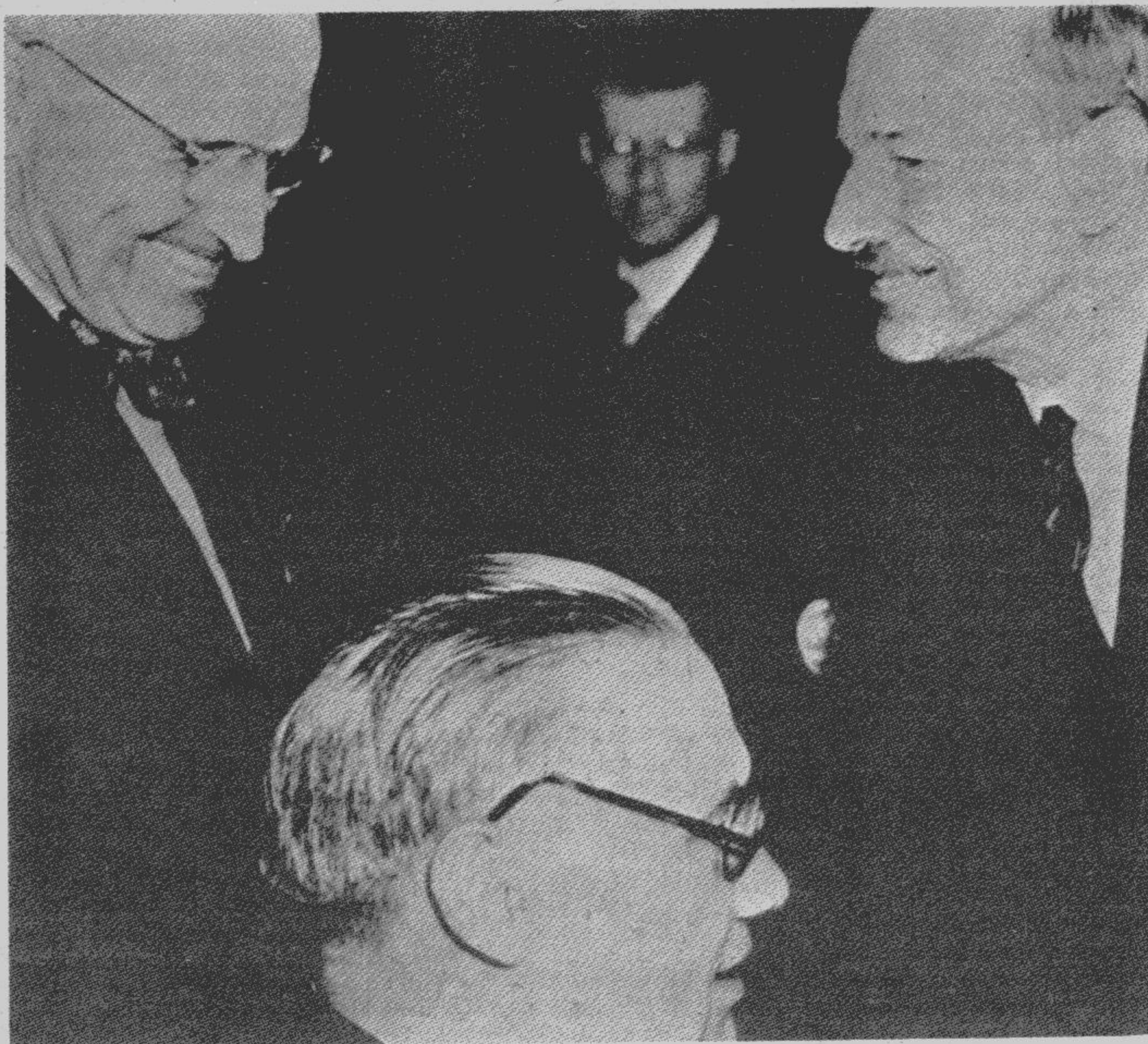


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Truman with British Labour leaders Atlee and Bevin at Potsdam, 1945

THE POST WAR RECONSTRUCTION OF CAPITALISM

The surrender of the German and Japanese governments by 1945 marked the end of 30 years of stagnation and decay in the capitalist world. There had been two inter-imperialist wars separated by 20 years of instability and crisis. Little or no economic progress had taken place. The following period, of the 1950's and 1960's was to see the most sustained period of capitalist expansion ever.

The post-war period forms the bridge between the two very different phases of capitalist development and an examination of it is crucial to understanding how capitalism became able, once again, to promote a major development of the productive forces.

The importance of physical destruction in the war is often exaggerated. There were no economically significant changes in the population structure of any capitalist countries after the war. Also the Allies' estimates of the damage to plant and machinery were much too high. The only major losses were in shipping, railways and housing.

STOCK LEVELS

Since a considerable investment also took place during the war, the stock of means of production in 1945 was above pre-war levels in most capitalist countries and not markedly lower anywhere. Evidence suggests that generally it was still workable, though many minor repairs were needed.

Most means of production could be converted to peacetime use without difficulty. So demobilisation did not present a major technical problem for capitalism: after specific shortages had been rectified and repairs made, there would not be a general shortage of suitable means of production relative to workers. The problems were economic and political ones: they were about how to combine the means of production and workers within capitalist social relations.

paradoxically, the USSR — the first workers' state. All the other participants would have liked the defeat of the USSR, providing this would not weaken them vis-a-vis their rivals.

Truman put it bluntly: "If we see that Germany is winning the war we ought to help Russia, and if Russia is winning we ought to help Germany and in that way let them kill as many as possible."

The war against Germany was primarily fought by the USSR. After the British withdrawal from Dunkirk (1940) Hitler concentrated on the Eastern Front. Between Dunkirk and the Normandy landings (June 1944) the UK and Commonwealth armies engaged between 2 and 8 German

divisions while the USSR fought an average of 180. At the peak of Anglo-American involvement the Russians still confronted 60% of German divisions.

The costs to the USSR were enormous. Over 20 million Russians were killed.

DISEQUILIBRIUM

In the capitalist countries though, the main reconstruction to be achieved was *social*. Normal capitalist social relations had been badly disrupted by the war and world capitalism was in a state of severe disequilibrium. There were three main sets of relations which had to be restored to stability: those between imperialism and the USSR; those between the social classes; and those between capitalist nation states.

Russia's participation in the war had produced a temporary alliance between the US and the USSR. With the defeat of the German Eastern Front the Red Army had occupied a large area of Europe. Churchill and Stalin had agreed in 1944 to the allocation of certain 'spheres of influence'.

