution.

One cannot conclude from the existence of "group solidarity" that it prepares the masses for the planned society of the future. The opposite is true. What group solidarity there is only shows that the pseudo-democratic as well as the fascistic capitalist society progresses in accordance with its own rules in opposition to all forms of solidarity. A trend towards "fundamental democratization", if existing, would find expression in the development of class-consciousness. Capitalism's triumph over the proletariat comes to light precisely in the successes of labor organizations, gained by way of "group solidarity"; for these successes excluded the democratization of society and removed possible obstacles in the path leading to dictatorship. Behind the illusory democratic processes was hidden the actual trend of development which is now openly exposed in the fascistic dictatorships.

Just as the "group solidarity" of the formerly individualistically oriented capitalists served to destroy the "automatic" capitalist "solidarity" which was made possible by "market laws" as yet beyond effective control, so the growth of capitalist "group solidarity" finally led to the break-down of international "solidarity" by breaking down the open world-market. This, in turn, led to a situation wherein capitalistic solidarity can find expression only in world-wide wars involving the destruction of ever-greater capitalistic "groups combined in solidarity" to serve the "group solidarity" of still stronger groups. The "group solidarity" of the workers, too, has led straight into the fascistic solidarity of the murderous front-fighter collectives and has destroyed for some time to come the basis on which proletarian solidarity could assert itself — the class basis. By hindering the development of class solidarity, "group solidarity" has not diminished but increased the general atomization of society. There is as little "solidarity" within each "group" as there is between the different social groups. There is as little sacrifice of individual desires in the interests of the whole in each group as there is folk-unity or world-community. The existence of an apparent "group solidarity" clouds the fact that it has come into being in order to intensify the struggle of all against all. The "solidarity" that is within each group is a "solidarity" of force and fear. The final meaning of this solidarity finds dramatic expression from time to time in wholesale murders and political purges in the interest of the "group". Thus the destruction of "group solidarity" is the first prerequisite for a possible class solidarity. The destruction of class solidarity, in turn, is the first prerequisite for a possible human solidarity. There is, then, nothing in Mannheim's "group solidarity" which reaches beyond the present and into the future, or acts as a sort of intellectual and moral training ground in preparation for things to come.

VIII

Mannheim ideas on how to plan society are based on those advanced in his interpretation of the collapse of the liberalistic social structure. If social interdependence and fundamental democratization create irrationality and the latter, on account of outworn social techniques cannot be integrated into the changing social structure, *new control techniques* have to be found which fit into the arising new structure and either transform the existing irrationality into a useful enthusiasm or free it of its dangerous character through sublimations. For Mannheim the question of reconstruction is a twofold one: not only society but man himself must be changed. Thought at the level of planning is different from that of the liberalistic age. Mannheim distinguishes between three historical stages of human thought and conduct: chance discovery, invention, and planning. There exists no sharp dividing line between the different stages, nor, at present, between the stages of invention and planning. They may very well co-exist as long as one dominates. If planning becomes predominant, however, the tension between old theories and new practice press towards solution.

The solution consists in furthering the "positive" aspects to be found in the process of fundamental democratization. The results of this latter process, Mannheim thinks, can be put to at least two different uses. Thus our future depends on what the "users" do; they may further the negative side of the democratization process by making the ensuing irrationality still more irrational, or they may turn this irrationality by way of intelligent and highly moral actions into directions which increase rationality and — in the long run — even improve the intellectual and moral level of the masses.

For Mannheim the remaking of man and society is planning for freedom. Dictatorship, he says, is not the same as planning. "A correct scheme for the planning of culture, which would plan everything in the sense of the totalitarian states, would also have to plan the place of criticism" (109). "Who plans the planners?", he asks. "The longer I reflect upon this question, the more it haunts me" (74). This question is asked today by most of the "anti-fascists", though not all of them are haunted by it. So far, however, it has always been answered in a fascistic manner. Let us look at Mannheim's attempt to solve the difficulty. He says that, "a new approach to history will be achieved when we are able to translate the main structural changes in terms of a displacement of the former systems of control" (269). As far as the control of the controllers is concerned, however, the former system seems to him to be quite adequate, for the new control techniques refer only to the broad masses, not to the elites. The control over the latter is to be secured by incorporating into the planned structure parliamentary democracy, if necessary without the nuisance of the "plebiscite which has lost its original function and no longer appeals to individuals living in concrete groups... but is addressed to members of an indefinite and emotional mass" (357).

The mass will not have any kind of direct control. A special set of controllers may be necessary. "It is very probable that a planned society will provide certain forms of closed social groups similar to our clubs, advisory commissions or even sects, in which absolutely free discussion may take place without being exposed to premature and unsatisfactory criticism by the broader public... it must be constitutionally provided that any advice or suggestions coming from these exclusive closed groups would really reach and have an appropriate influence on the government... Admission to those 'secret societies' or 'orders' would have to be on a democratic basis and they would remain in close and living contact with the masses and their situations and needs"(111). This, however, looks like little more than a sort of glorified GESTAPO or OGPU — organizations which also, quite democratically, select the "best from all layers of society, discuss the most subversive ideas behind closed doors, instruct the government as to what it must do in order to remain the government, and have their spies in such close contact with the masses that each member of the masses is secretly suspected of belonging to the secret order.

