

C. L. R. JAMES

“THIS THING ON DIALECTIC”
NOTES & COMMENTS

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 1948

Transcribed, Edited & Annotated

by

Robert A. Hill

Pluto Press
2005

Notes on Dialectic

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Editorial Note

The documents that follow consist of letters written in the Fall of 1948 by C.L.R. James during his sojourn in Nevada. The letters were written to two of James's key associates—"Rae" (Raya Dunayevskaya) and "Grace" (Grace Lee Boggs)—and were James's method of keeping them abreast of what he was working on as well as to solicit their feedback and assistance. The letters form a running commentary on the actual genesis of "Notes on Dialectic" as well as the "Plan" of the manuscript as it was originally formulated.

As historical documents, the letters provide not only a running commentary on the genesis and preparation of James's "Notes on Dialectic". They provide also an unrivalled window into the mind of one of the great Marxist theorists of the age at work at the very height of his creative powers.

A spontaneous vocality operates side by side with James's laser-like intensity in terms of theoretical focus. As the momentum of the writing builds and sweeps inexorably toward a theoretical conclusion, the reader feels a palpable sense of exhilaration in observing James's achievement. In addition to documenting one of the most fertile theoretical collaborations in the history of the Marxist movement, these letters offer to the reader an unrivalled window into the mind of James the political theoretician, as he girded himself to do battle in the Fall of 1948 against the deadweight of Stalinism and his own political avatar, Trotskyism. The political legacy of C.L.R. James is nowhere more powerfully embodied than in these letters as he wrestled the dialectic as the key to philosophical and political liberation.

The letters—fourteen in all—were each handwritten. Their form represents a serious challenge in terms of transcription and editing, since many of the letters were written "on the run," as it were, as time and circumstance allowed. They were composed under varying conditions, as the reader will discover, and written on several different kinds of paper—some on legal-size yellow pads, others on stenographic pads, still others on small note-sized paper. All of these conditions impacted the legibility of James's penmanship. Facsimile reproductions of five sample pages will provide the reader with an idea of the difficulty of deciphering the original handwriting.

In terms of editorial policy, three important considerations affected the editorial apparatus used to establish the texts, organize the documents, and annotate their historical references. These involved the editorial explication or rendering of text, the chronological ordering and re-formatting of the original documents, and historical elucidation.

Transcription

Several editorial devices are used to establish and explicate the text so as to facilitate readability of the letters.

Single square brackets signal editorial interventions in the text. They were necessary to spell out James's use of abbreviations, e.g., the initials of personal names; to supply missing punctuation marks in the text; and where the author deliberately left words blank in the text to fill them in. In a few places in the text, where it was

impossible to satisfy with any certitude James's actual words, square brackets are used to indicate editorial conjectures. In some instances, however, words are italicized and accompanied by a question mark to indicate that an editorial conjecture was made. In one or two instances, the word *illegible* appears within square brackets to indicate that it was impossible to decipher a word or words in a phrase.

Double square brackets are used to represent the presence of square brackets in the texts, and to differentiate these from editorial interventions. Only a few such instances occurred, so the frequency of the use of double square brackets is minimal.

Lineation was a recurring feature throughout the texts. Most often the author would use a single underscore of a word or group of words, but there were instances where double, triple, even quadruple, lineation was used for heightened emphasis. Technically, this presented a transcription barrier that could not be solved with the available word-processing technology. The only solution was use of single and double lineation, the understanding being that the editorial use of double lineation in the transcription indicates the author's resort to increased emphasis in the original texts.

Presentation

Presentation of the letters involved major problems of organization:

Chronologically, because only seven of the fourteen letters were dated by the author, the criterion used in the order of their presentation was determined by content, i.e., by attempting to trace the sequential development of particular themes in James's thought and organizing the undated letters thematically. Some of the letters, however, carry a range of dates, a reflection of the fact that sometimes James would start a letter, then be forced to suspend writing, and then return to it later, sometimes several times separated by an interval of days. In fact, due to the fact that James was writing to two separate interlocutors, there is a sense that James was conducting a sort of simultaneous correspondence. A different order of presentation could easily have been constructed.

Reconstruction of the text involved making decisions about the ordering of the sequence of the narrative *within* individual letters. James's use of *pagination* was frequently erratic, undoubtedly a reflection of the conditions of composition, James's mood or emotional state at the time, perhaps even the nature of the writing materials. There are some letters where pagination is completely non-existent. This problem is compounded by the fact of *missing pages*, further complicating the arrangement of the narrative. Where such breaks occur, the pages are now presumed to be lost. Breaks in the text, from whatever source, are clearly indicated.

Paragraph re-formatting was also a recurring consideration. The texts of the letters often seemed to obey no perceptible or clear cut pattern in terms of paragraph breaks, or where what looked like paragraph breaks were in fact breaks or an exigency of the shape of the paper that the author was writing on. Unfortunately, it was not possible to find a device through which to indicate in the text where what appeared to be a paragraph in the original was re-formatted.

Annotation

Recovery of James's purpose in writing involves a great deal of annotation, made all the more necessary because of the frequency of references that occur in a language that most readers today would not have access to. The annotations are of two kinds:

Historical annotation of historical and political references are the most numerous. Because James and his two chosen interlocutors had worked together for several years, and had communicated frequently by letter—in the case of "Rae" for nearly a decade—the effect is a sort of code, with frequent if elliptical allusions that require explanation. Every attempt has been made to recover James's meaning by identifying and explicating the historical references, especially the particularly obscure ones.

