

THE  
COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

M. N. ROY

RADICAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY

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# THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

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BY  
M. N. ROY

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## PREFACE

In contemporary history, which has been crowded with a rapid succession of startling developments, no event is perhaps of deeper and more far-reaching significance than the dissolution of the Communist International. In the following pages the distinguished writer of this book, who was one of those revolutionary pioneers that founded the International, has analysed the causes which led to its dissolution and has presented a new perspective for the future development of the forces of world revolution.

As was to be expected, the dissolution of the Communist International has been interpreted by various persons according to their predilections and predispositions. The sentimental nationalists have regarded it as a triumph of their cause and a resounding defeat of internationalism in the very home of its inspiration. On the other hand, sentimental communists—unfortunately, a large number of romantic revolutionaries must be included in this curious category—are inclined to regard the dissolution of the International as a purely opportunist step, dictated by the diplomatic convenience of the Soviet Union and bound to be retraced in more favourable circumstances. Both these interpretations thus agree in regarding this step as a setback, whether permanent or temporary, to the ideal of communism and to international co-operation for achieving that ideal.

In this book, M. N. Roy has presented a very different and characteristically original analysis, based upon his appreciation of the fact that communism has become easier of attainment as a result of this anti-fascist war, the revolutionary implications of which he was the first to recognise. The ideal of communism, so far from receding into the background, has actually come to the forefront, but the ways of achieving it have changed and the human forces which will participate in its accomplishment have greatly increased. The anti-fascist forces in the world, which comprise a larger section of the people than the working classes, are the objectively revolutionary forces of today. The Communist International, confined to the working classes alone and committed to the outworn dogma of "the dictatorship of the proletariat," had become obsolete in both its scope and its technique. It has disappeared to facilitate international co-operation on a wider basis and with a more appropriate technique.

In recent years, all thoughtful revolutionaries have been faced with an almost insoluble dilemma. The working classes were divided into two sections. The reformist school proved its bankruptcy by its inability to introduce socialism by gradual and constitutional means even when placed in power. The revolutionary section of the workers, on the other hand, repeatedly failed to bring about a successful revolution in the face of the greatly enhanced military power of a modern State and the more effective co-operation of such powerful capitalist States in crushing the revolutionary upheaval in any single country. Both reformist as well as revolutionary methods having proved ineffective, there appeared to be no way to bring about those

fundamental changes which nevertheless remained necessary for the further progress of society as a whole. History, however, could not be so easily checkmated. When the working class could not bring about the necessary social transformation by its own unaided efforts, the contradictions of capitalism assumed such ugly forms as to force a large section of the other classes of society into an alliance with the working class. The anti-fascist front, which has developed during the course of this war, represents this new alignment of forces. New ways of revolution have consequently opened up, and these have been indicated in the following pages.

When the contents of this book first appeared in the form of a series of articles in "Independent India," a question was sometimes raised as to why the explanation given by Stalin about the dissolution of the International is so very different from that of M. N. Roy. The two, however, are not contradictory. Stalin explained how the step was calculated to improve the diplomatic relations of the Soviet Union with other countries and to remove the basis of the interested propaganda that communists wanted to impose their system on unwilling peoples by outside intervention. These advantages of the dissolution of the Communist International can however become pertinent only after it is realised that the International had already become incapable of fulfilling its original object of bringing about a world revolution. Roy seeks to explain why the International failed to achieve its object and became a hindrance to further progress. The tree which was planted more than twenty years ago with such fond hopes had dried up and become sterile. It would be right to say that it was cut down for the supply of fuel ;

but one wants to know why the tree should become dead and sterile, so that to cut it down should appear more advantageous than to let it stand. This more fundamental question has been answered in this book.

A ruthless realist, free from attachment to any dogma and always responsive to changes in the world situation, M. N. Roy has been for many years a pioneer in revolutionary philosophy. None in India has better authority to write on the Communist International or to analyse the causes that led to its dissolution. In this book he has shown how the traditional ideas of revolution, which have dominated political controversy for nearly a hundred years, have become obsolete, and how new ways of revolution have opened up. As such, this book is bound to be of historical importance. Political workers devoted to the cause of freedom and progress will find it not only thought-provoking but a valuable guide to action.

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# THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

## I

**T**HE news of the dissolution of the Communist International must have caused surprise throughout the world. It has come unexpectedly, yet not quite as a bolt from the blue. It has been neither an arbitrary act on the part of the Russians, nor an opportunist move of Soviet diplomacy, though one of its by-products may, indeed, be a better diplomatic relation between the Soviet Government and its allies in this war.

The Communist International had been a nightmare for the ruling classes of the world ever since its foundation twenty-five years ago. Even today, the United Nations are not quite free from the influence of die-hard reactionaries and stupid conservatives. For the sake of its immense military advantage, they put up with an alliance with the Soviet Union. But they do not want it to be anything more than a temporary make-shift, and would utilise the relation between the Soviet Government and the Communist International as the excuse for breaking up the alliance as soon as the exigencies of this war were over. As a matter of fact, of late they have been complimenting the Russians for abandoning the cause of world revolution and recovering their traditional patriotic spirit. The dissolution of the Communist International will be welcomed by



them as the conclusive evidence for the triumph of reaction in the Soviet Union, qualifying it for respectable company. Indeed, it is reported that some American public men have congratulated the Soviet Government for "the step in the right direction". It is certainly a step in the right direction. But the standards of right and wrong are still different.

It would be a matter of satisfaction if the dissolution of the Communist International incidentally contributed to an improvement of diplomatic relations inside the camp of the United Nations. But the Russians have taken this step without any opportunist motive. That is clear from the resolution to dissolve the organization. The full text is not yet available. But sufficient indication of the object is to be found in the following passage included in the cabled report: "The proposal to disband is based on the fact that world conditions have greatly altered since the Comintern was founded, and that this form of international working class organisation no longer corresponds to world conditions, specially in view of the state of affairs created by the present war." The resolution contains a strong appeal to all the Communist Parties in other countries "to concentrate all their forces for the fullest support of, and active participation in, the war of *freedom of the peoples and States* of the anti-Hitlerite coalition in order to smash as quickly as possible the deadly enemy of workers—German Fascism and its allies and vassals."

The words italicized (by me) in the above quotation indicate the change in world conditions, in consequence of which the old form of international

working class organization has become out of place. It is a regrettable fact that since this war started, and even for a time previous to it, the Communist Parties in other countries than the Soviet Union, obsessed with their mechanical ideas about past, present and future, failed to realise that freedom of the peoples and States of the anti-Hitlerite coalition was the condition for the attainment of the greater freedom visualised in the programme of the Communist International. They failed to see that the freedom of the peoples and the States of the anti-Hitlerite coalition would smash the deadly enemy of the workers and thus pave the way for the freedom of the working class. They forgot one of the lessons of history taught by Karl Marx, namely, that a class frees itself by freeing the entire society of the time.

The change in the world conditions which warranted the dissolution of the Communist International was brought about by the establishment of the Nazi regime in Germany. Fascism had appeared on the scene as the avowed enemy, not only of the working class, but of modern political institutions and cultural values, more than a decade earlier. It had come to power in Italy. But not until the Nazis captured power in Germany did Fascism become an imminent menace for the whole world. Until then, Fascism was regarded, except by a few penetrating observers, as enemy only of the working class, and therefore to be fought only by the working class. A centralized world organization was to co-ordinate and guide the activities of the working class in different countries, in pursuance of that historic task. The Communist International was that world organization.

But before long, it became evident (it was evident to the more discerning observers from the very philosophy of Fascism) that Fascism proposed to subvert the whole structure of modern civilised society which enabled the more advanced sections of humanity to strive successfully for greater human freedom. There was a new polarisation of world forces. The working class was no longer alone in the fight which it had undertaken more than a century ago. It should be emphasised that historically the object of the fight was not to liberate the working class alone, but to liberate the entire society from bondages which prevented its further progress. This historical object of the working class movement may not have been clear in the mind of the great bulk of its members. But it was there, serving as its motive force.

Triumphant Fascism forced a new alignment of forces, an alliance of all desirous of defending modern civilization. The working class belonged to that alliance. But it could not immediately take up its position in the new constellation of forces fighting for freedom, because the new alliance embraced many social elements and political organizations which had previously been regarded as antagonistic to the liberation of the working class. Therefore, even after the world conditions had undergone a far-reaching change, the Communist International continued in existence.

But the Soviet Government promptly appreciated the new world situation, characterised by a new polarisation of forces, and adapted itself to it. The first step in that direction was to join the League of Nations, which had previously been condemned as an alliance

of imperialist powers for the destruction of the Soviet Union and for world domination. The next step was the persistent effort of the Soviet Government for non-aggression pacts which were to lay the foundation for an anti-Fascist alliance. The newly orientated Soviet foreign policy eventually resulted in the formation of the Franco-Soviet alliance which, linked up with the alliances of both these Powers with Czechoslovakia, represented a long advance towards the formation of an anti-fascist bloc. The appeasement policy of the British Government under Chamberlain delayed the consummation of that object. Nevertheless, the Soviet Government was undaunted in its efforts, and had not the Moscow negotiations in 1939 failed, it would have entered into an alliance even with the Chamberlain Government.

The People's Front movement, inaugurated by the Communist Parties in 1934, at the instance of the Russians, was in accord with the new orientation of Soviet foreign policy. Fundamentally, that was a deviation from the original position of the Communist International; therefore, if the new movement developed as it promised to, it could not be accommodated within the organizational structure of the Communist International. By sponsoring the new movement, the Communist International substituted dictatorship of the proletariat by a democratic alliance as the means to the attainment of its ultimate goal. Of course, this fundamental shifting of position was not noticed by the Communist Parties outside the Soviet Union. It is immaterial whether all the Russian leaders themselves realised the implication of the movement they encouraged. However, the People's Front movement

was a definite step towards the eventual dissolution of the Communist International—not only its organizational disabandment, but a revision of its political programme and theoretical presuppositions.