Such a deal fulfilled Stalin's needs. The existence of the Soviet bureaucracy depended on both the defence of the non-capitalist relations in the USSR and the defence of capitalist property relations in the advanced capitalist world, because the overthrow of capitalism by the mass would endanger the bureaucracy. (This did not rule out, as happened later, the setting up of some regimes in the image of the USSR in such a way that did not pose a threat).

Imperialism might not keep to the deal, however. The Western Allies had continually reneged on promises to open a second front in the war. Capitalism remained hostile to the USSR and might invade any time it felt the Soviet Union could be defeated without too much cost to world capitalist stability. This was all the more possible because the US now had the atom bomb.

Stalin had to try both to prevent world revolution and an imperialist attack on the USSR. This meant attempting to give sufficient concessions to imperialism to prevent either a revolution in Europe or an immediate attack on the USSR without leaving Russia sufficiently vulnerable to make invasion attractive to the US administration in the near future.

STALIN'S WEAPONS

The Red Army was severely weakened by its losses. But Stalin retained two main weapons and bargaining counters: the occupied territories in Europe (which could be used as bargaining counters or to provide a strategic buffer zone and as a source of supplies to rebuild Russia's economy); and secondly the communist parties in Western Europe which could be used to hold back the workers' movement as part of a deal with imperialism or to weaken capitalism domestically by fomenting class struggle, as well as to influence Western foreign policy towards peace from within Popular Front governments.)

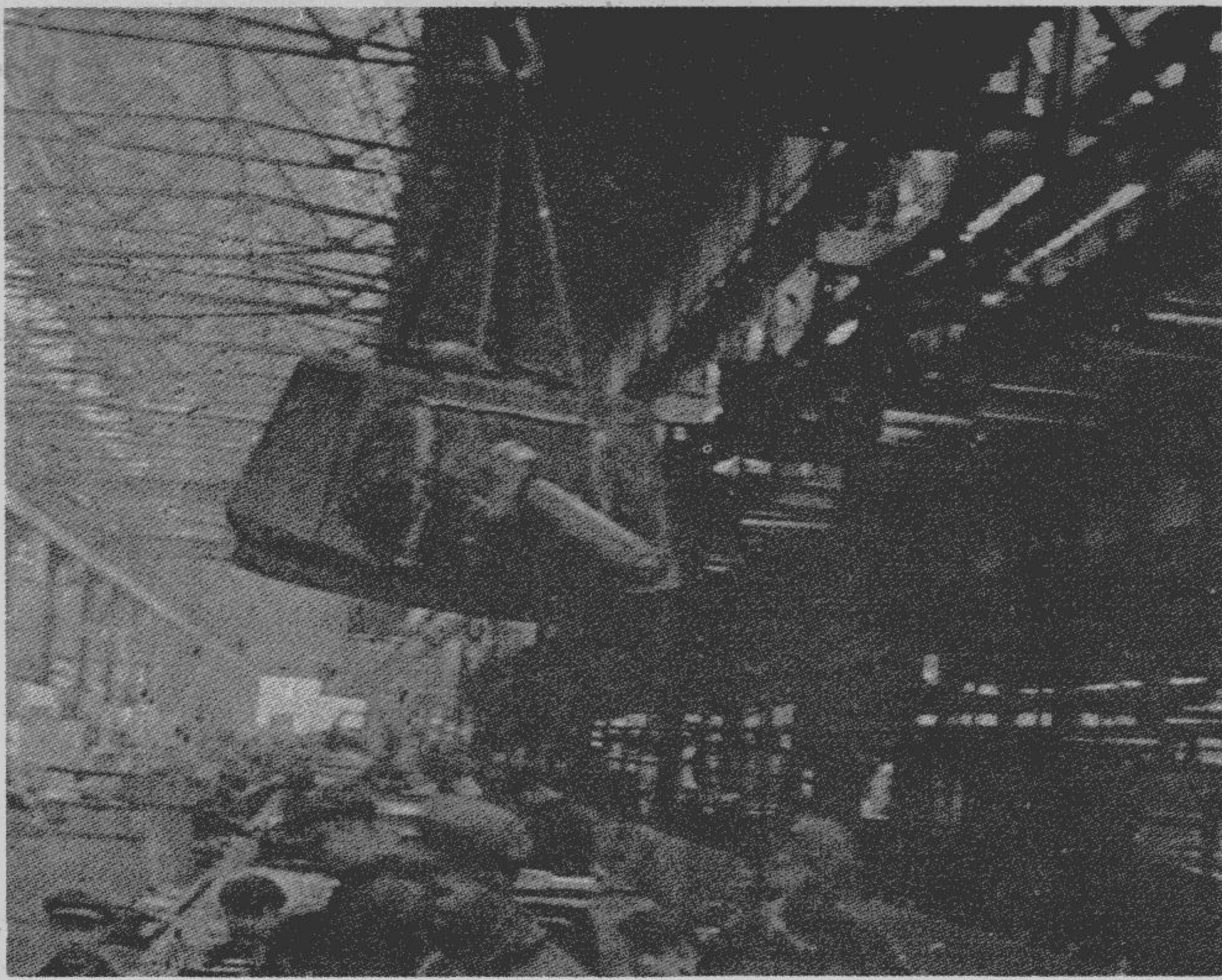
Relations between the classes were also disrupted after the war. In much of Europe the state machinery had collapsed. The allied armies and resistance movements faced each other uneasily. Both were armed. In Europe, the armed workers' organisations in which the CPs were powerful were often in control of factories, sometimes operating them under workers' management. Workers in the armies had had enough of war and the capitalists could not rely on discipline holding.

There had been shortages and workers' living standards had been held down in the war. Industrial unrest was flaring up again after a period of relative quiescence.