To be sure, Mannheim has something quite different in mind. But so long as class relations and economic exploitation prevails, all such plans in practice will turn out as if they had been concocted by Heinrich Himmler. However, Mannheim is not too reluctant to learn from the fascists. Democracy", he says, "ought to instruct its citizens "in its own values instead of feebly waiting until its system is wrecked by private armies from within. Tolerance does not mean tolerating the intolerant"(353). But democracy was not wrecked by private armies. Something else took place: the capitalistic exploitation-system changed both economically and politically from democracy to dictatorship. Because no one was intolerant enough to do away with the capitalist structure, class rule and the wage system which feeds it were prolonged in a new form. Property and power changed hands. It has, so far, always changed hands by the two methods of economic competition and military force, with military force lately becoming dominant. Furthermore, the "values" of democracy cannot safeguard democracy. "To safeguard democracy" can mean nothing more than to safeguard those people who, under conditions democratic for them, hold property. To keep their power they have to be intolerant in dealing with other intolerants who thirst to take their place. Thus, when Mannheim says, "there is nothing in the nature of planning or of democratic machinery which makes them inconsistent with each other"(339), what he really says is that those who today in the democracies control property and government need not lose it if only they are willing to defend it with the same vigor and with the same methods that the fascists employ. In this sense it is true that "society can be planned, in the form of a hierarchy as well as in the form of democracy" (364) i. e., of a democracy for the controllers as described above. The difference between both forms would be a purely aesthetic one, the choice between a bourgeoisie in mufti and a bourgeoisie in uniform.

Intolerance in a good cause is excusable. There is hope, Mannheim thinks, that "the Western democracies at their present stage of development

are gradually transforming the liberal conception of government into a social one" ..that these states are ..."changing into social service states"(336). Moreover, "the power of the state is bound to increase until the state becomes nearly identical with society". What Mannheim could say is that the state becomes nearly identical with the property and power institutions of society; for, unfortunately, the state cannot become identical with society. In that case it would no longer exist — there would then be only society. By equating state and society Mannheim continues to deal with mistaken identities. He sees, for instance, in the growth of social insurance not proof of an actually increasing social insecurity, but a "tremendous advance toward the positive conception of the state"(336). He is even willing to embrace institutions of the kind of Goebbel's *Kraft Durch Freude*, since "we seem to have the choice simply between commercialized or state-controlled leisure"(337).

For Mannheim "the only way in which a planned society differs from that of the nineteenth century is that more and more spheres of social life, and ultimately each and all of them, are subjected to state control". Just the same, democracy need not be lost, for "if a few controls can be held in check by parliamentary sovereignty, so can many"(340). Though central control is more than ever necessary, in a democratic state "sovereignty can be boundlessly strengthened by plenary powers without renouncing democratic control" (341). Mannheim, the optimist, however, is always shadowed by Mannheim the pessimist. Though at first the class issues were no longer for him the decisive ones, he comes to the conclusion, after further reflection on the possibilities of a planning for freedom, that "planning based on the inequality of classes or estates probably cannot last long because those inequalities will create so great a tension in society that it will be impossible to establish even that minimum of tacit consent which is the *conditio sine qua non* of the functioning of a system"(364). Finally, and in contradiction to his previous contention that the good in both the old and the new must be merged, he says that "from the wreckage of liberalism nothing can be saved but its values, among others, the belief in a free personality"(364) which, as we know from history, has been the belief in the right to buy and sell labor power freely. Again, he feels that even this may not be salvaged because "the type of freedom which is possible in one society cannot be reasonably demanded in another, which may have other forms of freedom at its command"(370).

IX

The freedom of liberalism, that is, the freedom of the invention stage cannot be applied to the planning stage. This freedom was highly illusory anyhow. "It has been rightly pointed out", Mannheim says, "that the 'liberties' of liberal capitalist society are often only available to the rich, and that the 'have-nots' are forced to submit to the pressure of circumstances"(377). Though at one place he has stated that "one of the reasons for the disorganization in the free system of industrial economy was that an

absolute freedom of consumer's choice made it difficult to co-ordinate production and consumption" (315), now, on second thought, he admits that the "greater part of the population has never had this freedom of choice and has been forced by poverty to buy standardized goods" (348). Thus the greater part of the population is well prepared for the new freedom of planning. It really cannot make the unhappy mistake of applying to one stage of development the concept of freedom of another.