Textual annotation supplies the text of quotations employed by the author as well as bibliographical citations to published works that appear throughout the letters. Wherever a reference or a passage in the text remains unclear, this is indicated in the notes.

With these principles of editorial policy and methodology now made explicit, it should be evident that the various editorial problems encountered were quite considerable. Every effort was made to balance fidelity to the original texts with the function of readability and comprehension. The ultimate test of "this thing on dialectic" is what it adds to our knowledge of James and the application of the dialectic. In this regard, there can be no doubt as to the manifest political importance of these letters.

Robert A. Hill

Notes & Comments
August-September 1948

Source: Martin Glaberman Collection
Ann Arbor, Michigan
Courtesy of Peter Glaberman

Document #1

[Pyramid Lake Ranch, Sutcliffe, Nevada, August 30, 1948]

My dear R[ae]:¹

. . . The L[eon] T[rotsky] business I am digging at. Here is a letter I had begun to G[race].²
Ask her to read it to you.

Thanks for all you do for C[onstance].³ I appreciate that more than anything else. Watch over her for me. She needs help at this time. I leave this letter unsealed so that she can read it and get a little insight into things.

¹ Rae Spiegel (Raya Dunayevskaya) (1910-1987), aka Freddie Forest, was the co-founder with C.L.R. James, aka J.R. Johnson, of the “Johnson-Forest Tendency” (J-FT) or the state-capitalist faction within the Workers Party of America that was formed following the split in the American Trotskyist movement in April 1940. Dunayevskaya worked in 1937 as Leon Trotsky’s Russian-language secretary during the latter’s exile in Mexico, but broke with him in 1939 at the time of the Hitler-Stalin Pact. She joined with James in 1940 in arguing that not only was Russia a state-capitalist society, but that state-capitalism was a new stage of world capitalism. In 1955 she split from James and founded her own organization (“News and Letters Committees”) and the newspaper *News & Letters* (Andrew Anderson, “The Johnson-Forest Tendency in the U.S.,” talk given at the “Legacy of Hegel” Seminar, November 20, 1998, <http://home.mira.net/~andy/seminars/aajames.htm>; Eugene Gogol, *Raya Dunayevskaya: Philosopher of Marxist-Humanism* [Portland, OR: Resource Publications, 2004]). Dunayevskaya, who typed the original manuscript of “Notes on Dialectic,” upon receipt of James’s letters from Nevada responded:

. . . it is only, with your recent letters, which are absolutely magnificent, that we are developing not only out of the past but for the future. You have opened a door to the understanding of vanguardism which has stayed shut too long. We must developed this unitedly (Raya Dunayevskaya Collection—Marxist-Humanism, Wayne State University Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Detroit, Michigan, Raya Dunayevskaya to C.L.R. James, October 14, 1948, microfilm reel #1, frames 1334-1335).

² Grace Lee Boggs was a key member of the Johnson-Forest Tendency; the co-author with Phil Romano of *The American Worker* (New York: n.p., 1947), and translator of the first ever English translation of *Essays by Karl Marx Selected from the Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts* (New York: Martin Harvey, 1947), she was an academically trained philosopher (cf. Grace Lee Boggs, *Living for Change: An Autobiography* [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998]).

³ Constance Webb (d. 2005), C.L.R. James’s wife (see Anna Grimshaw, ed., *Special Delivery: The Letters of C.L.R. James to Constance Webb, 1939-1948* [Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996]; and Constance Webb, *Not Without Love: Memoirs* [Middletown, CT: Dartmouth College Press/University Press of New England, 2003]).

G[race]'s greatest mistake is that she has not yet learnt to think first, first, first, and last last last, of the organization. If she did she would take it upon herself to see everything in that aspect[;] a corollary of same, to see that she did everything to keep relations with you at the best possible pitch, always thinking of that.

I did my best in our meetings during the Convention⁴ to impress upon all that the chief organisational task for us now was the transfer of my authority to you. She does not understand that means beginning with herself. She would inculcate it into the ranks, but to set out systematically to reorient herself, that is very hard for her. Believe me, I have seen this thing too often.

We must be patient. Grace wants to learn, and has made heroic efforts. And yet, if she were correct, and had to discipline herself, that would be a job; a really tough one for the anarchistic American self, bourgeois; a necessary tho a hard lesson; in this case she is wrong. I am sure now that she should not have taken the Leon book. I told her, before she came,—to tell Clarke: I want to do rank and file work, typing, adding, handing out leaflets, ordinary work. I told her the way she should say it.

I am scared stiff that 1) they should all start trying to win her over, which would be terribly humiliating for her, and embarrass her awfully or 2) they all start, the wives, disliking her, wh[ich] would be worse or 3) after trying to win her, and failing, turning on her the cold blast. I am trying to save G. from all this by telling her, as I did over and over again, duck into the darkness, hide, go underground, turn your back on everything, but she does not see it. You will have to make her see it, even if for a time she suspects you of “persecuting” her personally.

Regards to John.⁵

Document #2

[Pyramid Lake Ranch, Sutcliffe, Nevada, n.d.]