But history refuses to be fitted into any scheme devised even by the cleverest of the leaders of men. The Spanish episode proved to be a serious snag, and upset all the calculations of the Russians regarding the possibilities of the People's Front movement. Had the movement succeeded in France, as it had a very good chance to do, the whole history of Europe might have changed. But to prevent a break in their sustained effort for bringing about an anti-fascist alliance, the Soviet Government, while fully supporting the People's Front Republican Government of Spain, could not successfully oppose the non-intervention policy of the British Government, which succeeded in compelling the People's Front Government in France to fall in line. The result was the People's Front movement ending in a debacle. But seen from a historical perspective, it was only a temporary break in the process of realignment of forces in accord with changed world conditions.

That was a process which ultimately was bound to dissolve the Communist International *formally*. As a matter of fact, the spiritual dissolution of the organization coincided with that process, when Stalin declared that Communism was not a commodity for export. That historic declaration was evidently not a repudiation of Communism. It meant that the Soviet Government did not propose to introduce Communism in other countries. Those who entertained the ideal of Communism as a historical necessity need not have the

ambition of imposing it on other countries. If Communism is a necessary stage of social evolution, every country will reach the stage in due course of time. The progress towards that stage is bound to be uneven, determined by the conditions of each country, the conditions in any particular country being determined by the world conditions.

But the continued existence of the Communist International appeared to contradict the declaration of Stalin, which could be made by any sensible Communist in any country. It *appeared* to contradict because formally the Communist International was not a part of the Soviet Government and much less identical with it. But that was only the formal relation. In reality, the Communist International was so very intimately linked up with the Soviet Government that it was very difficult to dissociate the latter from any act or idea of the former.

The Communist International proclaimed itself to be the General Staff of the army of world revolution. Nominally, the army was stationed throughout the world, each of the sixty odd Communist Parties being the commanding cadres of the respective local detachments of the army of world revolution. But the fact remained that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was a member of the Communist International, and was therefore committed by all its pronouncements and responsible for all its actions. Moreover, it occupied such a dominating position in the International that without its approval the latter could make no pronouncement nor undertake any action. On the other hand, the Soviet Government was controlled by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Its new foreign policy

was sanctioned by the Communist Party. Therefore, for a time, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was pursuing a course which could be characterised as double-dealing.

That was a damaging result of the contradictions of the existence of the Communist International even after the change in world conditions had rendered it superfluous. Indeed, the position was still worse. According to its constitution, the activities of each party affiliated to it are planned and guided collectively by the International as a whole. Formally, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union could not claim exemption from the rule. Therefore, the entire Communist International was committed by the new orientation of the Soviet foreign policy which, in its turn, prepared the ground for the dissolution of the Communist International. Such a self-contradictory situation could not continue indefinitely. But it is very difficult to abolish an established institution.

It would have been easier if the Communist Parties in other parts of the world, at least in the leading countries, were as keenly alive to the changing conditions as the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. But intellectual subservience was the curse of practically all the Communist Parties outside the Soviet Union. That misfortune again was to a large extent historically determined. The Communist International was a creation of the Russians. By virtue of the fact that it was the only Communist Party in power, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was naturally recognised as the leader of the International, and consequently dominated it in every respect. All the other

parties accepted the authority of the Russians, to the point of intellectual subservience. The Russians could not be entirely absolved of all responsibility in this connection. But they did not deliberately try to check the intellectual growth of other parties. The spirit of hero worship and the atmosphere of the Catholic Church, which came to prevail in the Communist International, caused intellectual atrophy and political helplessness on the part of the Communist Parties outside the Soviet Union. Consequently, the Communist International dragged along its self-contradictory and superfluous existence under the momentum of its inability to think for itself. Ultimately the Russians had to bell the cat.

But even now, they have acted very correctly. The resolution to dissolve the Communist International is recommendatory. It has been submitted for the approval of all the affiliated parties. The latter have the right to reject the proposal. But it would be too much to expect of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to abide by such a possible, though completely improbable, decision. Even then, there will be nothing to prevent other Communist Parties to maintain their world organization. That is not at all likely to happen. Already several Communist leaders in other countries have rushed to endorse the resolution without even waiting for reading the full text of it. That shows to what a depth of moral degradation this once proud organization has fallen, and that again shows how very necessary was its dissolution.

One colourful chapter of the history of revolution of our time is closed. How will the next chapter begin ?



History is not divided into water-tight compartments. Its chapters overlap. We have been living through such a period of transition, which can be regarded as having been closed by the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union. The new chapter began with an event which would have been entirely incredible even a few days earlier. It was Churchill's speech on the day after the Soviet Union was attacked. Even that incredible event was not altogether unexpected. It was determined by the fall of Chamberlain and the subsequent development of British foreign policy. Stalin's speech shortly afterwards clearly indicated how the new chapter was going to be written. Finally came the Anglo-Soviet alliance as the most outstanding landmark of contemporary history. The far-reaching implication of the fact that the alliance was concluded for 20 years was not appreciated by many. It has not been fully appreciated as yet. Men at the helm of affairs of leading countries do not commit their respective governments for such a long time in these eventful days, when something entirely unexpected may happen tomorrow, unless they are working with a long term plan. At least in the case of Stalin, that was so. The dissolution of the Communist International proves that.

## II

**T**HE chapter of the contemporary history of revolution, closed with the dissolution of the Communist International, did not begin with its foundation. Originally, the Communist International was called the Third International. Two other Internationals had preceded it. The history of all the three Internationals composes the history of revolution of our time. The chapter just closed had opened with the formation of the International Association of Workers by Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels and their associates in 1866. The theoretical foundation of the new organization was laid down by the memorable Communist Manifesto issued about fifteen years earlier.

The rise of National States had been the outstanding feature of the history of Europe during the preceding century. The revolutionary struggle leading up to the establishment of National States was led by the rising capitalist class, called the bourgeoisie, because of their association with urban areas. It had the support also of the urban workers as well as of the peasantry. The revolution developed under the banner of democratic freedom. But the National States established by it became instruments in the hands of the capitalist middle class with or without the support of the upper classes.

By a searching analysis of the mode of capitalist production, Karl Marx showed that all new values were created by labour ; that production of surplus value

was the basis of capitalist economy. Capitalist economy, though developing within national boundaries protected by respective National States, was however a universal system. It was guided by laws which operated everywhere. Consequently, industrial workers in all the capitalist countries were subjected to an identical system of exploitation. Their ultimate liberation was conditional upon the replacement of that system by a system of social justice. But the system being universal, the struggle against it must take place on an international scale. Even the immediate demands of the industrial workers as regards wages and conditions of labour could not be enforced successfully in one country. If wages remained low in one country and the workers there laboured under worse conditions, the capitalists in another country would not redress the grievances of their workers in that respect on the plea that greater cost of production would make them unable to compete in the world market. If the conditions of workers were depressed in one country, workers of all other countries would be adversely affected on the same plea.

Having pointed out the identity of interest of the working class throughout the world, Karl Marx gave the famous slogan "Workers of the World- Unite!" which became the motto of the international labour movement.

Patriotism was a product of the Great French Revolution. But after the establishment of National States, the sentiment was exploited by vested interests for entrenching themselves and aggrandising themselves at the cost of the toiling masses. The latter were to sacrifice so that the nation might prosper and be

great. Patriotism lost its charm for the workers and, indeed, became an instrument for their social slavery. Karl Marx showed that capitalism expropriated the producing masses. How could they be the owners of their respective countries? Therefore, Marx declared that the working class had no country. Nationalism would make the working class of one country fight the working class of another, while the interests of the working class, immediate as well as remote, required united efforts against the universal system of exploitation. That analysis of the situation, as it was in the middle of the nineteenth century, led the pioneers of the labour movement towards the ideal of internationalism. The International Association of Workers, subsequently known as the First International, was founded in consequence.

The Communist Manifesto not only laid down the theoretical foundation of the International Association of Workers, but also outlined its programme of action. The immediate object of the International was to secure progressive improvement of the conditions of the working class through collective action. The ultimate object was to replace capitalist society, based on private ownership of the means of production, by a freer social organization in which they would be collectively owned. Even before the time of Karl Marx, workers had been called to revolt against capitalism and establish a communist society. Property had been characterised by philosophers as theft, and capitalism castigated as sinful. But the ideal of common ownership and communist society remained a utopia—no more within practical realisation than the Christian Millennium.

Karl Marx showed that Communism was not a utopia ; that property was not theft, but a lever of social progress in a certain stage of history ; and that capitalism was a necessary stage of social evolution. From that analysis he concluded that, just as private ownership had replaced tribal communism, and capitalism had replaced earlier economic systems, just so was it bound to be replaced eventually by a higher form of social organization. He further showed that the capitalist mode of production with the aid of modern machine would gradually undermine private ownership, and, without any social necessity, the latter could exist only as an obstacle to further economic development. Machine production socialises labour ; the corollary to that should be common ownership of the means of production—of the tools with which labour is performed. Communism ceased to be a utopia. It was conceived as a necessary stage of social evolution.

Although capitalism, being a stage of social evolution, was bound to disappear in course of time, National States controlled by the capitalist class could maintain it almost indefinitely even after it had exhausted all its progressive possibilities. The mode of production is the lever of social evolution ; but political power could promote or retard progress. Therefore, Karl Marx came to the conclusion that the capture of political power by the working class was the condition for the final disappearance of the decayed capitalist society and the establishment of Communism. The State being the instrument in the hands of the class controlling the economic life of a nation, it must be overthrown before the life could be reorganised. The State further is the organ of power ; therefore it could not be overthrown.

without violence. This analysis led to the conclusion that sooner or later the working class, striving for a better social order, must rise up in insurrection against the established State, overthrow it and establish a dictatorship of the proletariat to overwhelm all resistance, and ultimately to establish the communist social order.

The International Association of Workers was to inspire the working class of the world with those ideals and lead them step by step through the outlined program of action. Before long there was an insurrection, which established the Paris Commune of 1870. The experience was very short. Its defeat was explained by the fact that the Commune was not a proletarian dictatorship. The real reason of the failure perhaps was that already then the relation of forces had so changed as to make insurrection not a very practical proposition. Less than a hundred years ago, the Parisian people, armed with picks and shovels, could overwhelm and overthrow the corrupt and decayed monarchy. But in 1870, the insurgents had to face the formidable Prussian Army, which was very much different from the armed forces of the effete Bourbons.