Though this happy situation makes the functions of the controllers of society relatively easy, it must not be overlooked that "the planning approach outruns the immediate actions of the individual even more than in liberal society where separate individual ends were pursued. The tensions between individual actions and thinking become greater than ever before" (212). But the sun breaks through again, because now "we have reached a stage where we can imagine how to plan the best possible human types by deliberately reorganizing the various groups of social factors" (222). It will be psychology's job to "discover key positions in the sphere of structural sociology, when certain kinds of behavior can be predicted or produced with a high degree of accuracy... It will seek for laws which turn aside the aggressive impulses and guide them towards sublimation". (202). Planning is finally the rational mastery of the irrational.

There are direct and indirect methods of influencing human behavior. Indirect influences work from afar. Thus the "individual might have an illusion of freedom, and indeed he does in fact make his own adjustment. But from the sociological point of view the possible solutions are more or less determined in advance by social control of the situation" (275). Expectations, wishes, rewards fall under this control and must be planned. Appreciatively Mannheim quotes F. Knight's observation that "even our interest in food is largely a matter of social standards rather than biological needs" (282), and that we have to distinguish between conditions when food and housing carry social prestige, and when the desire for prestige can be satisfied by badges and titles⁸. In other respects, too, Mannheim hopes that "a society in which profit is not the only criterion of economic production will prefer to work by methods which, though less effective from a point of view of output, give the workers more psychological satisfaction" (266). But even then conflicts are bound to develop, making necessary "professions whose principal task is to study the technique of adjusting conflicts" (302), and to develop the technique of arbitration into a science.

Planning for freedom gives the elite the freedom to plan and the planned the freedom to accept it. The masses must learn once more that whatever is, is right. Just as during the *Age of Reason* their submission to the actual and ideological rule of the capitalist class spelled social peace and co-operation, so now in the planned society cooperation and peace are established

8) This is Veblen carried to the extreme; the psychology of the petty-bourgeoisie is generalized. It seems odd, however, that generally those who have sufficient food and good housing have also the badges and titles.

by submission to the rulings of the planners. In order cheerfully to accept situations created for them, the masses have only to understand that the powers of the elite are really necessary for their welfare. Just as before they were convinced that without the capitalists society could not exist, so now they must recognize in the elite an unavoidable requirement for the social life-process. To overcome the feeling and the fact of oppression it is only necessary to begin to like it. At a later stage the masses themselves may again be consulted, the plebiscite may possibly be re-introduced. With the proper elite at the helm, with economic life fairly well planned, with new progress made, new social problems and those that remain may then be solved with the help of a truly sociological psychology.

It is true that freedom in an abstract sense can never be realized. Marx for instance, pointed out⁹ that freedom in socialism "cannot consist of anything else but of the fact that socialized man, the associated producers, regulate their interchange with nature rationally, bring it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by some blind power; that they accomplish their task with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most adequate to their human nature and most worthy of it". For Mannheim the "realm of necessity" to which according to Marx all freedom in the working society is subjected, includes, besides nature, a "second nature" restricting the scope of freedom still further. "Technique", he says, "while freeing us from the tyranny of nature, gives rise to two new forms of dependence. All progress in technique is bound up with additional social organization" (373). Thus "freedom in man's direct struggle with nature is something entirely different from freedom in his struggle with 'second nature', that is, a 'nature' characterized at this stage of development by the lack of power "both theoretically and practically to master the cumulative effect of mass psychology or of the trade cycle, or of maladjusted institutions" (375). It is true that this "second nature", caused not by the development of technique as Mannheim puts it, but by a socio-economic and technical development of the class society, must be mastered first to allow for a greater mastery over nature. The class struggle, by releasing productive forces unable to be developed under capitalistic conditions, is for Marx the pre-requisite for a greater freedom. But for Mannheim "second nature" takes on such a rigidity and persistency that the "realm of necessity", which determines the possible freedoms, becomes so enlarged that by comparison with it even a mere reorganization of the existing system of exploitation and the development of additional control techniques for the sake of social peace in spite of class relations looks like a new set of liberties accompanying the never-ending struggle of mankind for further progress.

X

"Liberties" within Mannheim's "realm of necessity" demand a variety of compulsions. Planning has to take this into consideration and becomes at once both planning for and against the planned. The planners find them-

9) *Capital*; Vol. III., p. 954.

selves at all times opposed to those groups that attempt to take their place. The ruling elite, to remain such and to maintain the ability to "plan for society", is forced to continue the concentration process initiated by capitalist accumulation. But, as Mannheim has noticed before, "society is in its very nature based on an increasing internal differentiation, so that its lesser units cannot all be controlled by the central body" (49). The ruling elite however, can counteract the increasing inaccessibility to control only by way of still further centralization. Thus the more planning there is, the more difficult it becomes to assure the control of the planned. Finally, planning which started as an attempt to solve social problems, reduces itself to a planning of ways and means of keeping the ruling elite in power at whatever cost to society.