Dear R[ae],

⁴ A reference to the 13th National Convention of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), held July 1, 1948. The J-FT re-entered the SWP in the Fall of 1947 after an “interim period” that lasted three months, following its withdrawal from the Workers Party (WP).

⁵ John Dwyer (1912-1989), aka John Fredericks, husband of Raya Dunayevskaya, who gives the following description of him: “In 1945 John Fredericks, who had been away in the military, returned, and within the SWP [Socialist Workers Party] began to develop a state-capitalist tendency. He sought out the Johnson-Forest Tendency and began to collaborate with them for a brief period before they re-entered the SWP” (*Guide to the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection—Marxist-Humanism: A Half-Century of Its World Development*, Wayne State University Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Detroit, Michigan, p. 14). He is listed in the *Guide* as co-author with John Hudson of *Stalinist Russia: A Capitalist State*, “written September 29, 1945, and published in *Internal Bulletin* of the Socialist Workers Party, November 1946,” (ibid.)

I have just read L[enin]'s against R[osa] L[uxemburg].⁶ Very instructive but not quite it. I am looking forward to L.T. But chiefly we want him in 1912; and the articles in *Neue Zeit* against which L[enin] wrote: The Historical Meaning of the Party Struggle.⁷

I am searching for a principle. I know that the same L.T. of 1903-1917 began all over again in 1919. This I have to prove; but I cannot [tell?] all the threads wh[ich] lead me, personally, to this conclusion. The T[rade] U[nion] question.⁸ L[enin] said "mediation" of t. u.'s.⁹

⁶ Reply by N. Lenin to Rosa Luxemburg: *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*, written September 1904 (Vladimir Il'ich Lenin, *Collected Works*, 4th ed. enl. Russian ed. [Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977], Vol. 7, pp. 474-485); and "'Practicality' in the National Question" and "The Utopian Karl Marx and the Practical Rosa Luxemburg," in Lenin, *The Right of Nations to Self Determination*, written February-May 1914 (ibid., Vol. 20, pp. 409-414; 435-442). (Unless otherwise stated, all references to the *Collected Works* of Lenin are to the 4th ed.) The first statement by Lenin was a response to Rosa Luxemburg's "Organizational Questions of the Russian Social Democracy [Leninism or Marxism?]," first published in *Iskra* and *Neue Zeit* in 1904; the second statement was Lenin's reply to Luxemburg's critique, "The Special Problem of Poland," in which she decried the "practicality" of Polish independence (cf. Jie-Hyun Lim, "Rosa Luxemburg on the Dialectics of Proletarian Internationalism and Social Patriotism," *Science & Society*, Vol. 59, no. 4 [1995]: 498-531; J. P. Nettle, *Rosa Luxemburg*, 2 vols. [London: Oxford University Press, 1966; Horace B. Davis, *The National Question: Selected Writings by Rosa Luxemburg* [New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976]; Paul Le Blanc, ed., *Rosa Luxemburg: Reflections and Writings* [Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 1999; Peter Hudis and Kevin Anderson, eds., *The Rosa Luxemburg Reader* [New York: Monthly Review Press, 2004]).

⁷ Lenin, *The Historical Meaning of the Inner-Party Struggle in Russia*, written September-November 1910 (*Collected Works*, Vol. 16, pp. 374-392). The article was Lenin's answer against the articles of Trotsky and Julius Martov published in *Neue Zeit*, organ of the German Social-Democrats (cf. Daniel Gaido, "'The American Worker' and the Theory of Permanent Revolution: Karl Kautsky on Werner Sombart's *Why is There No Socialism in the United States?*" *Historical Materialism*, Vol. 11, no. 4 [2003]: 79-123, for the historical context of Trotsky's *Neue Zeit* articles).

⁸ The reference is to the Russian Communist Party discussion of the trade unions' role and tasks that erupted in late 1920 and continued for several months in 1921. The starting point was the "shake-up" slogan proclaimed at the Fifth All-Russia Conference of Trade Unions on November 2-6, 1920. At the Communist group meeting on November 3, Trotsky demanded the immediate "governmentalisation" of the trade unions, and the introduction of military methods of command and administration. His speech initiated the Party discussion, but his proposals were rejected by the Communist delegates. On November 9, 1921, he submitted his "draft theses," *The Trade Unions and Their Future Role*, to the Central Committee Plenum (cf. Leonard Schapiro, *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union* [New York: Random House, 1959]). The most recent account of this crucial juncture in Trotsky's political career is contained in Ian D. Thatcher, *Trotsky* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003):

Discontent in the trade unions with the role assigned to them by Trotsky's militarisation order rumbled in the background throughout 1920. It exploded into a full-scale party crisis from November 1920 onwards. Leading trade unionists, such as M.P. Tomsy, joined forces with fellow prominent member of the Central Committee, most notably Zinoviev, in an open assault. They accused Trotsky of riding roughshod over the trade unions, intending to eliminate them as institutions protecting the interests of workers. They linked his practice of the appointment of industrial officials over election from below to the growth of red tape and bureaucracy. The inevitable outcome of Trotsky's approach to the trade unions, they claimed, would be the alienation of the workers from the administration, a split between the party and the trade unions, and the growth of underground trade unions, most likely organised by Menshevik and Socialist Revolutionary agitators. Tomsy and Zinoviev called for the trade unions to be kept separate from the state, for their traditional function to be maintained and for an extension of workers' democracy in the workplace.