Insurrection as well as dictatorship were traditions of the French Revolution, and of other revolutions of still earlier periods. The revolution which broke out towards the end of the eighteenth century continued throughout the earlier half of the nineteenth century. Therefore, the tradition was very much alive. The Communist Manifesto was composed in the midst of an insurrectionary atmosphere,—when in 1848 several European capitals were scenes of insurrection. They all failed. But it was too early to draw the lesson of

the failure. It was ascribed to weakness and treachery. But in 1870, there was neither weakness nor treachery among the Communards of Paris. Still the insurrection did not succeed, and the Commune was drowned in a sea of blood. The relation of forces had changed, at least it was changing. Nevertheless, it was too early to detect the process. Therefore, revolutionaries stood by the traditions of the Great French Revolution and inscribed insurrection and dictatorship on their banner.

The very achievement of the French Revolution, however, rendered action according to its tradition very difficult, if not impossible. The newly arisen National States were economically much more stable, politically much better organized and militarily immensely stronger than the decayed feudal order and mediaeval monarchy which they had replaced. They could not be easily overthrown by popular upheavals. That was proved by the experience of revolutionary movements during the period between the Great French Revolution and the Paris Commune.

The First International was disrupted by the consequences of the fall of the Paris Commune. The bitter experience of a whole century of defeats sobered down the spirit of the working class. There was yet another cause for the tendency which since then gained ascendancy in the labour movement. Partial political freedom and civic rights, established in a number of modern European States during the very period when the revolutionary movement experienced a series of defeats, afforded the working class the opportunity to defend and promote their immediate interests with less spectacular methods. During the last decades of the nineteenth century there was a steady improvement in the

conditions of the working class, particularly in Great Britain. Consequently, the ideas with which the International Association of Workers had been established began to lose their appeal to the bulk of workers and the Second International was born in that atmosphere of optimism.

Dictatorship was indeed an ill-conceived idea. It is particularly out of place in the Marxian scheme of historical development. With the development of capitalism, the majority of a nation becomes proletarianised. The object of revolution is to restore the dispossessed to their own. Political power has indeed been given the decisive importance. But when political power is captured by the proletariat, it comes in the possession of the majority and consequently the ideal of democracy is realised. Assuming that capture of power was still to be an act of violence—overthrow of the established State by an insurrection—its result would be not dictatorship, but establishment of democracy. For these reasons, it was inadvisable to have been carried away by the idea of dictatorship. As a matter of fact, originally, Marx and his associates did not do so. The necessity of dictatorship was pressed subsequently in order to combat the simplification of the problem of the transformation of the State from an instrument in the hands of the possessing classes into a bulwark of freedom for the people as a whole.

But the faith in parliamentary democracy, which characterised the Second International, was equally misplaced. That was proved by subsequent history, when working class parties commanding majorities in parliaments, or at least constituting sufficiently large



minorities, failed to influence fundamentally the policy of the State. A middle course had to be found. But it was as yet too early. It could be opened later on only by radical changes in the relation of forces, changes which have now warranted the dissolution of the Communist International.

Revolution remained a necessity. Class relations must change. Ultimately, society should cease to be divided into exploiting and exploited classes. A radical change in the political organization of society, that is the State, was a condition for the fulfilment of all those necessities. If the State could not be overthrown, what was the other alternative? The opponents of the idea of dictatorship failed to realise the decisive importance of the State. They could not distinguish between the State and the Government. As it was theoretically possible for the working class, wherever and whenever it constituted the majority of the population, to form the Government under the parliamentary system, it was maintained that power was within the reach of the working class. There was nothing more to do than to take it. The fallacy of this view was exposed by experience and later on by the forcible abolition of parliamentary democracy on the advent of Fascism. That experience revived the idea of dictatorship, and the Communist International was established after the last world war with the original programme of the International Association of Workers. The Second International with its faith in parliamentary democracy had come to grief on the outbreak of the last war. But the history of the intervening quarter of a century could not simply be effaced. It was bound to influence subsequent developments.

The failure of parliamentary democracy to develop gradually into Socialism, and its eventual suppression in a number of European countries by Fascism, naturally placed the ideas of violent overthrow of the capitalist State and dictatorship of the proletariat again on the order of the day. But at the same time, the rise of Fascism revealed the inadequacies of parliamentary democracy and forced a realignment of forces on the international scale, which created conditions for a possible transformation of the State peacefully.

The last great war broke up the Second International and dispelled its parliamentary illusions. It also created conditions for the success of the revolution in Russia. The Communist International, originally called the Third International, was one of the immediate outcomes of the Russian Revolution. Immediately preceding events determined the outlook of the Communist International, which appeared as the uncompromising standard-bearer of the tradition of the First International. The latter was inspired by the traditions of the Great French Revolution. The Third International proposed to carry the banner of the revolution, successful in Russia, to the rest of the world. Naturally it believed that revolution must travel the same way everywhere, that the scenes of Leningrad and Moscow in 1917 should be reenacted to the minutest detail, including the very stage-setting, in Berlin, Paris and London.

When the parties of the Second International called upon the workers in their respective countries to participate in the last war, as a war of national defence, Lenin denounced the war as an imperialist war and

gave the slogan that it should be transformed into a civil war. The Russian Revolution triumphed with that slogan. The Communist International inherited that tradition. Ultimately, it approached the situation created by the present anti-Fascist war with the old slogan of Lenin. It failed to see how the slogan was entirely inapplicable to this war. Between the two wars, two new factors had appeared on the scene, namely, a Socialist State embracing one sixth of the globe, and Fascism which had subjugated the whole of Europe. Consequently, this war broke out on the background of an entirely different relation of forces. The old slogan of Lenin was not applicable to it simply because this war is a civil war. There is nothing to be transformed. And the revolutionary character of this war was determined by events which had taken place during the period between the two wars. Since the world is involved in a civil war which, if waged resolutely, will bring about the necessary transformation of the State, the programme of the Communist International had become unsuitable to the situation. Therefore, its dissolution was a necessity.

### III

**D**ID not the experience of the Russian Revolution prove that insurrection and dictatorship of the proletariat are indispensable conditions for the attainment of the goal of Communism? That goal still remains to be attained in other parts of the world. Did not, then, the Communist International still have a historical role to play?

The Russian Revolution is a fluke of history. It does not fit into the Marxist scheme of revolution. According to that scheme, a revolution in our time becomes necessary when capitalism undermines the institution of private property by socialising production, and thus lays down the foundation for the socialist society. Those conditions for a necessary social transformation mature only in the most advanced capitalist countries. Before the revolution they were practically absent in Russia. The revolution there succeeded thanks to a fortuitous combination of circumstances. Nevertheless, once it did succeed, it became the most decisive event of our time. Only it did not set the pattern of subsequent events. It influenced the course of history indirectly.

That is the case with all great revolutions. None of them is ever repeated after the original model. That was so after the French Revolution. It opened up a whole period of revolutions lasting for nearly a century. But the Parisian scene of the last decade of the eighteenth century was never enacted anywhere. The

Communist International disregarded this lesson of history. It proposed to organize revolutions in all the other countries of the world after the model of the Russian Revolution. The impracticability of that plan became evident very soon. Yet, it was many years before the plan was abandoned—before the actual dissolution of the Communist International. In so far as the Russians were concerned, the plan was practically abandoned as far back as 1926. Already then, Stalin at least had come to the conclusion that revolution on the Russian model was not possible in the countries of Western Europe. That was not a theoretical conclusion but wisdom gained from experience. The Communist International should have been disbanded already at that time.

No great revolution sets the pattern of subsequent events. But in each case, the respective ideals are attained gradually over a whole period, even in countries not experiencing any revolutionary upheaval. The French Revolution was opposed by all the Powers of Europe. Prussia led the opposition militarily. But the greatest opposition to the ideals of the French Revolution came from Britain, although the ideals had previously been conceived in that country. Later on, the ideals of the French Revolution triumphed more nearly in Britain than in any other European country. Similarly, in the case of the Russian Revolution, its opponents have at last become allies and admirers of the Soviet Union. That does not mean that they are going to imitate the Russians. They still remain opposed to the idea of Communism. But what is there in a name? When the achievements of the Soviet Union win the admiration of the world, they are bound to influence

the course of coming history. Britain's relation to the Russian Revolution may be a repetition of her relation with the French Revolution.

The Russian Revolution could take place on the model of the Great French Revolution even after nearly hundred and fifty years because of the peculiarities of the situation in which it took place. For one thing, Russia had not experienced the process of modernization which had taken place in other European countries since the French Revolution. The economic organization of the country remained very backward and unstable. The State was corrupt and inefficient. There was indeed a large army equipped with modern weapons. But it was not free from the corruption and inefficiency of the State, being itself a part of the State. Secondly, during the war the economic life of the country was further disorganized. Then, defeat completely disorganized the army and demoralized the State. On the whole, the conditions thus were very much analogous to those at the time of the Great French Revolution when an armed insurrection could succeed.

But even then no success would be guaranteed to the Russian Revolution if the factor which operated against subsequent revolutionary upheavals in other countries could be in operation against it also. That factor was the armed forces of the victorious Powers. When the Russian State collapsed and the revolutionaries seized power, external opponents of the revolution were busy elsewhere. They could not intervene promptly as they did in the case of subsequent revolutionary outbreaks in other countries. The only threat came from the German Eastern armies, and they were

almost on the point of overwhelming the revolution and overrunning the whole of European Russia . But that danger to the Russian Revolution was headed off by the defeat of the Germans on the Western front. Because the capitalist Powers were engaged in a war against each other, the grand alliance against the Russian Revolution could not be formed as promptly as in the case of the French Revolution. That gave the revolution some time to consolidate itself—politically, if not militarily and economically. Even when the grand alliance was eventually formed, it was not very solid, being rent with mutual suspicion and rivalry among its members. Therefore the war of intervention was waged indirectly. In short, insurrection succeeded in Russia because it did not have to contend with an organised modern army. That was an accident. Revolutionary outbreaks in other countries, inspired by the Russian experience, did not have the advantage, and all failed.