The control over the ruled is in need of continuous improvements as planning proceeds. The fear of the planners grows as the complexities of social life under modern conditions contradict in increasing measure the planners' narrowing schemes. The whole hierarchy of systems of control as employed in fascist states is inherently insecure. The permanent terror exercised wherever this system rules betrays its insecurity. It is, in addition, uneconomical and much too rigid to satisfy the real needs of modern processes of production and distribution. It destroys initiative and adaptability and necessitates further organizational improvements which become obsolete as soon as introduced. The accumulation of capital changes into the accumulation of organizations. The latter, instead of raising the productivity and satisfying social needs, become a source for new social insecurities and a hindrance to the unfolding of production.

The weapon of terror and psychological control can, it is true, be successfully employed only if the "baser needs" of the masses can also be somehow taken care of. But what are these "baser needs"? Endurance is the most remarkable quality of human beings. It nevertheless defies calculation. It is not possible to say when, where, and how endurance ends. Thus a great variety of control techniques must be simultaneously engaged to cope with every possibility that may arise. Any kind of independence which does not serve the ruling class must be prevented. The psychological control must be all-embracing. It can be more embracing than some other control techniques, which may be in need of leniencies in order not to lose their usefulness. Thus the vogue of psychology must be understood in connection with the transformation of the liberal into the totalitarian society.

Totalitarian institutions like the Catholic Church always extensively employed psychological methods of control. We may also recall here that the philosopher of the super-man believed quite consistently that "psychology shall once more be recognized as the queen of the sciences, for whose service and equipment the other sciences exist".¹⁰⁾ It is no wonder that the "anti-fascists" of today point with great excitement to the fascist application of psychology (all schools included) and ask for similar weapons in order to

10) *Beyond Good and Evil. The Philosophy of Nietzsche. Modern Library Edition, p. 27.*

defeat fascism.¹¹⁾ For all theoreticians who want to solve social problems independent of the class nature of present-day society, psychology becomes of the greatest importance.¹²⁾ However, all political activity becomes thereby a sort of gigantic hog-calling contest and the successful leaders must be celebrated as great animal-trainers.

Because present-day social struggles seem to Mannheim to be no more than the competitive fight between party-organizations and industrialists for the control of labor, the importance he gives to psychology, both in its present crude form and as a promising control and planning instrument of the future, becomes quite plausible. On our part there is no need to deny the present importance and the future possibilities of psychology for purposes of propaganda and control. We do not need, however, to bother about the psychological problems involved in Mannheim's question as to how the controllers can be controlled and the planners planned. If we replace these questions that are based on the unwarranted assumptions that the division of society into rulers and ruled is unalterable by an investigation of the practical measures by which the planned could become the planners and the controlled abolish control, the emphasis shifts back from the psychological to the economic and class aspects of the problem, that is, to inquiries and actions concerned with altering social relationships in the sphere of production. Marxism's overwhelming interest in the more objective aspects of the social processes has not only methodological reasons, but is also explained by its revolutionary character. After a thorough economic analysis of the capitalistic structure and its mechanisms, it becomes inconceivable that any real solution short of the abolition of society's class structure can be found for the problems that beset the working class. Consistent Marxists have thus always steered clear of "scientific" sociology as it has been developed by an optimistic bourgeoisie who thought that their own forgotten revolution had solved once and for all the problems of society.

Bourgeois sociology, now that the capitalist concentration process which destroyed the particular brand of optimism connected with the market-regulated economy is completed, is slowly transformed into a kind of pseudo-scientific psychology for the defense of the ruling class. This change of function is camouflaged by ideas such as that of the "multi-dimensional" character of the social life process. This apparent widening of the field of sociological theory is, however, mainly of a verbal nature. As G. von Gontard has said, the psychologists "have created in their minds a cosmos in itself which cannot be attacked because its integrity is guarded by terminological precautions".¹³⁾ The cosmos is decoration. In so far as sociology and psychology are put to use they serve the very narrow function of supplementing the various instruments needed to perpetuate the existing conditions of exploitation.

11) For example: S. Chakotin, *THE RAPE OF THE MASSES*. New York 1940.

12) The marginal utility theory in economics is here another example.

13) *In Defense of Love*. New York, 1940, p. 292.

The applicability of social psychology, furthermore, is closely bound up with the material apparatus, or, rather, with the people who control the apparatus which distributes the ideological requirements for the coordination of individual wills. To control and influence individual minds, the press, school, church, cinema and radio must be controlled. Effective psychological control presupposes that the control instruments are securely in the hands of the controllers. And so they are, which means that psychological control remains the exclusive weapon of the ruling class unless it is overthrown with weapons stronger than theirs, with weapons and methods not given to the control of the controllers. The possibility, previously open to different capitalistic groups and political movements, to employ to a greater or lesser extent the usual propaganda means disappeared in the totalitarian state. If the revolutionist continues to think that the whole question of social change is one of opposing one ideology with another and that the only medium for social transformation is the displacement of one set of rulers by another, he certainly must despair. The present stage of development demonstrates with utmost clarity that the ways and means of gaining political influence and control within bourgeois democracy have definitely ceased to exist. All that is left to such people, still thought of as "revolutionists", is to demand, in so far as they are still able to voice their opinions, that the present rulership of the still "democratic" nations itself carry through the needed social revolution.¹⁴⁾