T[rotsky] denounced the syndicalists¹⁰ as he denounced Mks [Mensheviks] in 1905. But he produces another theory of the p[roletarian] revolution—for the European p't [proletariat] he now substitutes the party, i[.].e[.] the State. He had these ideas in *Terrorism & Communism*.¹¹ The p't made the rev'n and then—it could not do what was necessary. Till 1940 he never believed that the Russian p't could defend Russia. That task he “left” to the bu'cy [bureaucracy]—you understand me.

Trotsky clashed with his critics at a series of meetings, from sessions of the Central Committee to debate forums attended by several thousand party members. At these events rhetoric could take precedence over serious discussion, with some insults aired in heated exchanges. During a debate held at the Bolshoi Theatre on 30 December 1920, for example Trotsky called Zinoviev ‘an apologist, defender, advocate and proponent of what is purely unproductive’. For Trotsky, the workers had to learn how to become producers, and the best way to ensure this was to merge the trade unions into the state. Indeed, at this time Trotsky saw the enlargement of the state and its functions as a natural part of the transition to communism. Lenin became less and less impressed with Trotsky’s arguments and with his behaviour. He called him to book for insulting comrades, and blamed him for creating platforms and factions that threatened a split in the party. Although Lenin was keen not to censure Trotsky fully and openly, he sided with his opponents in agreeing that even in a workers’ state the trade unions had to be independent so that they could defend the workers from their state. Lenin also gave prominence to the trade unions as ‘schools of communism’, a notion ridiculed by Trotsky for lacking a ‘productionist perspective’.

The trade union debates of January to March 1921 resulted in a series of defeats for Trotsky. Regional party committees voted against his theses. Even those that had a majority of Trotskyists did not support him and were henceforth lost to his opponents. More seriously still, at the Tenth Party Congress of March 1921 Lenin ensured that advocates of Trotsky’s line on the trade unions were demoted from important party bodies such as the Secretariat and that they would be in a minority on the Central Committee. The Congress devoted only one day to discussing rival motions on the trade unions and overwhelmingly backed the motion sponsored by Lenin. This not only marked the end of the militarisation of industry favoured by Trotsky, but was another indication of Trotsky’s problematic relationship with a party he had only recently joined . . . (pp. 108-110).

⁹ Lenin analysed the question of the trade unions and offered his criticisms of Trotsky in several articles and speeches; cf. “The Trade Unions, the Present Situation, and Trotsky’s Mistakes,” speech delivered December 30, 1920 (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, pp. 19-42); “The Party Crisis,” speech delivered January 19, 1921 (*ibid.*, Vol. 32, pp. 43-53); “The Second All-Russia Congress of Miners,” report delivered January 23 and 24, 1921 (*ibid.*, Vol. 32, 54-68); “Once Again on the Trade Unions, the Current Situation and the Mistakes of Trotsky and Bukharin,” speech delivered January 25, 1921 (*ibid.*, Vol. 32, pp. 70-107); and “Speech on the Trade Unions,” Tenth Congress of the R.C.P. (B.), March 14, 1921 (*ibid.*, Vol. 32, pp. 165-271).

¹⁰ A reference to the “Workers’ Opposition,” an opposition tendency within the Bolshevik party strongly opposed to the increasing bureaucratization of the Soviet state. Alexandra Kollontai (1873-1952) became identified with the “Workers’ Opposition” when she joined it at the December 1920 All-Russian Congress of Soviets. The “Workers’ Opposition,” which had strong support in the Metalworkers’ Union and the Ukrainian Communist Party, was banned together with other party factions at the 10th Party Congress in March 1921. For the clash of opinions between Lenin, Trotsky and the “Workers’ Opposition,” see Alexandra Kollontai, *The Workers’ Opposition* (London: Solidarity, 1968); Barbara Evans Clements, *Bolshevik Feminist: the Life of Aleksandra Kollontai* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1979); and Larry E. Holmes, *For the Revolution redeemed: the Workers’ Opposition in the Bolshevik Party, 1919-1920* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Center for Russian and East European Studies, 1990); cf. V. I. Lenin, *Tenth Congress of the R.C.P. (B.)*, Part IV, “Summing-Up Speech on Party Unity and the Anarcho-Syndicalist Deviation,” March 16, 1921 (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32).

¹¹ Leon Trotsky, *Terrorism and Communism—A Reply to Karl Kautsky*, foreword by Max Shachtman, and introduction to the 2d English ed., by Leon Trotsky (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1961).

Now the key is in his persistent association with the liquidationists.¹² It lasted for years. He had the same theory of the party struggles as Martov.¹³ Why?

Note also the absence of economic theory, of philosophy, of Marxist historiography as L[enin] wrote it in *The State & Rev'n*.¹⁴ The things we need and have worked at, he gives us nothing about them. None of his old works is reprinted. He called for none.