A theory was constructed out of the Russian experience : Collapse of the established State in consequence of a military defeat is the condition for a successful revolution ; therefore, in the case of a war, revolutionaries should try to bring about the military defeat of their countries. The theory came to be known as revolutionary defeatism. As a matter of fact, Lenin had developed that theory even before the Russian Revolution. The revolution was believed to have corroborated the theory. Apparently that was the case. But the success of the revolution was due to many other contributory causes, which were not properly appreciated. Consequently, the theory became rather a dogma than a lesson learned from experience. The Communist

International tried to act according to the dogmatic theory of revolutionary defeatism when this war broke out. That was the greatest blunder it ever committed. The blunder landed it almost in the camp of its avowed enemy. It became more evident than ever how dangerous it was to maintain an organization, committed to antiquated ideals and an impracticable program, even after its existence had become superfluous.

A year after the Russian Revolution, it became clear that the collapse of a State upon military defeat did not guarantee the success of revolution. In autumn 1918, the German army suffered defeat, and the monarchist State collapsed. There was a revolutionary outbreak throughout the country. Even soldiers and sailors joined the revolution, here and there. But the insurrection did not succeed. The Communists ascribed the failure to the treachery of the Social Democratic Party. It is true that the latter, as a party, did not join the insurrection. But it would have failed even if they had joined. Because defeat on the front had not completely disintegrated the German army which, on the whole, remained loyal to the ruling class. The latter, in its turn, was not corrupt and inefficient like the Russian ruling class. Then, had the revolution in Germany developed and come nearer to success, it would certainly have had to contend with the victorious Allied armies standing guard on the Western frontier. It was under that threat, in addition to the unimpaired power of resistance of the native ruling class, with its armed forces still largely intact, that the German Revolution preferred the peaceful line of development, and succeeded to a large extent. The alternative course most probably would have meant its bloody suppres-



sion, and a triumph of reaction perhaps to the extent of a restoration of the monarchy under the protection of the victorious Entente armies.

The revolution in Finland was not guaranteed success by the collapse of Czarism and the decomposition of the Russian army. It was suppressed by an invading German army. The Hungarian Revolution also met a similar fate. The Austrian Empire had disappeared. But the Rumanian army marched in to overthrow the Soviet Republic of Hungary.

All those experiences corroborate the theoretical judgment that the success of the Russian Revolution was due to a fortuitous combination of circumstances. Therefore, it cannot be regarded as a proof that insurrection is an indispensable condition for the necessary revolutionary change, even in our time. Later on, similar experience was made again in Germany in 1923, in Austria and Spain.

Now about dictatorship. The Soviet State founded by the Russian Revolution was not a proletarian dictatorship. In the beginning, it was a dictatorship, in so far as it functioned as the organ of power for overwhelming all resistance to the revolution and waging the civil war and the war of intervention. While fighting for its very existence and in the midst of a war, every government assumes dictatorial power. But constitutionally, even in the very beginning, the Soviet State had a very broad democratic basis, and it was certainly democratic as compared with the Czarist State it had replaced. The Soviet, from the very beginning, was a Soviet of Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' Deputies. These three sections of society in contempo-

rary. Russia together constituted an overwhelming majority of the people. How far effective power was exercised by those sections of the population may be a matter of doubt. But does the people exercise effective power in the parliamentary democratic State? However, as soon as normal conditions were established, the broader democratic character of the Soviet State became evident to all unprejudiced observers. It certainly made for more effective democratic practice.

The point, however, is that the Russian Revolution did not establish a proletarian dictatorship. It simply could not. Because the proletariat was such a small minority that it would be a fantastic dream on its part to assume dictatorial power. Lenin knew that long before the revolution. Therefore, he attached very great importance to the peasantry. The Bolsheviks gave the call for insurrection with the slogan "All power to the Soviets" only when the All-Russian Peasants' Soviet came over to them. So, the revolution broke out as a democratic revolution. Had any effort been made to establish a dictatorship of the proletariat, the revolution would have been destroyed by the peasantry. The success of the Russian Revolution and the consequent advance towards the goal of Communism was guaranteed by the democratic composition of the Soviet, and not by the imaginary dictatorship of the proletariat.

Towards the end of 1920, it became evident that the history of revolution of our time was not to be written as expected upon the foundation of the Communist International a year ago. The defeat of insurrections in Germany and Hungary had previously given the same indication. But why should not the banner

of revolution be carried from one country to another ? Napoleon did that after the French Revolution. The Red Army was to do that in our time. Its defeat at Warsaw in summer 1920 was yet another lesson of history. But that also was taken as a temporary setback. Europe, particularly Germany, still remained in the grip of a severe economic crisis and unsettled political conditions. They were very favourable for revolution ; indeed, they made revolution urgently necessary. The Communist International was to organize the army of the impending revolution which would rise and capture power and establish a proletarian dictatorship in the near future.

Finally, by 1924, there could be no doubt about the impossibility of revolutionary practice according to the program of the Communist International, framed under entirely different world conditions. The perennial economic crisis and unsettled political conditions led up to another revolutionary outbreak in Germany in 1923. By that time, the Communist Party had become a very powerful factor of the situation. It commanded the support of a very large section of the working class. The Soviet Government, through the instrumentality of the Communist International, had helped the German revolutionaries in every possible way. The Red Army was to march in to their aid as soon as they would deal the first blow. But it never came to that. The German army was on the march even before the insurrection had broken out. Any action on the part of the Red Army in that critical moment would have meant a war with Germany, who could count on the backing of the entire capitalist world. Action according to the implications of the program

of the Communist International would have thus buried the very prospect of revolution instead of promoting it,

That experience made a revision of the theoretical presuppositions and political program of the Communist International necessary. As a matter of fact, a step was taken in that direction. The Communist International issued the slogan of United Front. But there was mental reservation. The United Front of the working class was to be organized under the leadership of the Communist Parties. It was not said so expressly. But it could not be otherwise so long as the Communist Parties remained committed to the program of armed insurrection and dictatorship of the proletariat. Those two ideas constituted the difference between the Second International and the Communist International. Even after the latter was organized, the majority of the workers in the European countries through their respective trade-unions remained attached to the Second International. So long as the Communist International remained committed to the distinctive features of its program, it was only logical to infer that a united front of the entire working class was necessary for the execution of its program. So, one step in the right direction was soon followed by several in the opposite direction, and the united front policy was replaced by the foundation of the Red International of Labour Unions.

But the Soviet Government, now under the leadership of Stalin, did not fail to learn the lessons of history. The Communist International was virtually dissolved even if it continued in formal existence. Taking note of the fact that there was little possibility of

revolutions taking place in other European countries on the Russian model, the Soviet Government would no longer run after the chimera, but turn its entire attention to the problem of reconstruction at home. The defeat of Trotzky was the landmark in the new orientation of the Soviet Government. The ideal of Communism was not abandoned. On the contrary, the Russians set about the task of realising the ideal where they had the fullest freedom to do so. If the ideal could be achieved in one country, it was bound to influence the course of events in others. Stalin heralded the dissolution of the Communist International when he declared that Communism was not a commodity for export. That was the return to the original scientific position of Marxism. The Messianic spirit of the Communist International had been a deviation from that position. The new orientation of the Soviet Government, determined by the experience gained in a number of countries, indicated the new path of revolution. It no longer lay necessarily through insurrection and proletarian dictatorship. The Russian Revolution was to influence the course of history in our time indirectly, just as the Great French Revolution did in its time.

But the Communist International continued in the traditional way. Notwithstanding the new orientation of the Soviet Government, the Russians still remained its leaders. But they were too preoccupied with the gigantic task of building Socialism in one sixth of the globe to guide properly the general staff of the world revolution in which they no longer believed. Moreover, they could not be altogether free from obsessions which constituted the theoretical outfit and political program of the Communist International.

Ultimately, those obsessions blinded them, at least in the beginning, to the revolutionary possibilities of this war. In the beginning, they also condemned this war as an imperialist war, and appear to have believed that they could really keep out of it. But for the traditions of the Communist International, the Russian leaders might have detected earlier the change of conditions brought about by this war, and acted accordingly. As it is, perhaps they committed a blunder by staying out of the war until they were attacked. The greater blunder committed by Hitler has spared the world the possible disastrous consequences of the blunder which resulted from the history and tradition of the Communist International.

## IV

**R**EPEATED experience having proved that the tradition of the Communist International was no longer valid, that its program and plan of action modelled after events of another epoch were no longer practicable, its existence after 1924 was not only superfluous, but actually did more harm than help the attainment of its ideals. Many intelligent Marxists and loyal Communists detected the turning point in the history of revolution of our time and advocated a re-orientation which might have prevented the painful experiences and tragic events which resulted from the mechanical application of the antiquated policy of the Communist International. But they did not succeed. Reason was overwhelmed by conformist fanaticism ; dogmatism would listen to no argument. During the period between 1925 and 1929, the internal life of the Communist International was subjected to a regime of terror. The hope of a proletarian dictatorship exercising revolutionary terror throughout the world having not been fulfilled according to the fond expectations of the unthinking optimists, it came to be practised at home. The tallest heads were the first to fall. The Communist International was purged of all intelligence and independent thinking, in the name of discipline. Unquestioning acceptance of whatever the Russians said came to be the criterion of Communist loyalty. The pioneers, those who, with Lenin, had laid

the foundation of the Communist International, and its leading foundation members, were first removed from the leadership of the important national sections, to be altogether expelled eventually. They were replaced either by youthful enthusiasts or by sycophants. The result was serious weakening, not only moral, but also organizational.

Already at that time, it was anticipated by the more far-sighted among the Communists themselves that the International was doomed to be overwhelmed by the crisis unless the entire world situation would change in consequence of a revolution in a leading country in the near future. The crisis essentially was a crisis of leadership. Had there been a really Marxist leadership, capable of adjusting its theories and adopting its practice to changed world conditions, the Communist International would not have committed the series of fatal blunders during the years from 1925 to 1932, which seriously weakened the revolutionary movement.