"The only way in which dictatorial solutions to social crisis can be permanently successful", Mannheim writes, "is by centralizing the control of individual wills. The real problem, however, is to know how far these attempts are counteracted by the conditions of life in modern industrial society" (46). Unfortunately, though consistent with his own point of view, Mannheim concerned himself more with the "centralized control of individual wills" than with the "conditions of life" which may counteract its effect. Conditions of life in modern society have now created, however, a situation where economic and political issues demonstrate their primacy and their outstanding importance daily with the utmost, with almost unbearable, clarity. What was on the part of Marx a revelation of things-to-come is now naked reality. There is no longer in evidence that bewildering variety of groups and interests which beclouded the essentially two-class character of capitalist society. There exists now just one organization, one class, one group — the totalitarian state as the controller and therewith the owner of all that spells power in society. There is, on the other side, all the rest of the population subjected to this totalitarian rule. It is true that this whole mass is still artificially divided through ideological distinctions and is still actually split by the continued competition for better positions not yet brought to a close by total conscription of all labor. It is a powerless, will-less mass, absolutely at the mercy of the ruling elite. There is also the new world-war, still in its beginnings, able only to further complicate the unsolv-

14) See, for example, H. J. Laski's new book "Where Do We GO From Here?", which pleads for a SOCIAL REVOLUTION BY CONSENT! The consent, naturally, is to be given by the ruling classes, to whose reason and magnanimity Laski appeals.

able problem of squaring the class-nature of society with the real needs of the majority of mankind.

The fact of the existence of the proletariat as the largest class in industrial society,¹⁵⁾ the fact of the complete monopolization and centralization of all power centers excludes — at this time — any class struggles of a directly revolutionary character. There seems to be only the imperialist war, covered up by all sorts of phrases. But within the setting of this war there is developing, already incorporated, and being unconsciously fought the civil war against the classes in power. This civil war within the imperialistic war will become the more dominating the further the disruption of all social life proceeds with the further unfolding and extension of the present world conflagration. It will finally become the sole content of the present struggle, for it has incorporated in itself the only solution which is able to end the struggle and abolish its causes. If it becomes the only social reality it will leave far behind all illusory goals of yesterday and today.

The continuation of class-rule and exploitation means death and hunger. There are at present no real problems in the world except ending this murderous situation. Both death and hunger demand their human toll because classes, leaders, elites, privileged groups defend their narrow interests against the urgent need to socialize society, that is, to remove its class structure. Death and hunger may spread for a considerable time; within limits their miseries can be compensated for by terror and propaganda. Within limits the anger and bewilderment they cause may be canalized and utilized for one or another national interest behind which lingers no more than the class interests of the ruling bodies of different states. Essentially, however, death and hunger are more determining and more forceful than all ideological issues and all control instruments, however cleverly devised.

There is not the slightest reason to assume that this war will or can be kept within the borders desired by the centralized bodies waging it. Rather, the spreading of the war seems to be a certainty. Thus there comes in view once more and on a much greater scale than during the last world war, a situation which offers the powerless the opportunity — provided as they are with weapons, thanks to the contradictory and self-defeating class necessities of the ruling elites — to use their new powerful positions for pursuing the narrowest of interests — that of preserving their very lives and of satisfying their hunger. They will proceed, as they have to, undisturbed by the multi-dimensional nature of the social processes and they will serve their purposes without regard to "society as a whole", that is, without regard for the interests of the fascist and semi-fascist elites. What Mannheim attempts to do only symbolically, they must accomplish actually.

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15) This fact is often denied with the argument that — numerically — the proletariat class loses importance in relation to the more rapidly growing, so-called new middle-class of white-collar workers. This argument is nonsensical, for the bulk of the white collar workers are proletarians. They do not need to be "proletarianized" as is often suggested. Their present ideological idiosyncracies are no formidable force which could effectively interfere with the fundamental trend of society to impoverish and to suppress all layers of the laboring population and thus to force them into a uniform class-frame.

BOOK REVIEWS

TOWARD FULL USE OF RESOURCES

Part II of the report on *The Structure of American Economy*, published under the sub-title *Toward Full Use of Resources* by the National Resources Planning Board in June, 1940,¹⁾ does not add much to the picture that emerged from Part I ("Basic Characteristics"), published a year before.²⁾ There is, however, this difference: the new volume breaks entirely with that artificial restriction which the authors of the first volume had set for themselves when they proposed to deal with the "structure" of the economic system only, apart from its actual operation. This time a freer approach has been chosen.

The very form of presentation has been changed. While the first part was a heavy treatise with statistical appendices, the second part is a symposium. It includes, in addition to a new contribution by Gardner C. Means, four independent documents contributed by persons who had not even participated in the preparation of the first.