The New Course¹⁵ and in the *B—ks & World Peace*¹⁶ his analysis of the German Social De'cy [Democracy] and its degeneration are exactly the same; the party decayed somehow—routine, vote-seeking. The party is always something separate from the economic movement. The IVth [International]¹⁷ would come from the workers who would “learn” that the C[ommunist] P[arty] was now no good. “The Lessons of October”¹⁸ is the same type. The analysis of Fascism,¹⁹ brilliant as it is[,] is purely political. The French Turn²⁰ was just

¹² At the conference of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party held in Prague, in December 1908, “liquidationism” was defined, in the words of Lenin, as “an attempt on the part of a group of Party intellectuals to liquidate the existing organisation of the R.S.D.L.P. and to replace it at all costs, even at the price of downright renunciation of the programme, tactics, and traditions of the Party, by a loose association functioning legally” (Lenin, “Draft Resolution on Liquidationism and the Group of Liquidators,” *Collected Works*, Vol. 17).

¹³ Julius Martov (1873-1923), the ideological leader of Menshevism (see Israel Getzler, *Martov: A Political Biography of a Russian social democrat* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967]).

¹⁴ V. I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution: The Marxist Theory of the State and the Tasks of the Proletariat in the Revolution*, written August-September 1917 and published in 1918 (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, pp. 381-492).

¹⁵ Leon Trotsky, *The New Course* (New York: New International Pub. Co., 1923)

¹⁶ Leon Trotsky, *The Bolsheviks and World Peace*, with an introduction by Lincoln Steffens (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1918). This was an English translation of Trotsky's pamphlet *The War and the International*, written and published in 1914 during Trotsky's two month stay in Zurich.

¹⁷ The creation of the Fourth International rested on the premise that the program and practices of the Third (Communist) International were corrupt and needed to be replaced. The first organizational expression of this conviction came with the establishment of the International Left Opposition in 1930; a further progression was reached when it was transformed into the International Communist League in 1933 and then into the Movement for the Fourth International in 1936. The Fourth International was finally established in 1938, declaring itself to be the party of the world socialist revolution (Leon Trotsky, *The Soviet Union and the Fourth International, the Class Nature of the Soviet State* [New York: Communist League of America, 1934]; *Stalinism and Bolshevism: concerning the historical and theoretical roots of the Fourth International* [New York: Pioneer Publishers, 1937]; cf. Barry Lee Woolley, *Adherents of Permanent Revolution: A History of the Fourth (Trotskyist) International* [Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1999]).

¹⁸ Leon Trotsky, *The Lessons of October* (New York: Pioneer Publishers, 1937), written in 1924 as a preface to a volume of Trotsky's writings from 1917 and published in English in the Communist International's news magazine *Imprecorr* in February of 1925.

¹⁹ Leon Trotsky, *Fascism: What It Is and How To Fight It* (New York: Pioneer Publishers, 1944); *The Struggle against Fascism in Germany*, ed. by George Breitman and Merry Maisel (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1971).

²⁰ Robert J. Alexander explains the motive behind the so-called “French Turn” in French Trotskyism:

The new tactic, which was immediately to be known as the “French Turn” because it was first suggested by Trotsky to his French followers, and later was often referred to as “entrism,” was precipitated by the advent of the United Front between French Socialist and Communist parties in June 1934. Trotsky saw both a danger and a new opportunity for the Trotskyists in this event. In order to avoid one and take advantage of the other, he urged his French supporters to enter the

“foolishness”—pure foolishness.²¹ We went in, then at some conference after some votes in our favour, we were to split off and begin the party from that. A new int’l [international], a new party i[.]e[.] the result of profound & qualitative changes in the economic structure.

Now L[enin] said in 1917 that Imp[eriali]sm had developed (since 1905); cpm [capitalism] in Russia had developed; the soviets had taken national form therefore d’c [democratic] relationship of the p’t & p’y [party] was no longer viable. Note the program changes he made in 1917. Economic dev’pt [development] & mass creative power; in reality the same movement. In 1905 L.T.’s Pt R’n [Permanent Revolution]²² had no such basis. That is why he passed so easily to all the errors.

The sequence must begin from the P.R.; you see he did not see the p’t in its deepest relations in 1904. Hence the intellectuals struggled over it; he did not see it in 1923. Hence the party ruled; he did not see it in 1940; hence the bu’cy had to defend. Intellectuals (1905)[.] Party (1923)[.] Bu’cy (1940). 1918 (Brest-L’k)²³ (the German p’t); 1920 [T. Union] (the State). Never the p’t as primary with a certain task wh[ich] it alone could fulfill; and the party (subjective) merely as the necessary complement of the objective mvmt [movement] of the p’t. For him subjective is something wh[ich] could be shifted & manipulated by main force, lifting up by the boot’s straps. Consciousness lived a life of its own.

Now in his debates with Lenin 1905-1912, this exists. I know it does. It must. L[enin] gives us enough. But L.T.’s own words, his own formulations[,] will tell us everything. The concrete always. But the whole struggle, the idea that he and Lenin disagreed on “organization,” that is all wrong. Nobody except people like Goldman²⁴ ever disagree on “organization”. Deep, political, in fact philosophical and above all methodological (pardon me for separating these) are involved. When that hothead C’h’u [Chaulieu]²⁵ wants to split, without having this clear in his own head far less in other people’s, these things are messy.

Socialist Party as a group and to form a faction within the SFIO [Section Française de l’Internationale Ouvrière] (*International Trotskyism 1929-1985: A Documented Analysis of the Movement* [Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1991], p. 348).

According to Duncan Hallas, “The ‘French Turn’ . . . failed in its object—the creation of serious organisations with some influence in the working class movement that could form the basis of a new international” (“Against the Stream—The Origins of the Fourth Internationalist movement,” *International Socialism*, No. 53 [1972]).