The crisis coincided with the beginning of the post-revolutionary construction of the Soviet Union which, in its turn, precipitated a crisis in the Russian Communist Party. The elimination of a number of more known leaders of the revolution was the result of the latter crisis. Those leaders of the Russian Revolution who had lived in exile were naturally more known to the world. But the very fact that, for the better part of their life, they were compelled to live outside Russia kept them more or less ignorant of the peculiarities of the Russian situation. Lenin was the only exception, he being a man of universal intelligence. But the same misfortune enabled them to feel the spirit



of internationalism—even to the extent of unrealistic fanaticism. They were the founders of the Communist International. Trotzky was the personification of their spirit. Under the leadership of Lenin's genius, they all made valuable contributions to the success of the revolution so long as it was only destructive. But they thought in terms of world revolution. They firmly believed that, once the revolution broke out in one country, it would spread like wild-fire to others. So, when a fortuitous combination of circumstances enabled them to capture power in Russia, they regarded that success only as a step towards world revolution which was to take place according to a preconceived pattern. The power captured in Russia was to be utilised for bringing about revolution in other countries where conditions were more favourable for the realisation of the program of the Communist International.

Everything went well as long as the expectation lasted. But by 1924, it became clear that the revolutionary wave had subsided in Western Europe, and it was bound to be followed by a more or less long period of depression. That perspective presented the Russian leaders with a new problem. It was the problem of post-revolutionary reconstruction : to build Socialism in one country in the midst of a capitalist world. Was that possible ? The leaders of the revolution, whose names had been associated with that of Lenin, all believed that it was not. That confronted them with an even more difficult question : If post-revolutionary reconstruction was not possible except after world revolution, if Socialism could not be built in one country, what was the Soviet Government to do ? Was the Russian Communist Party then to lay down power and

go underground or retire into exile, waiting for the time when a revolutionary wave would sweep the whole world simultaneously?

I put this question to Trotsky in 1926 in a meeting of the Executive of the Communist International. That meeting resolved to remove him from the Executive. When that question, exposing the absurd implication of his challenge to the possibility of building Socialism in one country, was put to him, Trotsky's only reply was to keep quiet. He was not a man to be easily silenced. His intelligence was extraordinary, and his debating power was simply unrivalled. But he had taken up an untenable position. And that was the case with the other once famous leaders, such as Zinoviev, Kamenev, Radek etc., who had simply not thought of the problems of post-revolutionary reconstruction. Therefore, when the Soviet Government had to tackle the problem, irrespective of whether the theoretical possibility of its solution was visualised by orthodox Marxists, the older leaders had simply to make room for unknown men, who eventually proved to be better and greater.

But the talent of the latter also was one-sided. They were either old revolutionaries who had always remained in the country and were therefore in close touch with Russian reality, or they were men produced by the revolution. Stalin belonged to the first group, and the now well known "Stalin's young men" were the flower of the latter. But all of them were unacquainted with, or inadequately informed about, the situation in other countries. They had not lived in the hectic atmosphere of great expectations about the coming world revolution breath-

ed by the older leaders who spent their lives in exile ; they had not participated in the innumerable conferences of the Second International where the Russian exiles led by Lenin fanatically defended the traditions of the French Revolution against the revisionism of the Social Democratic Marxists. They had fought for the revolution in Russia. They had waged the civil war to its bitter end. In the beginning, they also had shared the hope of revolution breaking out in other countries. But when that hope disappeared, they thought that the wisest thing to do in the given situation was to reconstruct the economic organization in one sixth of the globe. Whether that was possible or not, was for them not a matter of theory, but of practice. The epic experience of the civil war had given them the feeling that there was nothing really impossible. That was the spirit of Stalin, breathed into the Russian Communist Party.

When the leadership of the Russian Communist Party passed on to those men, who were primarily concerned with the problems of socialist reconstruction in one country, they also became the leaders of the Communist International. Because the supremacy of the Russian Communist Party was never disputed inside the Communist International. That change in the leadership of the Communist International immediately produced two results. First-rank Russian leaders could no longer personally guide the Communist International, and whenever they did give any direction, it was often wrong because of their defective understanding of the situation in other countries. The older leaders had visualised Russian problems from the point of view of the situation in the Western European coun-

tries. The new leaders projected Russian problems into other countries. That unrealistic approach had a very adverse effect, particularly on the organizational structure of the Communist International ; and its organizational structure, cast on the model of the Russian Communist Party, contributed to its isolation from the masses in other countries. The structure of the Russian Communist Party was determined by the problems of post-revolutionary reconstruction. It was palpably absurd to cast the Communist Parties in other countries on that model, because they had to deal with entirely different problems.

The crisis of the Communist International, a crisis to which it ultimately succumbed, resulted from its internal contradiction, which itself was historically determined. The contradiction was that the organization as a whole tried to live simultaneously in two periods of history—pre-revolutionary and post-revolutionary. The Russian Communist Party constituting its leadership lived in the post-revolutionary period, whereas the rest of the organization lived in the pre-revolutionary period. Nevertheless, the entire organization was to function as a homogeneous body, with a uniform organisational structure, a centralised policy and according to resolutions equally binding for all.

That was an impossible situation. But it could not be changed because in that case there would be no International. The contradiction could be eliminated by the Russian Party getting out of the International. In that case, the International would die in no time. Because, after it had outlived its historical role, the Communist International existed exclusively on the

authority of the Russian Communist Party and the Soviet Government. Ultimately, it had to break down under its own internal contradiction, which was incurable. That is a vindication of the Marxist law of history, notwithstanding blundering orthodoxy.

After the Russian Communist Party survived its crisis, first class men disappeared from the actual leadership of the Communist International. Engaged in the super-human task of building Socialism in a backward country devastated by civil war, the Russian Communist Party could not spare any man of talent for leading the Communist International. Indifferent materials were delegated for that purpose. But they carried the authority of the Russian Bolsheviks, and on that authority, not only commanded unquestioning conformity, but claimed infallibility. That was a decisive check of intellectual growth on the part of other parties. Any disagreement with the Russians was a deviation ; as that could not be avoided by men of intelligence and independence, with all their devotion to the cause and concern for organizational solidarity, they came under the axe of mechanical discipline. By 1928, the leadership of the Communist International thus came to be composed exclusively of indifferent Russians and their nominees from other parties. Such a leadership was bound to be incompetent and commit the fatal blunders which marked the subsequent history of the Communist International.

The whole tragic story cannot be narrated in this obituary note. The history of the Communist International is still to be written. That contribution to contemporary history may now be made by qualified and fully informed persons whose tongue was hitherto tied

by the sense of loyalty to the organization to which they spiritually belonged even after the formal relation was severed. The silence was also caused by the desire not to cause the Russians any embarrassment or inconvenience. Any criticism would serve the purpose of anti-Communist and anti-Soviet propaganda.

The first blunder was theoretical, and the Russians contributed to it very largely owing to their inadequate acquaintance with the situation abroad. It was the failure to appreciate fully the consequence of the defeat of the German Revolution in 1923. The defeat might not have been conclusive if American Imperialism had not intervened. But the crisis of 1923, which almost helped revolution to triumph in Germany, convinced the victorious Entente Powers that, unless the German bourgeoisie were put back on their feet, Western Europe could not be freed from the menace of Bolshevism. American capital was poured into Germany, and the economic crisis in that country was overcome by a large-scale reconstruction and rationalization of industries. The Locarno Pact politically restored Germany to the status of a Great Power. But the Communist International still hugged the hope of world revolution, and its theoreticians interpreted the end of the German crisis as only partial stabilisation. The Social Democratic leaders did not accept that palpably erroneous view. Therefore, the entire propaganda of the Communist International was directed against the Social Democratic Party, which was accused of creating illusions for the working class with the object of sabotaging the revolution just around the corner. The fact, however, was that the great bulk of the German industrial workers followed the Social-Democratic Party ;

consequently, the fierce attack upon the latter only isolated the Communist Party from the working class. In 1923, its membership had risen above 300,000 ; and some of the most powerful trade-unions were under its control. In 1925, thanks to the new policy, the membership fell below 50,000 ; and, driven out of all the large trade-unions, the handful of Communists organized the Red International of Labour Unions.

During those fateful years, the Russian Party was absorbed with the struggle between old and new leaders. As pioneers and founders of the International, the old leaders had counted on the support of the parties outside of Russia in their struggle against Stalin, whom they accused of a desire to liquidate the revolution. In order to disarm his opponents, and isolate them in the International also, Stalin did not discourage the revolutionary illusion, although already in 1925 he had lost faith in the possibility of revolution in Western Europe on the classical model.

The second grave mistake was underestimation of the danger of Fascism. Although Mussolini's Black Shirts had captured power in Italy years ago, and Fascism had spread in a number of smaller European countries, it became a general menace in 1928 when the National-Socialist party suddenly became a rapidly rising factor in German politics. It was the consequence of the restoration of German capitalism with American help, the historical importance of which the Communist International had failed to appreciate. Therefore, when the subsided wave of revolution was eventually followed by a rising tide of counter-revolution, the Communist International ridiculed those who

sounded the alarm with the complacent slogan that "Germany is not Italy." But Hitler marched in the proverbial seven-league boots, and before long Communist theoreticians appreciated Fascism as a necessary stage of revolutionary development and expounded the following theory of catastrophe : The democratic illusion of the masses stood on the way to revolution ; the Weimar Republic kept up that illusion ; let the Fascists smash the Weimar Republic and free the masses from the democratic illusion, and then the Communists would step in to make the revolution.

That fantastic theory, of course, presented the Social-Democratic Party again as the devil of the drama : Social Democracy was a greater enemy of revolution than Fascism. That was not a mere fantasy. The theory was put into practice when, on the eve of Hitler's advent to power, the Communist Party actually made a united front with the Fascists as against the Social-Democrats, on the occasion of the great Berlin transport workers' strike in 1932. When the history of the Communist International comes to be written, it will have to pronounce the harsh verdict that the Communist International helped Fascism to capture power in Germany.