Full employment of resources and man-power, the American economy's dominant problem before National Defense became the dominant economic problem and full employment became instrumental to this end, is boldly attacked from the point of view of both economic structure and operating policies.

G. C. Means' contribution to this wider problem, just like his analysis of structure in Part I, has this outstanding value: that he insists on the decisive change brought about in capitalist economy during the last fifty to a hundred years through the emergence of *The Corporate Community* from what had been, or had been supposed to be, a free competitive system of independent enterprises (if not of independent "individuals"), or an economic system exclusively re-

gulated by the mechanism of the market.

He reveals the surprising fact that the economic literature of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, replete with expositions of the rational underlying the then prevailing system of market production, does not answer the simple question of "Just how is the market mechanism expected to insure reasonably full employment?" The economists either assumed full employment (just as they assumed full utilization of all available resources) or dealt with the problem only implicitly in their analysis of such other adjustment mechanisms as the balance of trade and the balance between savings and investments. There is no stronger indictment of the thoughtless assumptions of the nineteenth century economists and their present-day followers than the "employment adjustment mechanism underlying those earlier theories as it is here exposed to our postmortem inspection.³⁾ There is a complicated chain by which a given measure of "excessive" unemployment is supposed to be immediately equivalent to a corresponding deficiency of current buying. It thus "almost at once" brings about a corresponding reduction of prices, wages, and profits which in turn, at once and to the same extent, increases the real buying power of the outstanding money supply (the "redundant money") and thus provides buying in excess of current production, and thus additional employment until the "excessive" unemployment is completely eliminated. (One sees, incidentally, that Marx's criticism of the so-called "compensation-theory" did not attack the weakest but rather a comparatively more reasonable argument of the bourgeois employment-theory of his time!)

Yet it would be a mistake to assume that the ingenuous criticism of the fallacies of the early bourgeois economists, objectively contained in Mr. Means' reconstruction of their theories, is in any way aimed at the whole of the underlying economic system. He directs his attack ex-

clusively against that small die-hard group of American business men who assumedly believe that those crude "adjustment-mechanisms" are still valid today or could be made workable again by a return to the more primitive conditions of the past. He thus battles an imaginary opponent. He mistakes for a genuine and political theory what is in fact only a set of stock phrases and ideologies used for practical purposes by a particularly reckless school of "democratic" defenders of the existing capitalist system.

In this private feud against a non-existing danger he does not mince words. He shows the tremendous losses and risks implied in the attempt to effect those "minimum changes" in the existing economic structure that would allow the employment adjustment mechanism to operate effectively again. The "minimum changes" would involve not only a gigantic objective revolution (including the break-up of large enterprises, and general atomization of economic activity), but would inevitably lead to a tremendous "economic turmoil, and risk of social disruption and the loss of democratic institutions."⁴⁾ Thus it appears that he still believes in the essential validity of those same "adjustment mechanisms" which a short time before he apparently endeavored to refute. He knows that they no longer fulfill their task in a corporate economy under conditions of short-run insensitivity of prices, wages, profits and interest rates, but he will be quite content if he succeeds in devising a means by which essentially the same end could be reached today under the monopolistically changed conditions of the existing capitalist system. Yet he wants to reach it without those tremendous losses and risks of which he is afraid, most of all without the risk of a social revolution. In his own terms, he is out to find a new set of "adjustment mechanisms" which would "not depend for their effective operation on short-run sensitivity in goods-prices, wage rates, unit-profits, and interest rates, and would be able to perform the functions formerly assigned to the mechanisms discussed above."⁵⁾

His idea of economic "planning" as indeed that of all hitherto emerging promoters of either a "demo-

cratic" or an outright fascist type of planning — aims at nothing but an essentially unchanged replacement of the "mechanisms" that assumedly were operating in an earlier "competitive" phase, but are no longer (satisfactorily) operating in the new monopolistic phase of capitalistic economy. The "invisible hand" that supposedly rescued early capitalist economy from the extravagances of its individual members is to be replaced by a more visible hand which, in spite of pious declarations to the contrary, will turn out to be the hand of a totalitarian dictator. It will not really "adjust" the glaring contradictions of capitalist economy any more than was done by the "adjustment mechanisms" of the market in earlier phases of capitalist economy. It will preserve, for the time being, the fundamentals of capitalist privilege and oppression and thus fulfill the only function that was carried out by the so-called adjustment mechanisms of competitive capitalism.