²¹ Cf. Leon Trotsky, *The Crisis of the French Section (1935-36)* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1977); also *Leon Trotsky on France* (New York: Monad Press: distributed by Pathfinder Press, 1979).

²² Leon Trotsky, *The Permanent Revolution* (New York: Pioneer Publishers/Militant Publishing Association, 1931).

²³ Leon Trotsky, Speech At Best-Litovsk (May 1918), in Louis C. Fraina, *The Proletarian Revolution in Russia* (New York: Communist Press, 1918), pp. 348-354. Trotsky, as the Bolshevik War Commissar, negotiated the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with the Central Powers that led to Russia’s withdrawal from the First World War.

²⁴ Albert Goldman, Trotsky’s American attorney during the 1937 Dewey Commission into the Moscow Trials, was the spokesman for the majority faction when, in April 1940, the American Socialist Workers Party split in two (see Albert Goldman, *The question of unity between the Workers Party and the Socialist Workers Party*, introduction by Max Shachtman [Long Island City, NY: Workers Party Publication, 1947]).

²⁵ “Pierre Chaulieu” (Cornelius Castoriadis [1922-1997]) was the leader of the “leftist” faction in the French Trotskyist *Parti Communiste Révolutionnaire* (PCI), one of the three main factions at the time of the PCI’s Third Congress in September 1946. Castoriadis was born in Constantinople but grew up in Athens. He left in December 1945, on a scholarship to study in France (Christophe Premat, “A New

As you read keep all this in mind. L.T. had nowhere to go. He, we, have never had a mass basis to appeal to. The mass base of the IVth [International] is France in '36, the resistance movements. That is ours. We have nowhere else to go. L.T. "felt" it in that passage on "the instinctive drive,"²⁶ and in the Tr[ansitional] P'm [Programme] but he saw it subjectively—he could give it no Marxist basis. And the root of it is in 1904-1912. Why did he oppose L[enin]'s "defeatism".²⁷

Generation of Greek Intellectuals in Postwar France," in Julian Bourg, ed., *After the Deluge: New Perspectives on the Intellectual and Cultural History of Postwar France* [Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2004], pp. 103-123). Contact between J-FT and "Chaulieu" was initially established by Dunayevskaya in 1947; they met during the latter's visit to France to attend the conference of the Fourth International (*Guide to the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection—Marxist-Humanism*, p. 13). Castoriadis's break with Trotskyism in 1948 has been well documented (cf. Alex Callinicos, "Cornelius Castoriadis and the triumph of the will," *Trotskyism* [Buckingham: Open University Press, 1990]); the split with Trotskyism was quickly followed by formation of *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, a small organization with a handful of members in French car factories, which nonetheless carried on a broad theoretical critique of the Leninist-Bolshevik model of organization (Marcel van der Linden, "Socialisme ou Barbarie: A French Revolutionary Group, 1949-1965," *Left History*, Vol. 5, no. 1 [1998]: 7-37; Dick Howard, *The Specter of Democracy* [New York: Columbia University Press, 2002], "The Anticommunist Marxism of Socialisme ou Barbarie," Chap. 5, pp. 63-70). The group's journal (*Socialisme ou Barbarie*) serialized a French translation of Johnson-Forest's *The American Worker*, publishing the first part of the pamphlet in six issues and summarizing the second part in two issues (Raya Dunayevskaya, "Socialism or Barbarism," *Correspondence*, July 10, 1954). Castoriadis was also a contributor, with C.L.R. James and Grace Lee, to the book *Facing Reality* (Detroit: Correspondence, 1958). In the final issues of *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, Castoriadis declared that one had to decide between remaining a Marxist and remaining a revolutionary; he chose the latter position in "Marxism and Revolutionary Theory" (1964-1965) (Howard, *The Specter of Democracy*, Chap. 7, "From Marx to Castoriadis, and from Castoriadis to Us," pp. 83-98). (Castoriadis's repudiation of Marxism appeared in English under the pseudonym "Paul Cardan," viz., *Modern Capitalism and Revolution* [London: B. Potter, 1965]; *From Bolshevism to the bureaucracy* [London: Solidarity, 1967]; *History and revolution: a revolutionary critique of historical materialism* [Bromley, Kent: Solidarity, 1971]). *Socialisme ou Barbarie* was dissolved as a group in 1967, but its influence has been credited on the events of May 1968 in France. Castoriadis's articles from the journal *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, of which he was the editor, have been collected and published in three volumes (*Political and Social Writings*, translated and edited by David Ames Curtis, 3 vols. [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988, 1993]). Employed as an economist with the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) until 1970, when he retired from the position as Director of Statistics, National Accounts, and Growth Studies, Castoriadis became a practising psychoanalyst in 1974 and Director of Studies at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sociales Sciences in 1979. (It was only in 1970 that he gained French citizenship and began to publish under his own name.) Castoriadis's ideas of autonomy, self-management, and the radical imagination have had a major intellectual impact through a series of works (*Crossroads in the Labyrinth*, translated by Kate Soper and Martin H. Ryle [Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1984]; *The Imaginary Institution of Society*, translated by Kathleen Blamey [Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1987]; *Philosophy, politics, autonomy*, ed. by David Ames Curtis [New York: Oxford University Press, 1991]; and *World in fragments: writings on politics, society, psychoanalysis, and the imagination*, ed. and translated by David Ames Curtis [Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997]). Castoriadis died December 26, 1997, in Paris, at age 75, from complications following heart surgery.