Previous to that, an equally serious mistake had been committed in China. Even after the revolution had been defeated, for not taking the initiative in the opportune moment, the call was issued for a general armed uprising, which culminated in the short-lived Canton Commune. That adventurist experiment cost millions of lives still to be counted. That extremely costly experiment ultimately compelled the Communist Party of



China to fall back on the policy of co-operating with general democratic development, a course which it should have taken to recover from the unwarranted defeat of 1927.

The resolutions of the Communist International regarding India since 1928 were the height of stupidity. Very inadequately informed about the conditions in the colonial countries, Lenin had attributed an important revolutionary role to the nationalist movements in those countries. He regarded the bourgeoisie in the colonial countries as a revolutionary class. Other founder-members of the International had questioned his views. Nevertheless, there was general agreement on the policy that the movement for the liberation of the colonial countries was to be supported, particularly by the working class of the respective imperialist countries.

Lenin expressed his views in 1920. During the following years, the situation in the colonial countries, particularly in India, changed greatly. By 1928, there could not be any illusion about the revolutionary role of the nationalist bourgeoisie. The fact of their seeking a compromise with Imperialism could not be disputed. But a Marxist should discover the cause of that fact. The cause was gradual disappearance of the monopoly of imperialist finance and the consequent "decolonisation" of India. The benefit of the process all went to Indian capitalism. The Communist International refused to accept this perfectly Marxist view of the changed situation. The Sixth World Congress in 1928 condemned the expounders of the theory of decolonisation as apologists of Imperialism. Blissfully

ignoring the fundamental doctrine of Marxism that every economic system decays and develops internal contradictions, the theoreticians of the Communist International regarded Imperialism as something immutable and imperishable. Kuusinen was one of the Communist casuists of that time. He is no longer there to sign the death warrant of the Communist International. In the meantime, he had fallen a victim to his revolutionary illusions. Had he been alive, physically or spiritually, he might realise what nonsense he talked when he conducted the crusade against the decolonisation theory in the Sixth World Congress. He maintained that the Indian bourgeoisie was brutally suppressed by Imperialism. Yet, the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International passed a long resolution about India in which the Indian people was warned against the nationalist bourgeoisie betraying them, and the Communist Party was directed to develop the Indian Revolution with the slogan of Soviet Republic and dictatorship of the proletariat !

Acting on that stupid self-contradictory resolution, the infantile Communist Party of India denounced the National Congress as an organ of counter-revolution just when, as a loose mass movement, it might be brought under a progressive democratic leadership. The idea of Constituent Assembly was also denounced as counter-revolutionary, because how could Communists demand a Constituent Assembly after the Russians had disbanded one in Leningrad twenty years ago ! Such was the intellectual degeneration caused by the desire to imitate the Russians in every single detail.

The Seventh World Congress in 1935 reversed the whole policy on the strength of a report of an English Communist who had spent several years in an Indian jail. The revolutionary role of the Indian nationalist bourgeoisie was again discovered, and the Communist International recommended the grossly non-Marxian policy of creating the "National Front".

For India, the Communist International was an unmitigated evil. Its Indian section has done more harm to the cause of the Indian Revolution than any other single factor. Composed of a handful of half-baked youngsters, it could not do so if the authority of the Communist International and of the Soviet Government standing behind it, did not enable them to make an appeal to the romanticism of the middle-class youth. The liquidation of the Communist International can be expected to free the progressive elements from a fascination which prevented them to appraise the realities of the Indian situation. The disappearance of the Communist International will strengthen the position of a realistic revolutionary leadership in this country.

## V

**ULTIMATELY**, the Communist International was disrupted by its internal contradiction. The final disruption began with the conclusion of the Soviet-German Pact. The contradiction was between the post-revolutionary tasks of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the pre-revolutionary problems which confronted the rest of the International. The existence of the Soviet Union was the precondition for the accomplishment of the task of post-revolutionary socialist construction. Therefore, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union guiding the policy of the Soviet Government was deeply concerned with diplomatic and military considerations.

In critical periods of history, diplomacy can serve the purpose of defence. The years immediately preceding this war were such a period. In the beginning, Soviet diplomacy persistently tried to form an anti-fascist alliance which, in addition to protecting world democracy, would guarantee its own defence against the dreaded attack by Nazi Germany. When those efforts ultimately failed, the preparations for the defence of the Soviet Union were not quite complete. The Soviet leaders had anticipated that dangerous position. In view of the recently concluded Anti-Comintern Pact, it was also to be anticipated that Japan would attack the Soviet Union from the East simultaneously with the Nazi aggression from the West. As a matter of fact, the Soviet leaders believed that

the task of building Socialism in one country was bound to be eventually followed by the greater task of defending the Socialist Soviet Union against a concerted attack of the entire capitalist world. The Munich Pact and the subsequent breakdown of the Moscow negotiations were regarded by them as the signal for the apprehended attack. They might be able to fight Nazi Germany alone. But they were naturally reluctant to risk a war with the entire capitalist world so soon. In that critical situation, they fell back on the weapon of diplomacy, and concluded the non-aggression pact with Germany.

It was a matter of simple common sense that the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact was not meant to initiate the policy of fraternisation between Communism and Fascism throughout the world. As a matter of fact, the pact not only warded off the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union, but effectively checked Fascist aggression towards the East. It not only broke the Anti-Comintern Pact, at least for the time being; it also prevented the greater danger of the spiritual Fascisation of the democratic Powers as prepared by Chamberlain's appeasement policy, which had just culminated in the Munich Pact.

But the Communist Parties outside the Soviet Union interpreted the Soviet-German Pact in an entirely different way—as an alliance between Communism and Fascism against British Imperialism. Habituated to follow the Russians slavishly, they believed that the policy of the Russian Communist Party must be practised by all the other sections of the Communist International. The simple fact that these latter were living in an entirely different period

of history, and had therefore a different set of problems to solve, was clean forgotten.

In a few days, the war broke out and the spiritual confusion of the Communist International was complete. Having for nearly twenty years stood at the forefront of the struggle against the danger of rising Fascism, all on a sudden the Communists became fanatical advocates of peace with Hitler. They continued that insane policy even when the Fascist hordes overran one country after another, and the working class of entire Europe came under the iron heels of Fascism. The death warrant of the Communist International was signed by its own hand when the Communist Parties forgot that Fascism was the instrument created with the purpose of defending the decayed capitalist order against the coming revolution. The verdict of history is that, upon the outbreak of this war, the Communist International betrayed the cause of revolution. The more charitable verdict would be that the Communist International was the first casualty of this war, against which it had warned the world for years. No useful purpose would be served by letting the stinking carcass lie about. The sooner it was cleared away, the better.

The mechanical somersault of the Communist Parties after the Soviet Union was attacked by the Nazis proved their spiritual degeneration more conclusively, instead of rehabilitating them. It proved that the Communist Parties outside the Soviet Union were mere marionettes. An international organization composed of such bodies could not serve any useful purpose. The Russian Revolution had created in one country conditions for building up Socialism. There, the Communist Party has a role to perform. But in

the rest of the world, events did not develop according to the expectations aroused by the Russian Revolution. In those countries, the Communist Parties were to organize the revolution on the Russian model. As the events did not shape as desired, and they are less likely to do so in future than in the past, there is nothing for the Communist Parties to do. Only the Communist Party of the Soviet Union remains as the creator and the creation of the Russian Revolution. The Communist International proved to be an abortion of the Revolution. Therefore it could not be fitted into the scheme of the positive outcome of the latter. As a matter of fact, for a long time it stood on the way of the Russian Revolution influencing the world as it could do under the conditions of the world of our time. Its disappearance therefore will only help the world to advance towards the goal which has been set before it by the Russian Revolution.

The internal contradiction which brought the Communist International to grief prevented a homogeneous theoretical development on the basis of the teachings of Marx and Lenin. Theories degenerate into dead dogmas, if they are not adjusted to new experience and revised accordingly from time to time. After the Russian Revolution, Marxian theory had to be adjusted to two different sets of experiences. On the one hand, there were the experiences gained from a revolutionary struggle, from civil war and from the subsequent process of reconstruction. On the other hand, there was the experience of a series of defeated revolutions, of triumphant reaction and of a new alignment of forces consequent upon the rise of Fascism.

The Russians developed Marxian theories with the aid of their experience. They were naturally so very engrossed with their own experience that they could not correctly appraise the value of events in other parts of the world. Consequently, their theoretical contribution was one-sided. It covered the problems of post-revolutionary reconstruction, and more particularly, economic problems. The more fundamental aspects of Marxian theory were still regarded by them as immutable dogmas. Those aspects could be tested only by the experience gained in other countries where history did not fit into what is believed to be the Marxist scheme.

As a matter of fact, there is no such thing as a Marxist scheme of history. Marx did not cast the horoscope of mankind. He formulated certain fundamental principles and outlined some laws of social evolution. But his philosophical conclusions were deduced from a scientific knowledge nearly a hundred years old, and his political doctrines were determined by world conditions which have radically changed since his time. The Russians, since the revolution, have been living in a world of their own creation. But the Communists in other countries had to adjust themselves to conditions created by others. Therefore, they were in a better position to test the theoretical presuppositions of Marxism by the experiences of our time. It was for them to develop the more fundamental aspects of Marxism which the Russians, living in a world of their own, could simply accept as dogmas. Because, they did not affect their practice, as regards which they had the fullest freedom.



Theoretical constructions are always made before the revolution. The philosophical principles and political doctrines, which influenced and guided European life in the nineteenth century, had been formulated over a period of more than hundred years before the French Revolution. Similarly, Lenin and other Russians made valuable contributions to Marxism while they were preparing for the Revolution. Once they captured power, they were engrossed with practical matters. The time came for them to rebuild the world instead of building up theories. Lenin left his book on 'State and Revolution' incomplete, because the time came for revolutionary deeds instead of elaborating revolutionary theories.