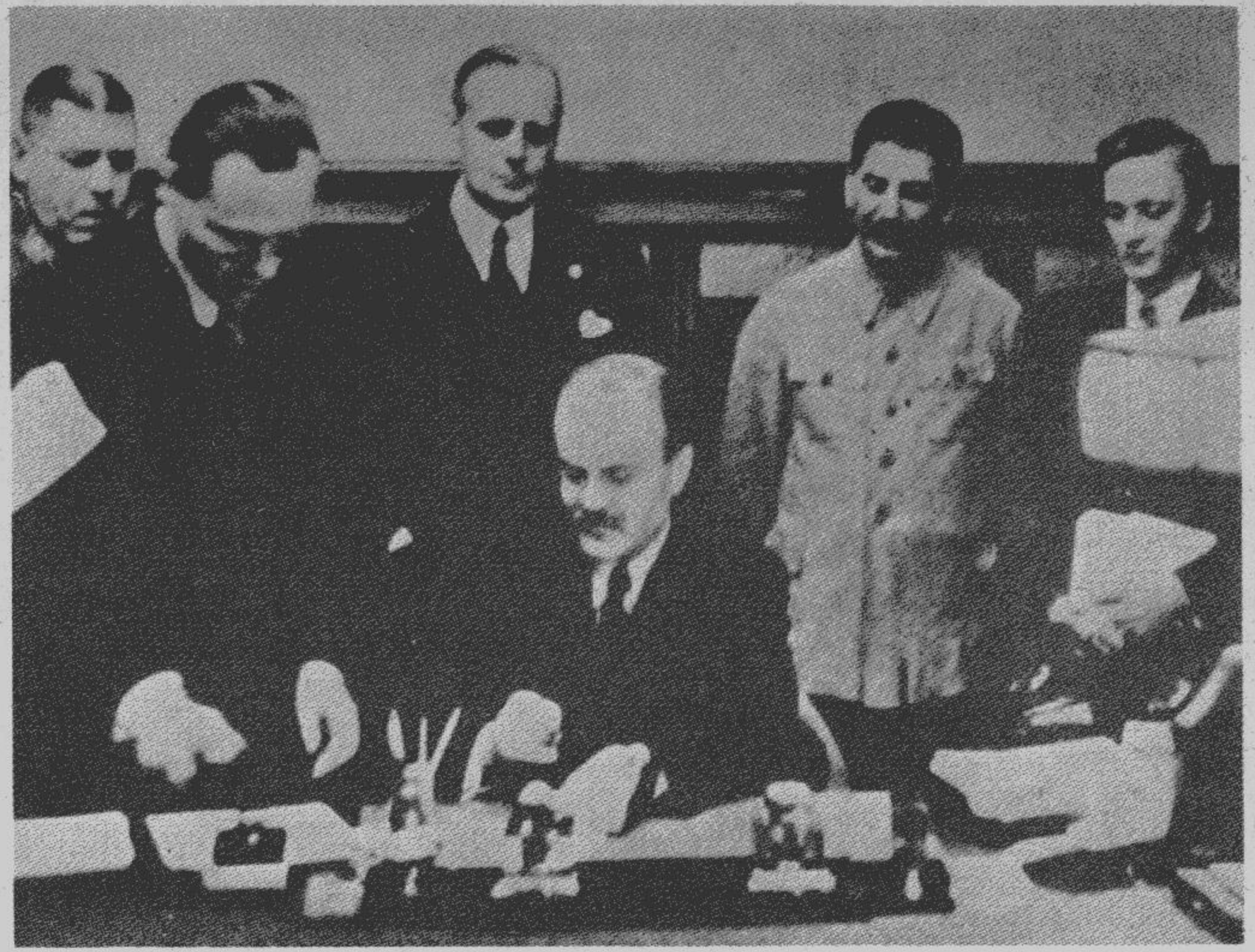
Relations between capitalist states had also been badly disrupted. The major powers had been fighting for markets with tanks as well as guns.

The international division of labour was severely dislocated. Opponents were clearly not trading with each





Soviet armament production in World War II



Molotov signs the "Stalin-Hitler non-aggression pact" August 1939

other. Sinkings and the fear of them reduced shipping freight. The belligerents controlled imports. The normal pattern of production was broken to concentrate on armaments.

The balance of world economic power had shifted considerably. The war had worsened the UK's position relative to the USA and Continental Europe was, for the moment, producing only a quarter of pre-war output. Over half of capitalist world production was concentrated in the US and the other parts were starved of dollars to buy American goods.

U.S. ADMINISTRATION

The USA had reached its height of world economic power. All the other ex-belligerents were dependent on US aid, while US occupation forces were in direct control of Japan and partially of Germany. The story of reconstruction is largely the story of US Government policy and its effects.

In formulating policy the US administration faced major contradictions. One was that policies aimed to reduce one aspect of the severe capitalist disequilibrium would often reinforce another. Open aggression against the USSR, for example, would cause Stalin to use the CPs to obstruct the reconstruction of capitalism in order to weaken the capitalist war effort and would provoke the working class, whereas leaving the USSR in control of the territories to its west would allow it to regain strength and construct a defensive buffer.

Secondly the US government was not a capitalist world government, but the government of one capitalist state. It was interested not only in the defence of world capitalism, but also in the consolidation of its position as the dominant capitalist power. Policies which aided one aim often worked against the other. Rebuilding viable capitalist states in Europe, for example, would help hold back the world revolution but would weaken US dominance.

US POLICY 1944-7

Initially the American administration's policy concentrated on the consolidation of US dominance. The most extreme example of this, seriously considered for a while, was a plan completely to de-industrialise Germany.

The occupation forces were told to take no responsibility for maintaining the economies of the defeated countries. Plant and equipment was to be dismantled and sent abroad as reparations.

A system of multi-lateral trade and international payments was to be set up rapidly. Aid to Europe was kept to the minimum needed to avoid mass starvation and insurrection. It was to consist of loans (not grants) and be used as a lever to ensure a quick return to multilateralism.

The USSR was allowed the breathing space Stalin desperately needed. The bureaucracy was sticking to the agreements over spheres of influence: it largely restored capitalist relations, especially the capitalist state apparatus, in the occupied zone, and it used the influence of the European CPs to defuse revolutionary developments. Because of the potentially revolutionary situation in Europe, the US administration felt the risk of an immediate war with the USSR was too great and continued negotiating peace arrangements.

The working class was to be dealt with by a pragmatic combination of concessions and repression until more stable relations were restored.

US AND UK

Both the US and the UK made a fairly smooth transition to a peace-time economy. Demobilisation occurred without substantial unemployment developing. Production fell from the war-time peak (1943-4 in the UK, 1945 in the US) by around 10%, but reached a trough in both countries by the end of 1946. Both administrations feared an explosive inflationary accumulation of financial assets. Both intended to deal with this by maintaining controls for a time.

In the event the US government ended price control following a strike wave at the turn of 1945/6 which won wage increases of around 18%. The capitalist class set out to pass on these wage increases in prices, generating rapid inflation.

The UK did not experience any similar upsurge of militancy. This was the result of the collaboration of the trade union leadership and the CP with the new Labour government. The TUC did not resist the maintenance of legislation outlawing strikes, and supported production drives. Controls were maintained into the 1950s, being removed piecemeal only when they were no longer necessary. Inflation was moderate.

The most immediate problem facing the Labour government was a balance of payments deficit equivalent to

10% of output. This was dealt with by a loan from the US.