²⁶ "Scientific socialism is the conscious expression of the unconscious historical process; namely, the instinctive and elemental drive of the proletariat to reconstruct society on communist beginnings" (Leon Trotsky, *In Defense of Marxism [against the Petty-bourgeois Opposition]* [New York: Pioneer Publishers, 1942], Part IV).

²⁷ A reference to Lenin's position of anti-war "revolutionary defeatism" during World War I (cf. Hal Draper, *War and Revolution: Lenin and the myth of revolutionary defeatism* [Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1996], a revision of an essay published in 1953-1954).

L[enin] saw the war as a sure dividing line between the classes—a breaking-point. Hence the sharpest formulations. The Fr Rev'n. The Commune,²⁸ 1905, the English Rev'n in the XVIIth [century] had taught him that the rev'y [revolutionary] class, its decisive stratum, would exceed any formulation. But L.T. temporised. He saw the opposition, the contradiction, but he saw the party, the intellectuals as a sort of go-between, adapting their knowledge to the consciousness of the masses. Same in 1904-1912.

I feel all over that in this period will be found in his writings phrase after phrase, idea after idea, which will be the unmistakeable basis of his later ideas. Read again Communism & Terr'm and you will see how he thought even in 1919-1920. He never changed.

Now if we can build from that period a solid structure & show how wrong he was, & why he opposed L[enin] so firmly, then from there we can move into the fully developed L.T. of 1923-1940. We must remember that after 1917 he would take over much of Leninism of the pre[-]1917 period. As usual with these developments, without solid basis it would support. Nowhere else. China! After all these years: Zero; or practically.²⁹

Forgive me if I say that naturally this is not the whole case. But we understand what T[rotskyis]m has to contribute. Now we have to turn the wheel right over.

Y[ou]rs
J.

I'll continue this. If you can make copies I'll be glad. Please double enclose and double tape all letters, particularly M.S.S. [manuscripts].

Document #3

[Pyramid Lake Ranch, Sutcliffe, Nevada] 9/6/48

[Rae:]

²⁸ A reference to the "Paris Commune" of 1871, specifically the socialist government that exercised power in Paris for two months in the spring of 1871 (March-May). The circumstances in which it was formed (the Franco-Prussian War of 1871), its radical and controversial decrees, and the brutal suppression at the end made it one of the most significant political events in the revolutionary history of nineteenth-century Europe. Marx's *The Civil War in France* (1871), written as an address to the International Workingmen's Association, explains the revolutionary achievements of the Paris Commune and the brutal reaction to it by the French government of Thiers. James penned an eloquent remembrance of the Commune in "They Showed the Way to Labor Emancipation: On Karl Marx and the 75th Anniversary of the Paris Commune" (*Labor Action* [newspaper of the Workers Party], March 18, 1946; cf. Robert Tombs, *The Paris Commune 1871* [London: Longman, 2000]; Carolyn Eichner, *Surmounting the barricades: Women in the Paris Commune* [Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004]; Alistair Horne, *The Terrible Year: the Paris Commune, 1871*, new ed. [London: Orion, 2004]; David Shafer, *The Paris Commune: French politics, culture, and society at the crossroads of the revolutionary tradition and revolutionary socialism* [New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005]).

²⁹ Cf. Duncan Hallas, "Fourth International in Decline: From Trotskyism to Pabloism, 1944-1953," *International Socialism*, no. 60 (1973): .

See this sequence. L[enin] said: The agricultural problem will be solved: either the rev'y way or the Russian way. L.T. said: Permanent Rev'n, and joined with the liquidators.

We say: either the totalitarian state of state-capital or the workers' state: socialism or barbarism.

L.T. said: The bu'cy might become a new ruling class. Then all is lost. [So] the revolution. But—he in practice has a very similar attitude, tho' more highly developed[,] to the bu'cy than he had to the liquidators.

He cannot make up his mind as to the role of the R'n [Russian] p't in the Russian rev'n, i.e., the world rev'n.

(I'll continue this later.)

Look now at method.

Lenin did not see Imperialism, or monopoly [*Inserted: the monopoly of Imp'm*], in 1903 (and before) when he outlined and concretised his perspective. He did not “see”, i.e., theoretically appraise the Social-Democracy. His [*Inserted: Russian*] politics was based upon a conception of capitalism in Russia.

Now it is important to note that L.T. had no particular conception of R'n economy. He dealt in “classes” and “politics”.

L[enin] wrote Imp'm,³⁰ Then came the R. R. [Russian Revolution] & the soviets—the alternative govt. L[enin] then changed not merely his policy. He changed his economics. He saw R'a had developed capitalistically more than they had thought. The new program shows that. All the socialistic policies of The Threatening Catastrophe³¹ are based upon Russian economy as ripe for nationalisation. It was very near state-capitalism already. The Soviets, dialectical complement of the need for nationalisation (under workers' power, of course) made socialism, “to look through all windows,” if only they could see it.

That was the economic step forward. Russian economy had approximated to the European.