The honourable task of laying down the theoretical foundation for revolutionary practice in the changed conditions of the world of our time fell to the Communist Parties outside the Soviet Union. But the Communist International made it impossible for them to accomplish that task. It did not equip them for the purpose. To imitate and obey the Russians came to be the criterion of Marxist orthodoxy. All Communists owe allegiance to the home of Socialism. But from that it does not follow that loyalty to the Russians makes one necessarily a Communist. Yet, the Communist International set up that standard and consequently obstructed the intellectual development of its adherents.

This negative achievement of the Communist International had its repercussions on the Russians themselves. Recognised by Communists throughout the world as the final authority on all philosophical

and scientific matters, they themselves experienced spiritual stultification. In the given situation, that was inevitable. They reacted marvellously to the problems of post-revolutionary reconstruction. But their approach to the political and economic problems of other countries was still determined by old ideas, which had been invalidated by changed conditions of the world, the belated recognition of which ultimately caused the dissolution of the Communist International. That wrong approach on their part was also inevitable. Because they did not directly experience the problems in other countries, and therefore did not have the incentive to thought which would indicate the correct approach under the given conditions. They could make the experience indirectly, through the Communists on the spot. But the latter behaved as projected egos of the Russians. They lived in the midst of changed conditions as men in the moon, thinking in terms of an imaginary world to come, or a world long past. In this respect, the Communist International failed the Russians also. It did not keep them in touch with the changing conditions of the world. That spiritual isolation was more dangerous than the political isolation of the Soviet Union brought about by the conspiracy of the capitalist world. The consequence of that evil was that, in a critical period, the Soviet leaders themselves were misguided by the obsessions of the Communist International instead of guiding the other Communist Parties on the right way.

It was a vicious circle. The predominating position of the Russians in the Communist International was fully deserved and historically determined. But that fact, in its turn, prevented the intellectual growth

of the revolutionary movement, which was historically necessary to supplement the practical achievements of the Russians. Finally, the spiritual stultification of the Communist Parties made of the Communist International a still-born child. As the Russians could not possibly abdicate their position in the Communist International without knocking the very basis off this latter, its internal contradiction was bound to disrupt it ultimately.

The theoretical weakness of the Russian leaders, who after all were the leaders of the Communist International, was determined by the combination of circumstances described above. The weakness expressed itself in the failure to appraise the relation between the objective and subjective factors of history. By declaring that man is the maker of his destiny, Marx appeared to have attached greater importance to the subjective factor. The reaction to the fatalist theory of gradualism also laid emphasis on the subjective factor. Consequently, in course of time, orthodox Marxists became converts to the doctrine that the history of the world is the biography of great men. The history of the world of our time was determined by the evil genius of a few imperialist statesmen conspiring to destroy the Soviet Union—that was the simplified approach to all the problems of contemporary history. It was forgotten by the orthodox Marxists that this simplified approach negatived the fundamental principle of the entire theoretical system of Marx. The principle is that thought is determined by the conditions of physical existence. So, after all, the objective factor is the predominating. Future events are to be anticipated in the light of a searching analysis of the anatomy

and physiology of the world as it is; the motives of men at the helm of affairs, their goodness or badness, are a secondary factor.

The bitter experience of their relation with the capitalist world made the Russian leaders deviate from this essential principle of Marxism. That was quite natural. After all, they are human beings. But bitterness and anger against the treachery of individual statesmen or imperialist governments should not have broken them asunder from theoretical moorings. Yet, exactly that almost happened to them in the earlier period of the war. The pact with Germany was a necessary diplomatic device, grossly misunderstood at that time. But subsequent events have justified it. Once the pact was concluded, it had to be scrupulously observed, if the expected advantage was not to be forfeited. That must have prevented the Communist International to instruct the Communist Parties in other countries how to behave.

But all those considerations do not justify certain passages of Molotov's speech made after his return from Berlin. That was not an ordinary propagandist performance. On that occasion, a dispassionate analysis of the given relation of forces could have been made, and that might have served as guidance, at least for the more intelligent Communists in other countries. On that occasion, Molotov characterised this war as "the second imperialist war", and that light-hearted, or theoretically wrong, pronouncement of his drove the Communist International almost into the arms of Fascism. Flying in the face of the known facts of recent history, Molotov held British Imperialism responsible for the war and thus, by implication, exoner-

ated Fascism. Theoretically, that was a crass contradiction of the correct Communist view, previously expressed emphatically, that Fascism means war.

Only a wrong theoretical approach could characterise this war as an imperialist war. An imperialist war, strictly speaking is an inter-imperialist war ; that is, a struggle between two Imperialist Powers for world domination. To call this war an imperialist war, therefore, was to identify Fascism with Imperialism. Such a view is entirely un-Marxist. Imperialism and Fascism both have for their common denominator capitalism. But they mark two distinctive stages of capitalism. Capitalism creates Fascism as the weapon for its last defence, only when it can no longer provide the foundation for Imperialism. Fascism was the banner under which all the reactionary and counter-revolutionary forces, known with different names previously, gathered. Therefore, on the rise of Fascism, there was a new polarisation of forces throughout the world. The new world conditions, which eventually compelled the dissolution of the Communist International, were created by the rise of Fascism. The Russian leaders made the mistake of not recognising that fact early enough.

Notwithstanding all the stupidities of the Communist International, and theoretical mistakes on their part, the Russian leaders could not possibly have any illusion about the intents and purposes of Fascism. Fully knowing that a fierce clash with that avowed enemy was inevitable, they only wanted to have time to make adequate preparations. As a matter of fact, I have always been of the opinion that the Russians wanted to attack first. But subjectivism, born of the

traditions of the Communist International, persuaded them to wait too long. The ultimate outcome of the Russian Revolution, which opened a new era of history, was bound to place the Soviet Union at the forefront of the world of our time. This war provided the Soviet Government with the opportunity to place itself at the head of a world democratic alliance. It could have done so in spite of the machinations which culminated in the Munich Pact. The outbreak of the war changed the whole situation. There was the opportunity for the Soviet Union again to take the initiative, and that time the last word would be with the peoples of England and France. When at last Hitler set his war machine moving, and began to overrun one country after another, ultimately threatening France and Britain, the field was clear for the Soviet Government to take the lead. The bulk of the Nazi army was moving towards the West. Just at that moment, a powerful Red Army—about a hundred divisions—was standing within a striking distance of Berlin. If the Soviet Government had struck at that moment, its isolation brought about by fifteen years' conspiracy, would have ended immediately, and it would have been hailed by world democracy as the leader in the anti-Fascist war.

Most probably, the step was not taken for military considerations. Preparations were not yet quite complete. But France was at stake. It was the choice between the entire French army and the vast industrial resources of France, on the one hand, and the possibility of creating a few more divisions of the Red Army. Evidently, even from the purely military point of view, the risk was worth taking. Politically, the Franco-Soviet Pact would have been forthwith restored in a

much stronger form. Russian action would have strengthened the hand of the progressive elements in the political and military circles of France. Fifth Columnists, capitulators and traitors would have been isolated. From the very beginning of the war, Hitler would have been placed in the position which he has been always so very anxious to avoid : he would have been compelled to fight on two fronts. The result of that mistake on the part of the Russians was the complete isolation, the end of which Stalin welcomed in his speech upon the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union.

That almost fatal blunder on the part of the Russians in that most critical period of contemporary history was due, in the last analysis, to the antiquated theoretical presuppositions of the Communist International. As long as the Communist Party of the Soviet Union remained a member of the Communist International, it could not be immune from its theoretical weaknesses and obsolete traditions. Once the mistake was committed, it might have had its full consequences. But there history stepped in to correct man's mistake. Marxism was vindicated. Having cast for the Soviet Union the honourable role of leading world democracy in the struggle against reaction fighting its last battles, history could not allow itself to be deceived by human frailties.

What the Russians themselves had always anticipated happened just when perhaps they believed that it might not happen at all. Most probably they believed that, having overrun Europe, Hitler's war machine would turn eastwards and destroy the British Empire. Suppose events did take that course, what would be Hitler's next objective ? He would turn towards his avowed enemy. Only, in the meantime he

would be so enormously strengthened that with all the preparations it would be almost impossible for the Soviet Union to resist the onslaught. It is simply dreadful to think that subjectivism and miscalculation on the part of the Russians drove the world to the brink of such a dangerous precipice. But the mistake on the part of the Russians was interpreted by Hitler as a sign of weakness, and he decided to strike in good time. A miscalculation on the part of counter-revolution cancelled the mistake committed in the camp of revolution. The scale of events was tipped, and the world was saved. The salvation has now been celebrated by the dissolution of the Communist International, the antiquated theoretical pre-suppositions of which persuaded the Russians to go so far in a dangerous direction.



## VI

**T**HE dissolution of the Communist International does not mean abandonment of the ideal of Communism which has been set before the civilised mankind by history itself. Indeed, it is not an ideal in the sense of something desirable. It is a state of social organization which mankind is bound to reach of necessity, in course of its endless progress. Being a historical necessity—for the entire mankind—the ideal of Communism cannot disappear, even if all the professed Communists turned their back on it or gave it up as unattainable.

The spirit of internationalism also remains. The dissolution of the Communist International is not a vindication of nationalism. As a matter of fact, Communist internationalism is not an antithesis of nationalism. The Communist International, from its very beginning, stood for national freedom of all peoples. But Marxists do not regard any state of social or political organization as final. There was a time when this Marxist view of history was not generally accepted. But today there is not one historian, who studies and teaches his subject as a science, seriously disputing that history, being a record of continuous progress, knows no finality. Therefore nationalism is only a stage of social progress, as transitory as any other stage.

The spirit of internationalism is to be distinguished from any particular plan of *action* on an interna-

tional scale. The Communist International was organized with such a plan. It was not a plan of international action as a matter of principle. It was a plan of a particular kind of international action, to be carried out not by mankind as a whole, but by a certain class of people in every country. The impossibility of such an action, under the given conditions of the world of our time, having been demonstrated by the experience of two decades, the plan has been abandoned. Evidently, that does not prove any defect in the idea of internationalism. On the contrary, the dissolution of the Communist International has been brought about by the realisation that internationalism must be practised on a higher plane, embracing the entire mankind.