A much more vital and vigorous attempt to come to grips with the main economic and social problems of our time than that made by G. C. Means, or, for that matter, by any of the other contributors, is contained in the last paper of the symposium. The clear and consistent analysis of *Economic Policy and the Structure of the American Economy*, contributed by Mordecai Ezekiel,⁶⁾ presents, even to the socialist opponent, a highly suggestive statement of the program of a genuine democratic activism. First of all the author leaves no doubt about the limitations inherent in a scheme that proposed to solve the problems of unemployment and full use of resources within a democratic, i. e., an essentially capitalistic economy. He carefully distinguishes this program from "more extreme forms of organizing economic activity, such as the full socialism of the USSR, or such as the various degrees of centralized government control in fascist Italy and Germany." Even utility regulation as illustrated by the public regulation of the railroads, telephone and telegraph, and electricity in this country has "so emphasized the protection of owners of the property" that some-

1) For sale by the Superintendent of Documents. Washington, D. C., 48 pp.; 15c. All subsequent references, unless otherwise marked, are to this report.

2) For a review of this see *Living Marxism*, V. 3; pp. 38 ff.

3) pp. 13—14.

4) p. 16.

5) p. 16.

6) pp. 35 ff.

times "public regulation actually is operated in the interest of the utility rather than in the interest of general welfare." This, according to the author, represents "a problem in the working of democracy" and should therefore be avoided in a truly democratic program, which should rather be based on "a maximum of program-making from the bottom up instead of from the top down." (One sees that the author is far removed from that crude glorification of State capitalism which until recently was, and occasionally still is, indulged in by many professed socialists and communists.)

The main interest of Mr. Ezekiel's contribution does not consist in the various "possible lines of action" which he discusses in his paper and which, of course, go nowhere beyond the well-known proposals of the most radical wing of the New Dealers. What is of the greatest interest, even for the most "advanced" Marxist reader, is the genuine materialist connection that exist throughout between his theoretical criticism of the basic restrictive influences inherent in the existing corporate price-policies on the one hand and his practical proposals for reform on the other. By a consistent argument with illustrations taken from the steel, building, lumber, cement, glass and plumbing fixtures industries, he reveals the present form of one of the most important contradictions of capitalist economy. A lowering of prices for the purpose of an increased volume of production, he shows, can be advantageous for the whole of a particular industry (or for all industries participating in producing a particular end-product, or for a still larger number of industries) and at the same time be distinctly disadvantageous for each of the involved industry (or industries). Vice versa, "it can seem to each of many individual elements in the economy that it is to its advantage to reduce output and gain a larger net income, yet at the same time it is obviously impossible for real national income to increase through reducing the output of all component industries."⁷⁾ The reason in both cases is that "elasticity of demand" for a particular end-product or a number of such end-products does not necessarily, or even normally, cause a proportionate increase in the volume of sales for the

single participating units. For example, the increased demand for automobiles due to a 10% reduction in the price of steel would give rise to an increased consumption of steel of but 1.5%.

From this "contradiction" arise a great number of restrictive influences on the expansion and development of production. Even if only a small portion of the economy or a single industry is in a position to restrict its output by a high-price policy, this may be sufficient to hold employment and national income far below the potentially attainable levels.

To sum up: "The fundamental economic weakness in the operations of the monopolistic or monopolistically competitive corporate structure, as it now stands, lies in the inability of management in any one industry, whether private or public (! K.K.), to view its problem in the light of national economy as a whole. As a consequence, actions which would be to the advantage both of the single industry and of the general welfare cannot be considered at all, because there is no effective means through which the industry could bring them into effect... If some means could be devised to bring about concerted expansion of all industries involved, so that all would simultaneously reduce their prices in proportion to the saving in unit costs which increased volume would yield, the final sale price would be reduced sufficiently to produce an increased volume of output and all the industries participating could gain from the result."⁸⁾

From this theoretical analysis it follows at once that the fundamental restrictive forces of production under conditions of monopoly capitalism (private and public) can be overcome, and can only be overcome, by an either voluntary or publicly enforced cooperation of all involved industries in a smaller or larger program of concerted expansion. The various forms of the execution of this proposal and their connection with other measures must be studied in the Report itself.

There is one flaw in all these intelligently devised and far-reaching "plans". The Report itself contains the warning for the reader that its

7) p. 36

8) p. 42

material "was prepared prior to developments of the emergency defense program, and of course does not attempt to deal with the special economic problems arising out of that emergency." Indeed, there is no way of knowing how even the most thoughtful and most honest plans of the last remaining representatives of a genuine "democratic activism" can

ever be fulfilled under the conditions of present-day high-pressure capitalism in general and in particular under the conditions of the imminent world-wide fight for supremacy between the forces of so-called democracy and the forces of European and Asiatic fascism.

Karl Korsch

CLASS AND AMERICAN SOCIOLOGY. From Ward to Ross. By Charles Hunt Page. The Dial Press, New York. (319 pp.; \$3.50).

The publisher's blurb on Mr. Page's book quotes Professor R. M. Mac-Iver as saying that its "treatment of social classes by American sociologists throws much light on the social attitudes of sociologists". This is about all the book does. But this is certainly not the author's fault. Mr. Page's book is very interesting and can be highly recommended. That sociology may be regarded as little more than the psychology of sociologists fits in with the social class structure which excludes a science of society. The book is valuable also because it serves to show the impossibility of developing a sociology. Though it deals with the "fathers" of sociology (L. F. Ward, W. G. Sumner, A. W. Small, F. H. Giddings, C. H. Cooley, E. A. Ross) it proves, if their work is compared with the most of the modern sociologists, that the children have learned nothing that their fathers did not know. In short, this reveals the stagnation which marks all social science under capitalism.