EUROPE AND JAPAN

Production was far more disrupted in the defeated powers (including France). At its lowest point industrial production fell to between one half (France) and one tenth (Japan) of pre-war levels. This was because of the disruption of social relations and short-term specific shortages (transport, fuel, raw materials).

Living standards were below pre-war levels everywhere, ranging from one quarter less in France to three quarters less in Japan and Germany. The working class was militant. Armed workers were in control of factories and even whole regions in a number of countries. There were strike waves in Italy and Japan in 1945 and 1946.

There was strong inflationary pressure everywhere as financial assets had been accumulated during the war. In Germany rationing and price controls led to the growth of enormous black markets and the virtual breakdown of a monetary economy. Elsewhere inflation ran at about 50-100% a year. A currency conversion in Japan did not halt the inflation.

Production grew rapidly. Industrial production in Europe for 1946 was 72% of the 1938 level and agricultural production for 1946-7 was 78%. In Japan industrial production doubled in the 7 months after surrender, taking it to 25% of pre-war levels.

Working class militancy was initially met by repression. Trade unions were banned in Germany. Concessions than followed. Trade union rights were restored in Japan in late 1945 and in Germany in early 1946. The pressure of the labour movement was reflected in Italy in a law passed banning dismissals in 1945 and in the fact that in Japan employers found it impossible to sack anyone.

The Communist Parties played a crucial role in defusing the class struggle. In France and Italy they supported the disarming of the workers' militias and the reconstruction of the state apparatus - even supporting the monarchy in Italy for a period. They opposed strikes in both countries.

In Japan the CP leadership supported the occupation. In Britain it supported production drives and compulsory wage arbitration. In Germany it failed to contest the reformists for leadership in the trade unions.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

In the international sphere the Bretton Woods agreement provided a framework for international payments essentially along the lines that the US administration wanted. Anglo-US negotiations on tariffs and preferences in 1945 led to the setting up, by the UN, of a committee to draft proposals for a 'Charter' to cover this area.

The US administration could be reasonably satisfied with developments up to 1947. It had achieved a smooth demobilisation at home, and capital accumulation was substantially above the 1929 peak.

Internationally the US had come quite a way towards constructing an international trade and payments system. Europe appeared to be getting back on its feet without too much US help. The working class had been disarmed and largely re-employed. Stalin had pursued a cooperative role.

Complete equilibrium had not been re-established: the power of the working class remained a threat and the rapid inflation in Europe and Japan was, partially, a reflection of this as workers tried to restore their living standards. Nevertheless the immediate threat of a revolution had been averted and world capitalism appeared to be moving towards stability.

COLD WAR

By the autumn of 1947 the US government had radically altered its policies. The cold war had begun and the US administration was preparing to give massive grants for European Reconstruction.

The main impetus for this change was a reassessment by the US government of the relative strength of the classes on a world level and, hence, of the correct strategy to pursue. The assessment was imperialism was stronger and it was the right time to take the offensive. The European CPs had done their job by assisting in disarming and peacefully reemploying the workers.

The longer imperialism collaborated with the CPs the stronger they would become. The imminent danger of a European revolution had receded and an offensive could be launched against the labour movement. Also the longer cooperation with Stalin continued the more the USSR would be able to rebuild its economic and military strength. Before long it would have the atom bomb. Therefore it was

time to return to the 'norm' of hostility to any workers' state.

In 1947, then, the previous emphasis of US policy on the consolidation of US dominance was reversed and policies for strengthening world capitalism came to the fore.

The US administration rapidly lost its enthusiasm for aid being dispensed by multilateral bodies. The United Nations programme was terminated over aid going to Yugoslavia. The World Bank refused a loan to Poland because its association with the USSR made it a bad 'credit risk'. The IMF made virtually no loans in the first half of 1947.

In the Spring of 1947 Truman asked Congress for economic and military aid for Greece and Turkey, arguing that the US should support the defence of world capitalism against the threat of communism. This was the famous "Truman Doctrine".

In the Spring Marshall returned from the abortive Moscow peace conference and suggested a European Recovery Programme which the USA would assist with aid of 5 or 6 million dollars a year for several years.

The real problems as far as Europe was concerned were summed up by a senior US official as the need for "stringent measures of financial and social discipline".

It should be clear from the state of destruction of the USSR that it was incapable of launching a war of invasion even if it had wanted to, which it did not. The Red Army had been demobilised from the 11½ million at the end of the war to 3 million in 1947.

This leaves unanswered the question of why the US government moved from its previous emphasis on the consolidation of US dominance towards policies for strengthening the capitalist system as a whole. Economically this was based on a realisation that American capitalism stood to gain more from trade and foreign investment in an expanding capitalist system than from dominating a stagnant Europe. Politically, if the stale-mate in class relations was not resolved in favour of the bourgeoisie, then there was the renewed likelihood of revolutionary developments in Europe, which would reverberate in the US.

Thus the US administration was prepared to make substantial concessions in the area of relations between capitalist states in order to break the stalemate between the classes in the system and adopt a tougher line in relation to the USSR.

MARSHALL AID

Western Europe responded enthusiastically. The IMF relaxed its lending policy as a stop-gap measure. A European committee drew up recovery plans and the US gave a total allocation of 4.9 million dollars Marshall Aid for 1948-9.

By the second half of 1947 industrial production in capitalist Europe had reached its pre-war level and agricultural output was improving. The balance of payments deficit with the US was reduced by almost one third.

This improvement, and the new aid, provided the basis for attacks on the remaining problems. Tight monetary measures were taken in Italy in mid 1947 and in Germany in mid 1948. They were aimed partly at stabilising prices, but also had another more basic purpose: an attack on the working class. In Germany the currency reform wiped out trade union funds and was accompanied by fat concessions for capital and decontrol of prices.

The CPs were excluded from the coalitions in France and Italy in 1947. In the UK, when the CP stopped supporting the Labour government after Stalin denounced it as a result of the Cold War, they were witch hunted by the TUC.

In Japan the major attack on workers was held back until 1949, though inflation ran at 50% a year through 1947 and 1948. In 1948 strikes by government employees were banned, but employers were still unable to implement redundancies. But in 1949 a credit squeeze was imposed with wage controls.

US RECESSION

A recession began in the US in early 1949. A pent-up consumer demand which had sustained the economy was exhausted by the end of 1947. Output was only held up in 1948 by state expenditure. Production fell 15% in the six months from November 1948. Unemployment rose considerably.

This recession began to turn around by mid 1949, though industrial output did not pick up until the second

quarter of 1950.