This is not a belated wisdom—a shamefaced rectification of a wrong idea. Practice of internationalism on a higher plane was not possible previously. The perspective of the Communist International, therefore, was necessarily limited by the conditions and possibilities of the time. The latter having changed, the perspective has correspondingly broadened. The historically necessary struggle for the liberation of mankind, an ideal to be realised through the reorganization of society on a higher level, can now have the advantage of a larger adherence than could be imagined before. The program and the organization of the Communist International excluded this possibility. Therefore, its continued existence would have retarded progress towards its own goal, and consequently would have done harm to the spirit of internationalism.

The ideal remains. Only the method of attaining it must be changed. That is the significance of the

dissolution of the Communist International. Changed world conditions compel a corresponding change in the method of attaining the goal. More concretely speaking, revolution—that is to say, a reorganization of society—still remains a necessity. The necessity is felt more keenly today than ever before, and by an increasingly larger section of society. The feeling of its necessity by a larger section of society not only increases the chances of its success, but opens up new ways before it. The end is a historically necessary reorganization of society. It is immaterial how that end is attained. Previously, there appeared to be no other way than the traditional methods of revolution. The changed world conditions have opened up new ways. The resistance will be much less in the future. The camp of counter-revolution is disintegrating. Decay and decomposition reduce its power of resistance. Past revolutions were associated with violence, not because revolutions are inherently violent, but because of the fierceness of resistance to it. In the absence of fierce and fanatical resistance, the impending revolution will cease to have violent forms and terrifying appearances.

It is becoming evident to all thinking men that capitalist economy has exhausted all its progressive possibilities, having created conditions for a better social order ; that its restoration is not compatible with ideals of democratic freedom and peaceful progress. It is also being realised by persons not blinded by greediness and preconceived ideas that, if this war could possibly end in the restoration of the *status quo*, the peace would be only an armed truce, to be soon disturbed by a still more catastrophic war. Moreover, the condi-

tions of the post-war world will preclude the normal practice of capitalism. Reconstruction of the world on the basis of capitalist production will make the introduction of Fascist practices inevitable. These latter practices were introduced in Germany and other countries not due to any innate perversity on their part. After it had exhausted all its social-usefulness, capitalism could be maintained only by those practices. Therefore, this war has confronted the entire world with the choice between Fascism and Socialism. Democracy will survive this war only by becoming Social Democracy. And that is only a less frightening name for Communism.

Even before this war, and particularly during the period of recurring crises between the two great wars, the necessity for a radical reorganization of society was felt by all thinking and progressive minded people. The Marxist criticism of capitalism, and the prediction that eventually the latter must be replaced by a system of economy based on common ownership, were gaining ground among people not directly interested in the established order of society. But they were doubtful about the practicability of socialist economy. The prejudice that profit motive is the condition for all enterprise and initiative confused thought and paralysed action.

Eventually, one sixth of the world became the scene of socialist reconstruction. The unprecedented experiment was watched with suspicion, doubt and interest. Again, prejudice prevented a correct appreciation. Nevertheless, news about the socialist reconstruction in the Soviet Union spread throughout the world,

influencing economic thought and dispelling lingering doubt about the possibility of shifting the entire economic system of a country from the basis of private property to that of common ownership. Finally, came this war, and presented the Soviet Union with the opportunity to stand what can be called the crucial test of a gigantic social experiment. There could be no doubt that all the cherished human qualities, collective as well as individual, have flourished there in the atmosphere of Socialism. The achievement of socialist economy can now be measured by the traditional standards. Communism could not only perform military miracles, but, as Lord Breaverbrook declared a year ago, it produced the greatest generals of our time. Coming from one of the most successful capitalists of our time, that candid confession was of decisive historical importance. There could no longer be any doubt about the practicability of Socialism. The recognition of the triumph of Socialism is the outcome of this war. And it is going to be the significance of the victory over Fascism.

But there still remained another obstacle. It was fear. The Communist International was a spectre. Nearly a hundred years ago Karl Marx wrote: "Communism stalks over Europe like a spectre." Then, capitalism was a rising system which appeared to be full of endless possibilities, and consequently occasioned great expectations. Anything that challenged capitalism was regarded as an evil—a threat to civilisation. Since then, things have changed. Having exhausted all its progressive possibilities, capitalism, in the form of Fascism, became the enemy of modern civilisation. It ceased to be regarded as something sacrosanct. Everybody admitted that there was some-

thing wrong with the established order, and the necessity of reform was generally felt. Marxists knew that the crisis was coming, that the revolution would take place of necessity. Communism is the positive outcome of capitalism. Why should it appear as something fearful, and thus delay its own general acceptance? So long as revolution was a thing of the future, it had to be heralded, and its necessity proved. But once it is there, why not let it take its own course? Let it be, instead of talking about it and thus striking terror in the heart of people who are willy-nilly involved in the process of revolution. The dissolution of the Communist International is an act of revolutionary realism, to remove the last obstacle to the triumph of revolution. This bold act could be taken and properly appreciated only by the revolutionary realists who have discovered the new ways of revolution.

Revolutionaries do not believe in the possibility of persuading the opponent with arguments. Particularly, Marxists cannot have that belief. Men's ideas are determined by the conditions of their physical existence, which include social relations. Therefore, arguments cannot change ideas. The change can be brought about only by a change in the conditions of existence. In other words, arguments advanced by individuals may not carry conviction; but the arguments of history cannot be disregarded. Because, the sanction behind the arguments of history has changed social conditions, which include the relation of forces on the national as well as on the international scale.

Fascism is a product of capitalism. It is an instrument created for the defence of the decayed capitalist society. Therefore it was only natural for

the capitalist powers, notwithstanding the democratic form of their governments, to aid and abet the rise of Fascism. From the capitalist point of view, this war should not have taken place. It should have been avoided at all cost. No effort was spared to do so. But the logic of history overwhelmed subjective efforts to arrest the necessary march of events. It was a veritable case of man proposing and God disposing; only it was not the God with a long beard sitting in the Seventh Heaven; it was the irresistible impact of the objective forces of history. The outbreak of this war, defying all the frantic efforts from both sides, finally proved the necessity of revolution. Everything necessary may not be inevitable. But in this case, it was inevitable to a very high degree of probability. Otherwise, this war might have been avoided.

Whatever may be the immediate outcome of this war, a military defeat of the Axis Powers will mean a severe disruption and disorganization of the forces of counter-revolution marshalled in such a formidable array. Fascism as a social tendency may not be immediately destroyed. That will depend on the nature of the military outcome of this war. Military defeat, however, will deprive Fascism of political power, and consequently emasculate it to a very large degree. Eventual destruction of Fascism will mean destruction of the instrument created to defend the decayed capitalist system. Marx's prophesy is being fulfilled before our very eyes: Capitalism is digging its own grave. Capitalist Governments having undertaken the task of destroying the last citadel of capitalism, the necessity of maintaining a separate international organization as the General Staff of the world revolution disappears.

This highly interesting, and entirely unexpected, process is taking place without the forces involved in it being conscious of its implications. Most probably, they are still confident that nothing of the kind will happen. But the predispositions and desires of men occupying positions of great power have once been overwhelmed by the objective forces of history. There will be much greater chance of that happening once again, when this war has set free still more powerful forces. In this situation, co-operation is bound to promote the cause of revolution and accelerate progress. Particularism will only breed suspicion and divide the forces which should pull together to take advantage of the most favourable fortuitous combination of circumstances. That consideration has led to the dissolution of the Communist International.

But we need not entertain illusions. It will not be an easy sailing. There will be ups and downs in the process. It may be long or short. But one thing is certain: For its own defence, democracy must become Social Democracy. And that, after all, is how Marx called Communism. Therefore, it is not a wishful statement to say that the dissolution of the Communist International does not mean turning away from the goal of Communism. On the contrary, an instrument suitable for a method of action which could not embrace all the progressive forces, becomes antiquated when, owing to the tremendous accession of strength, the revolution is within the reach of its goal.

Revolutions take place of necessity, because periodical reorganization of society is in the nature of human progress. A revolution may take place through



the instrumentality of a certain class of people. But it takes place for general welfare. Otherwise, it would not be a historical necessity. Modern civilization being the high water mark of human progress until now, it creates greater possibilities of further progress than ever before. Consequently, the need for social changes opening up new channels of progress is felt in the modern civilized society by a much larger section of people than in the earlier periods of history. When the forces of revolution swell to the extent of becoming the majority, the resistance to the impending social change becomes correspondingly weaker, and the ways of the revolution change accordingly. When it takes place by consent, it loses its terror. Consent, however, is not always given willingly. But it may result from the pressure of circumstances which cannot possibly be controlled. The world is under such a pressure today. Therefore, new ways of revolution are opening up.

These unexpected possibilities cannot be visualised except in the light of a proper appreciation of the historical value of Marxism. The greatest injustice done to Marxism by its orthodox exponents is to characterise it as the ideology of a particular class. Marx himself disowned, as it were in anticipation, such a narrow interpretation of his teachings. He said that a class became revolutionary when its interests coincided with the interests of the entire society. It is also a fundamental principle of Marxism that the ideology of a particular class is determined by its position in society. Therefore, the proletariat could not be the leader of modern society if its ideology was not the philosophy of the future of mankind.

Backward people may not always know what is good for them. Therefore, in the past, revolutions were carried through by progressive minorities. The civilized man, owing to higher education and more developed intelligence, is not only more conscious of his interest, but is able to take an enlightened view about it. As soon as a revolution becomes necessary, in modern times, the necessity is felt by more and more people, until the majority joins the army of progress. The process is accelerated under the pressure of unforeseen circumstances. We are experiencing such a juncture of history.

Just as many avowed enemies of Communism are today helping mankind to advance towards that goal, just so more men are today moving in the direction indicated by Marxism than can be imagined by the casual observer. Marxism has already become the philosophy of the progressive mankind. The world can be reconstructed as a home of freedom and culture only along the lines indicated by Marxism. Therefore, Communism has come to its own. It has become the future of mankind, its heritage.

In this situation, an exclusive organization of the Communists is no longer necessary, and being unnecessary, it has ceased to exist.

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