That the question of class has been neglected in sociological theory shows not only the petty-bourgeois character of professional sociologists, but also the actual lack of class-consciousness on the part of the workers. That the class issue could enter social theory at all is connected with the fact that the middle-class was at times opposed to the rising plutocracy and thus appeared as the defender of proletarian "rights". At no time, however, have sociological theories furthered the independent actual struggles of the working class. In so far as sociology fulfilled a function in society, that function was to serve the ideology which identified social control with class control. Despite the great extremes of wealth and poverty, America remained, in

the minds of its social theoreticians, the land of the petty-bourgeoisie. The changing conditions in America at the turn of the century and the influence of European theories led to a "radicalization" of intellectuals interested in social questions. But even in their new advances they remained middle-class, as may be seen from the works of Veblen, Dewey, Beard and others, and from the sociologists who shared their progressive views.

American sociology was the more impractical the more it was "American", that is, the more it strove for application. The social reforms sociologists advocated were introduced in America later than in other developed nations, and then not as reforms to better society but as instruments to maintain a declining order. Ward, for instance, was not interested in advocating the better distribution of wealth. He saw in the distribution of knowledge the first essential to social betterment. If he were living today, he would see that the greater distribution of knowledge only increased the social inequalities as regards the distribution of wealth, as well as the distribution of opportunities. Because of class conditions the growth of knowledge can only serve the growth of profits. If he hoped for an ideal government which would truly represent society and not just the groups favored by the laissez-faire system, he would now find his ideal realized in fascism. He could object to it only by belatedly recognizing the class issues that he thought of so little importance.

Sumner, however, though also middle-class to the core, had a much deeper insight into the real social issues than any other of his colleagues. In his analysis of society he often reached conclusions which remind one of Marx. But monopoly, privilege,

wars, class, are for him forces outside of human control. They must be accepted because only by struggle can progress be made. He himself took the side of capitalism in this struggle determined by the nature of things. Sumner and Ward, Mr. Page observes, have concerned themselves with class issues to a greater extent than any of their contemporaries. They certainly concerned themselves with these issues more than the other sociologists described by Page, who either openly opposed the working class, or suggested solutions for social questions which in the end would have been worse than the open

struggle a Sumner was willing to wage. They accepted either one or the other or both positions at the same time; they were not able to contribute one original element to the discussions that preceded them. Page himself has a much too positive approach to American sociology. It may be politeness on his part which makes him say that its traditions should be carried on for the benefit of contemporary research. To us, however, it seems that his book reveals that the traditions of sociology, too, hang like millstones around the neck of those interested in social problems.

THE WORLD OF NATIONS. A Study of the National Implications in the Work of Karl Marx. By Solomon F. Bloom. Columbia University Press, New York. (225 pp.; \$2.50).

This book places Marx's position on national issues against the whole background of his thought and activity. In turn, Marx's general social and economic philosophy is examined from the point of view of its bearing upon the fortunes of particular nations, especially England, France, Germany and the United States. It is thus an important contribution towards an understanding of the political ideas of the 19th century. It will help to disperse the many misrepresentations of Marxian theories with regard to national problems. Agreeing with Mr. Bloom almost completely and hoping that our readers will turn to the book itself, we can restrict ourselves here to a few remarks which may indicate the richness of the work.

For Marx, nationality was an objective condition, a complex product and function of environmental, economic, historical and other influences. Intellectual and cultural variations between nations he traced to socio-economic and historical differences between countries. The world remained for Marx richly variegated; he did not pour it all into one mold. Along with the too-small society, he rejected the vague and amorphous global society. His world consisted of a limited number of advanced nations.

Marx was no nationalist, but for him a true internationalist must strive

for the advance of particular countries as the basis of world progress. Bloom makes it clear that Marx, contrary to some of his followers, did not believe in the principle of self-determination of nations. National independence had meaning for Marx only for nations, or combinations of nations, which were in a position to develop modern economics. He related all questions of national emancipation to the interests of international program. Though he knew the imperialists for what they were, he recognized that imperialism revolutionized backward countries and stagnating societies.

Though often denying small nations the right of separate statehood, Marx was always in favor of the complete emancipation of all national minorities from civil, social, and economic restrictions. He distinguished clearly between nation and state. All national questions were bound up with class issues. All forms of oppression were interconnected and had their basis in class exploitation. So long as society was divided into classes, national interests coincided with the interest of the class that furthered most of the economic development; the character of the nation was closely related to the character of the ruling class. Only with the end of class oppositions within the nations will it be possible to end the rivalries between the nations.