GENERAL RECESSION

The US recession and the new line in Europe produced a slowdown in economic activity everywhere, though the timing of the fall-back varied - in Italy it began in mid 1947, while the rate of growth of output in Japan accelerated until 1949.

In the first half of 1949, then, it seemed possible that a major world recession was starting. The rate of growth of industrial production for OEEC Europe (excluding Germany) had fallen from 12% a year (1947-8) to 5% (1949-50). The US recession also affected Europe's balance of payments: the deficit to the US rose rapidly in the second quarter of 1949 as US imports fell.

In 1949, negotiations took place between the US, UK and Canada, leading to the devaluation of the pound by 30% in September along with a wage freeze and an 8½% cut in government expenditure. The other main European countries rapidly followed the UK in devaluing. And by reducing the dollar price of exports by less than the devaluations, European capital was able to make exports more profitable.

KOREAN BOOM

With the onset of the Korean war a boom set in internationally. By 1951 in Italy Germany and Japan the share of the profits and productivity levels were comparable



North Korean liberation forces



The "Big Three" at Yalta, February 1945

to those of the height of the pre-war repression of the labour movement. In the UK and USA also, profit levels comparable to the pre-war peak were achieved. Investment was generally around one quarter higher than in 1938 and was above the pre-war peak in each of the countries by 1952. The defeats imposed on the labour movement between 1947 and 1950 had laid the basis for high levels of accumulation and boom conditions.

But by the middle of 1951 the boom began to subside (the war ended in April). In general its effects appear to have been fairly short-lived. The most important economic effect of the war was probably the substantial increase in defence spending in the US (from 5% of GDP in 1950 to 13.1% in 1952) which helped postpone until the mid 1950s the stagnation in America which had been threatening since 1949.

CONCLUSIONS

The common view of reconstruction is that massive physical destruction occurred in Europe and the US quickly

provided free aid for reconstruction to prevent both a CP-led revolution and the threat of Soviet aggression.

This is the opposite of the truth. There was not massive physical destruction. The US did not give substantial grants for reconstruction until *after* the most potentially revolutionary period. The main responsibility for restabilising class relations lies with Stalin, not Truman. The US never believed in the threat of Soviet invasion, but only used it as an ideological weapon against internal social revolution.

The Soviet bureaucracy, which had usurped power in the world's first workers' state after the failure of the world revolution following the first world war, betrayed the proletariat in the capitalist countries and prevented a socialist revolution in the wake of the second world war. The proletariat in the capitalist countries, rather than Stalin's foreign policy was primarily responsible for protecting the nationalised property relations of that workers' state. Such are the paradoxes of history.

by John Sugden

NOT THE WHOLE STORY

Reply to Tim Wohlforth's article "James P. Cannon : IN DEFENCE OF A GREAT REVOLUTIONARY".

by John Lister

Tim Wohlforth's article in defence of James P. Cannon has been published in the last two editions of 'Trotskyism Today'. We have given it this amount of attention because we feel that the article represents a genuine attempt to come to grips with two fundamental problems which concern us as a movement: the real history of the Fourth International, to which the history of the US Socialist Workers Party is of great importance; and the real problems involved in reconstructing the Fourth International today, in which a central problem is the degeneration of the International Committee of the Fourth International, headed by Gerry Healy (General Secretary of the British Workers Revolutionary Party).

Within definite limitations Wohlforth makes a valuable attempt to see Cannon's life work as a *whole* and not simply as snippets and episodes taken out of historical and material context. Certainly in the body of the article sketching through the growth of US Trotskyism from the very beginning he gives a vivid picture of the emergence of the SWP and its record in the 1930s and 1940s as a revolutionary combat party with real and living roots in the organised working class.

He also establishes clearly the crucial role played by Cannon and the SWP in leading the break from the bureaucratic and liquidationist International Secretariat led by Michel Pablo in 1953. It was this split which led to the establishment of the International Committee. But in 1963 the SWP broke from the IC and rejoined the Pabloite International Secretariat. A minority within the SWP resisted this opportunist course and were expelled. Leader of this group of eight comrades was Tim Wohlforth. That small group, the Workers League, grew over the following ten years to a considerable movement with a twice-weekly newspaper and a substantial youth movement - becoming, after the 1971 split with the French OCI, the major international grouping, outside Britain, supporting the IC.

'AGENT'

In August 1974, however, at the WL summer camp in Montreal, Gerry Healy intervened. A special CC meeting was called in the middle of the night and Healy accused CC member Nancy Fields of being a CIA agent and Wohlforth of 'covering up' this fact. Under the calculated hysteria of the situation Healy succeeded in getting the CC to vote unanimously to remove Wohlforth as National Secretary and to suspend Fields from membership pending an inquiry.

That inquiry finally concluded that:

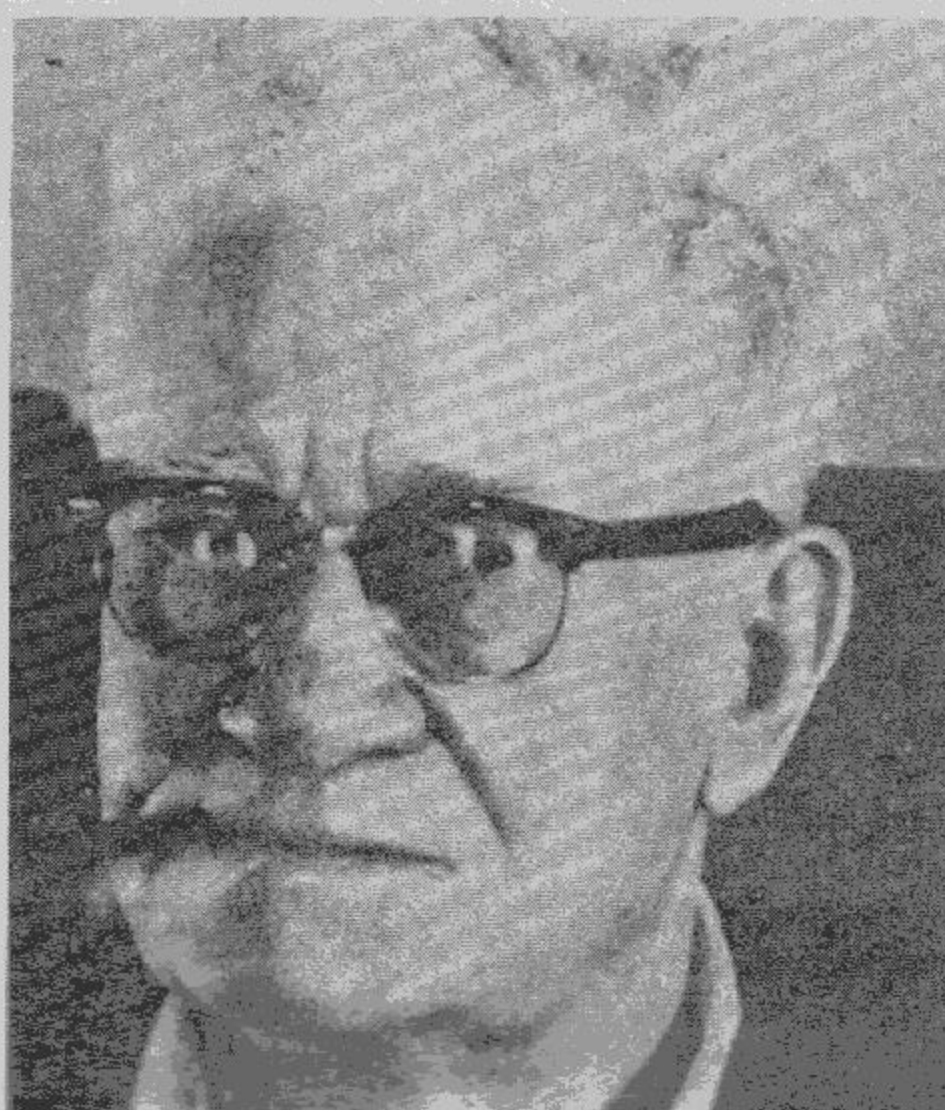
"After interviewing and investigating all the available material, there is no evidence to suggest that NF or TW is in any way connected with the work of the CIA or any other

government agency." (*Findings of Commission of Inquiry*, November 9th 1974).

But, over a month before these findings were published, Wohlforth, succumbing (wrongly, in our view) to the immense political and personal pressures brought to bear by Healy's sympathisers within the WL, had resigned from the movement. This sealed Wohlforth's isolation from WL cadres, and gave Healy still further ammunition.

We know now (though few could have then guessed the scale it would reach) that this was just the start of a reckless international trail of havoc and disruption created by Healy over the last 18 months. Mass expulsions and leadership purges have followed in Britain, Australia (twice), Greece, Portugal and a further change of National Secretary in the WL itself. Throughout these events Healy's methods can only be likened to those of Pablo as described in the famous SWP 'Open Letter' of 1953 which formed the platform of the International Committee:

"Pablo's autocratic demand to a leader of a section of



James P. Cannon

the Fourth International to refrain from criticising Pablo's revisionist political line is bad enough. But Pablo did not stop there. While trying to gag their leader and prevent him from participating in a free discussion ... Pablo proceeded to intervene organisationally, attempting to crystallise a minority revisionist faction to conduct war on the leadership of the section.

This procedure is out of the foul tradition of the Comintern as it underwent degeneration under the influence of Stalin. If there were no other issue than this, it would be necessary to fight Pabloism to the finish to save the Fourth International from internal corruption.

This Stalinist organisational course began, as is now

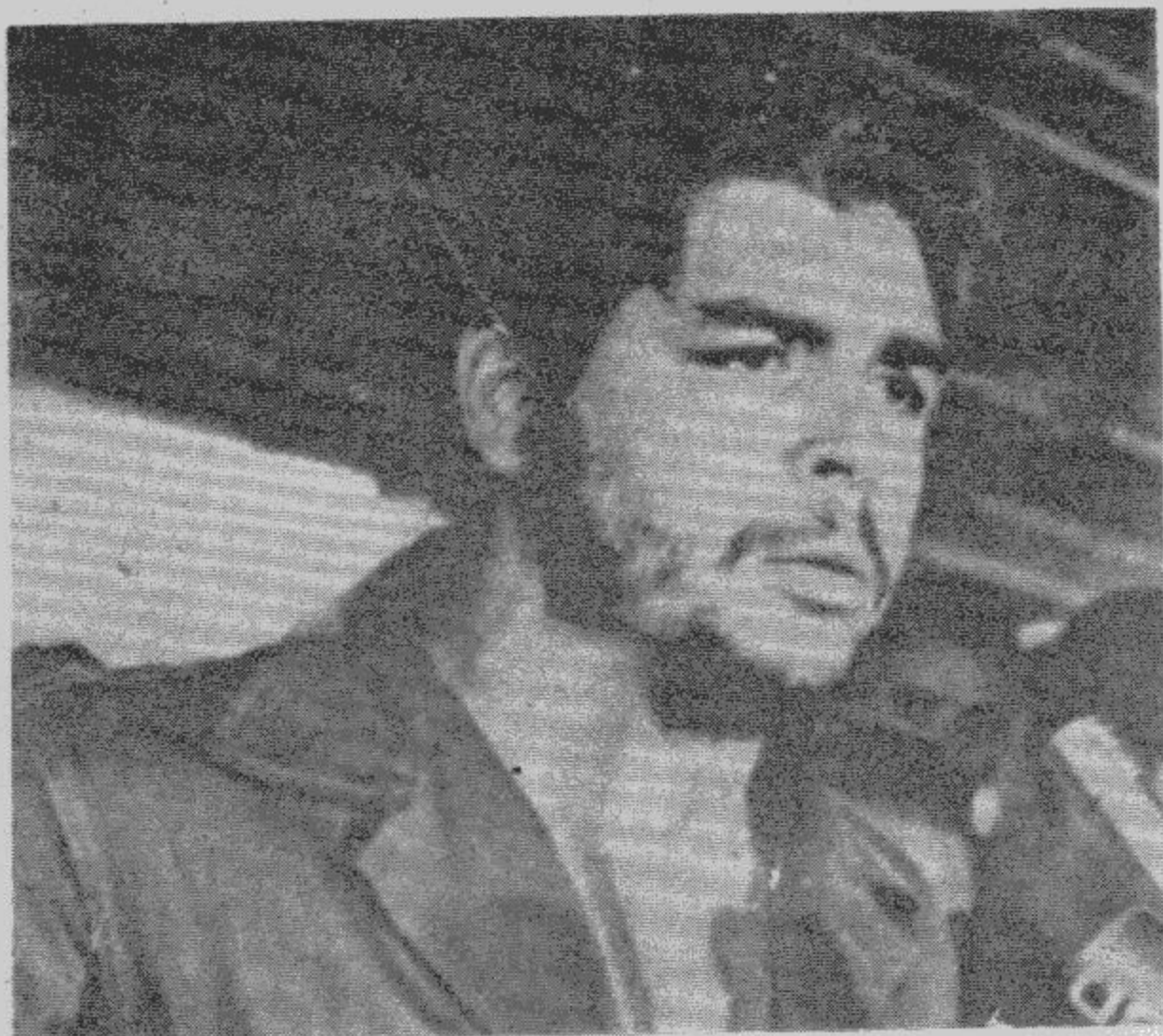
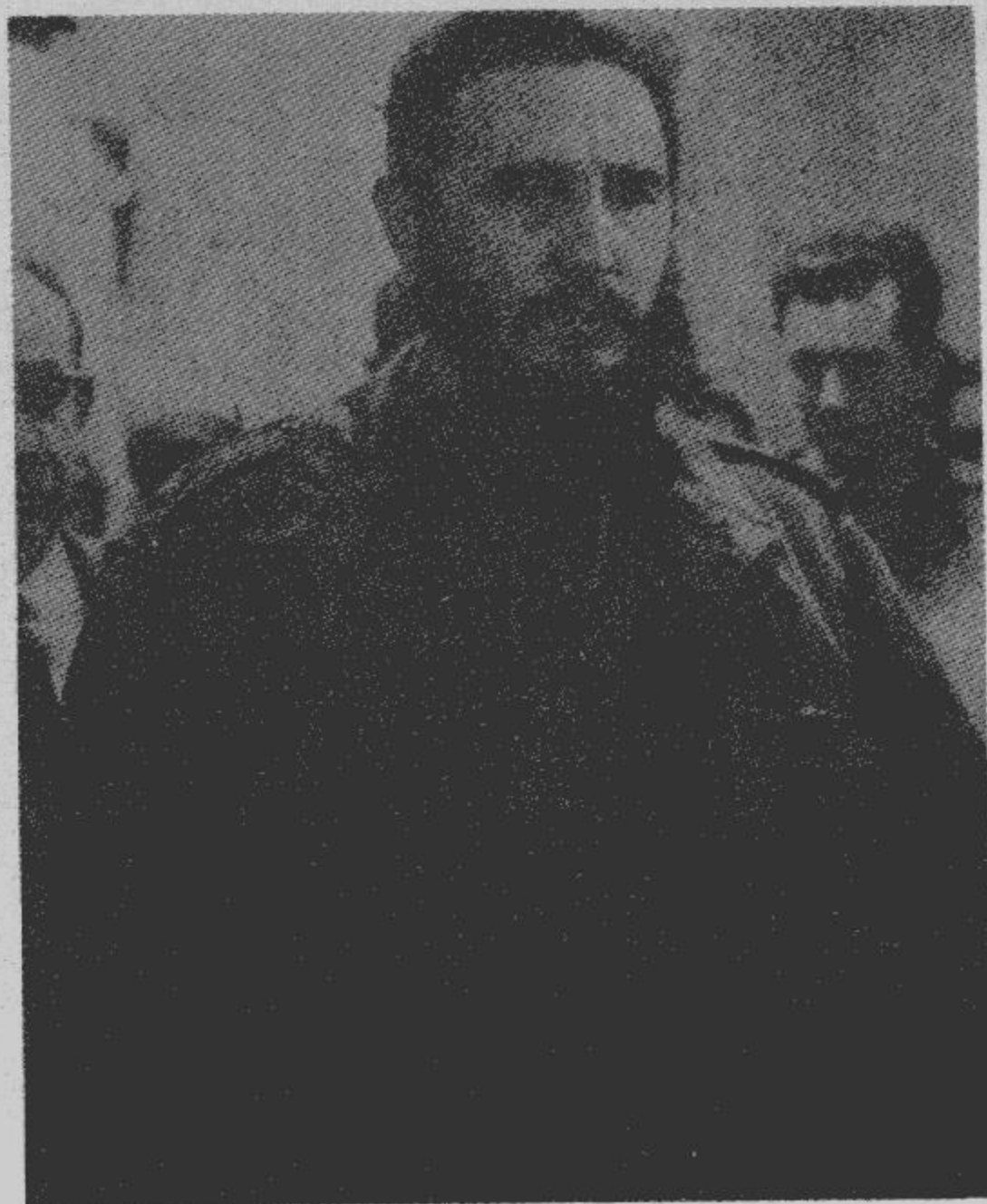


Painting of striking coal miners, metal miners, steel workers and railroad workers by Diego de Rivera

quite clear, with Pablo's brutal abuse of administrative control in his disruptive campaign against the majority of the French section of the Fourth International more than a year ago.

By fiat of the International Secretariat, the elected majority of the French section was forbidden to exercise its rights to lead the political and propaganda work of the party." (*Trotskyism v. Revisionism*, Vol.1 pp.310-1).

But to draw the full lessons from the 1974 political upheavals within the Workers League, we must go deeper than seeking past parallels and describing Healy's organisational course. Wohlforth's best



TOP (left): The Bolshevik Party - concept attacked by Pablo
TOP (right): Castro - SWP's 'natural Marxist'
ABOVE: Guevara RIGHT: G. Healy

the early date at which his defence of Cannon was written, but also because of definite weaknesses in his political approach) is able only partially to challenge the politics of Healy's intervention. Three main factors weaken Wohlforth's analysis.

HALLMARKS

Firstly, he ignores the unmistakeable hallmarks of Healyism within the Workers League itself. These he summed up in his resignation letter to the WL PC:

"A tendency has become manifest in the central leadership for which I bear responsibility, to rest on activist layers of the party and not to fight sharply for the theoretical development of the movement as essential to the intervention in the working class. Trade union work has not been given its proper emphasis and there are great weaknesses ... in the development of youth cadres."

All of these are crucial weaknesses which accelerated the 'degeneration' of the British WRP, assisted by Healy's bankruptcy of programme. But Wohlforth, while correctly attacking the liquidationist recruitment campaigns run by the WRP, signing up "members" on street corners, he is unable to break from the Healyite conception that these kind of "new forces" from a "turn outwards" can substitute for a firm party cadre with a history of struggle and roots in the working class. His article therefore throws a slanted emphasis on Cannon's insistence that there are different layers within the working class, some of which have been conserved by the prolonged prosperity of the 'boom', stressing that "the only revolutionary perspective" in the US is "to turn to the working class youth, including the young workers in the unions ... particularly among the mass of minority working class youth ..."

Nobody doubts the potential of these oppressed layers. But Cannon made clear his real position on the "conservatism" of some layers of workers:

"Experience has already shown that the conservatism of the American workers, induced by a high standard of living, can be rapidly turned into its opposite when these cherished standards are infringed upon. The American worker's high regard for his living standards can and will become a revolutionary factor of the highest importance when the attempt is made to cut them down."

Wohlforth dwells only on the negative side of the organised working class in the US - bringing the danger of pulling back from the fight to sink roots into the trade union movement in every industry necessary to break in practice from propagandism.

LIQUIDATIONISM

This leads into the second weakness in Wohlforth's approach - he devotes scant attention to why Healy should have reached the level of liquidationism shown in August 1974, and, while critical, pulls back from characterising Healy's method of indiscriminate recruitment as liquidationist. He seems to go out of his way to differentiate between his own policy of the "turn outwards" from Healy's election campaigns. Of course in this Wohlforth continues the classic Healy method of attacking your opponent for carrying out your own policy. Only this one-sided approach on the part of the WRP allowed Cliff Slaughter, sitting amid the carnage created in the WRP's October 1974 election campaign, to write in these terms

"the perspectives of the IC and of the Workers League were not carried out. . . that the trade union work was virtually liquidated . . . the "outward turn" to the youth has liquidated the youth cadres and thus transformed the youth work into the opposite of revolutionary practice. Moreover, you explain that these are "problems which inevitably arise in the course of taking the party outward". On the contrary, the "turn outward" becomes a liquidation of the party into "community politics" and the abandonment of the political perspectives, once the central question of leadership and the training of the cadre is pushed into the background".

So Wohlforth takes up Healy for indiscriminate recruitment as Healy pitches into Wohlforth for "liquidationism". Both sides of this polemic are subjective interpretations of the harsh truth that the politics of the IC leadership and of Healy in particular have become, despite this favourable period, the politics of liquidationism. In carrying them into practice Wohlforth opened up great dangers for the Workers League, just as in the WRP Healy's actions were paving the way for the liquidation of the daily Workers Press. And in seeking to protect his leading position by posing as the defender of qualitative cadre training and trade union work, Healy was covering over the immense problems besetting the WRP in Britain where Wohlforth's "vices" were being applauded as the only virtues.

The third weakness of Wohlforth in coming to grips with his own position is in failing to admit honestly the close work that had taken place between himself and Healy, and the retreats he had made rather than conflict with Healy. He maintains discrete silence on the failure of the IC to discuss the critical theoretical questions arising from the SWP split in 1963. He does not mention the fact that a major theoretical work *The Theory of Structural Assimilation* which he wrote as part of such a discussion, was ignored by the IC with his tacit consent.

But the biggest weakness in the document is Wohlforth's complete avoidance of any comment on the 1963 split itself - in which the SWP broke away from the IC to "reunify" with the Pabloites of the United Secretariat from which the IC had broken in 1953. If, as Wohlforth correctly shows in his document, Cannon's greatest contribution to the post-war International was his firm stand against Pabloism in 1953, then surely his role in the hasty and cynical "reunification" must be examined in order to complete the picture?

The omission is the more striking because Wohlforth repeatedly refers to Cannon's *Speeches to the Party* which deal with the faction fight within the SWP which ran alongside the international fight with Pablo. But there is no attempt seriously to question Cannon's 1963 change of position which stands in glaring contrast to these speeches - for instance the one entitled "Factional Struggle and Party Leadership", where Cannon firmly stated:

"We are finished and done with Pablo and Pabloism forever, not only here but on the international field. And nobody is going to take up any of our time with any

negotiations about compromise or any nonsense of that sort". (*Speeches to the Party* p 176). and further

"And if our break with Pabloism . . . boils down to one point and is concentrated in one point, that is it: the question of the party . . . That is written into the *Transitional Programme*, that Leninist concept of the decisive role of the revolutionary party. And that is what the Pabloites are throwing overboard in favour of the conception that the ideas will somehow filter into the treacherous bureaucracy, the Stalinists or reformists, and in some way or another, "In the Day of the Comet" the socialist revolution will be realised and carried through to conclusion without a revolutionary Marxist, that is, a Leninist-Trotskyist, party". (pp 181-2)

By 1963 the SWP was of course joining the Pabloites in these revisionist notions in regard to Cuba where they accredited the Castro leadership as "natural Marxists", anticipating a whole new era of revolutions without Trotskyist parties. Wohlforth in the US led the fight against this opportunism - but in his defence of Cannon offers us not a word on the matter. This is no way objectively to assess and understand Cannon. Rather it is an advance indication of Wohlforth's subsequent shift to outright support for the present-day SWP, dropping on the way a number of theoretical differences. In his opening section "The History of History" Wohlforth barely but correctly describes the reunification as "ill-conceived and unprepared". The political conclusions from this in our view belong also in a life story of James P. Cannon.

ADAPTATION

This position, adapting demands to the spontaneous consciousness of workers to the point of dropping the principled call for a Labour Party is not challenged by Wohlforth, though he does correctly challenge Cannon's wrong conception of the SWP as a "small mass party" enabling the working class to jump over a development through reformism and centrism. And of course by blunting this approach to Cannon on the Labour Party, Wohlforth was moving closer to the attitude of today's SWP which whilst sporadically mentioning the demand in their paper *The Militant*, accord the Labour Party question one paragraph on Page 14 of a 16 page Perspectives document, *Prospects for Socialism in America*. The illusions of the "small mass party" are clearly dead neither for Wohlforth or the SWP.

LABOUR PARTY

A final point to make is on the question of the fight for a Labour Party in the US. Wohlforth's article deals at times in some detail with the history of this demand, but pulls back from examining Cannon's attitude towards it in the post-war period. The demand is of course of great importance to Trotskyists in seeking to mobilise the American working class independently of the two bourgeois parties which today monopolise the mass vote in elections.

Wohlforth makes no comment on the fact that Cannon consciously pulled back from the fight for the Labour Party slogan, expressing himself clearly in *Speeches to the Party*:

"...the slogan "Build a Labour Party Now!" has to be amended. "Build a Labour Party Now!" - that's a slogan of action. Originally it was counterposed to the promise of such Labour bureaucrats as Reuther to build a labour party "after the next election". How would it sound in the midst of an explanation, which we have already started to make in the paper that the trend is toward the Democratic-labour coalition in 1956? Latently, the sentiment for a labour party is probably stronger than ever, but there will be no action and very little, if any, talk about it in the near future." (p. 213).

But even with these political weaknesses, Wohlforth's article on Cannon stands head and shoulders above the idealist distortions by Mike Banda in his series of articles *A critical Assessment of a Pioneer Trotskyist*. It provides a serious starting point for the further study of US and world Trotskyism and of Cannon's important writings so much neglected in Britain today.

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