Thus whereas L.T. had said that the economy being as it is, the revolutionary provisional gov't would have to take socialistic measures, L[enin] said that the economy having changed from what we “or I” thought it was we must now take the steps necessary corresponding to the change. I think the point is of capital importance for us. L.T. saw the classes in relation to political struggles. Lenin saw them in relation to economic stages of development and tasks. From there he drew his political conclusions.

³⁰ Lenin, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, written January-June 1916 (Vladimir Il'ich Lenin, *Selected Works in Three Volumes*, rev. ed. [Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977], Vol. 1, pp. 667-766; *Collected Works*, Vol. 22).

³¹ Lenin, *The Impending Catastrophe and How To Combat It*, written September 10-14, 1917 (*Collected Works*, Vol. 25, pp. 323-69).

Now it seems to me that this explains (1) the opposite attitudes to the war, or rather the opposing attitudes. L[enin] saw the war as the economic [bankruptcy] of cp'm [capitalism]. Only a new class could solve that bankruptcy of society. Hence he told the proletariat: Your first task is to destroy the role of the old class. "Defeatism"[.]

L.T. did not pose it that way. He couldn't. What did he see? He saw what he had seen in Russia: classes with opposed interests; and he saw essentially the social and political conflict (I am using social here in a limited sense). But because he did not see economic systems clashing, he balked at saying that the defeat of the economic system in your own country is the main task. The formulation of defeatism is only the quintessence of the whole political attitude. It is this hesitation, this not deeply enough rooted politics wh[ich] allowed him to oppose L[enin]'s formula and fool around with Cheidze³² & Co.

[Three lines are crossed out] . . . Watch here the same instinct, or rather tendency, to join the "liquidationist" type. This is precisely the continuation of the uncompromising refusal of L[enin] to tolerate liquidationism and L.T.'s struggle against it.

The sharpness of the class struggle at home. What is L[enin]'s basis. The most genuine permanent rev'n and internationalism is the merciless war against the representatives of the economic system and therefore against all who tamper with this war. Note L[enin]'s statement in 1915 that the individual country having overthrown etc and organized society on a socialist basis can then set out to wage the intern'l socialist war. L.T.'s internationalism balked at defeatism. It was the world rev'n of the Perm'n Rev'n theory covering the same hesitation which allowed him to protect the liquidators.

The pro't is not differentiated from the b'sie in abstract, economic terms, & the tasks formulated in the harsh uncompromising terms of economic movement.

We have done some work on B[rest]-L[itovsk]. But here again it is unquestionable that L.T. was carrying into practice his theory of the P. R. Even when L[enin] said the p't is not ready, retreat, it showed his basis that the Russian p't could solve the share of world-problems wh[ich] faced it [in] R'a. It is not surprising that now, the previous liquidationists, are all not for war, Mensheviks & Social-Rev'ies [Revolutionaries]. And it is not surprising that L.T. is with them, but is, as usual, hesitating to follow out his line.

To sum up. He is malleably opposed to the bourgeoisie but is always seeking help for the proletariat. He seeks all the rev'ies in 1905-1917; he has in mind the world rev'n; in 1914-1918, he seeks all the left Social-Dcts [Democrats]. That is one reason why he opposed the defeatist formulation. He seeks to win more support to the rev'y cause. Lenin seeks to win the p't and tries to win support to the party. B[rest]-Litovsk L.T. wants to win the help of the

³² H.S. Cheidze, the Georgian Menshevik chairman of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies; he was displaced by Trotsky as president on September 24, 1917, placing control of the Petrograd Soviet firmly in Bolsheviks hands, which was confirmed on October 29, 1917, when the Petrograd Soviet voted to transfer all military power to a Military Revolutionary Committee, headed by Trotsky (Leon Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution*, translated by Max Eastman, Vol. 2: The Attempted Counter-Revolution [New York: Simon & Schuster, 1932], Chaps. 24 and 31; cf. Rosa Luxemburg, "The Old Mole," *Spartacus*, No. 5 [May 1917]).

European p't . (His comparison of his blunder here with L[enin]'s re Warsaw, is monstrous. L[enin] said: We have nothing to lose. At B-L, the R. R'n was at stake.[])

To return to the sequence. In 1920 T[rade] U[union] discussion, he turns to the state, as in 1923 he turns to the party, which is the developing preliminary to his final error: to be afraid to trust the defence of the Russian rev'n to the R'n proletariat. He trusts to the bu'cy to keep the p't "in its own way" until the world rev'n.

But every such mistake leads inevitably to weakening of slogans as in 1912 at [the] August Conference.³³ And the climax of it is the refusal to accept defeatism in Russia and the weakening of the struggle v[s]] the bu'cy. The consequences are now world-wide, since R'a has become open contender for world-power.

The method lacks[:]

- a) i. Economic Basis: That is why he never saw [that] Stalinism was the working-class bu'ctic [bureaucratic] response to state-cap'm.
- ii. Refusal or inability to see the "instinctive drive" Soviets in 1917, Sp[anish] [Civil] W[ar],³⁴ U.S. in 1936, as the proletarian economic solution of problems of capitalism. God! How L[enin] saw that in 1917. How he saw it. Please let us in all our writings drive that home.
- b) But the above carries with it lack of a philosophical conception. The philo[so]phical i.e. abstracted, generalized conception, becomes more & more concrete until only the realisation of the philosophic concept can solve the concrete problem. L.T. sees it empirically as "instinctive drive etc"[.] We have to take that quote further. It has served its purpose. I mean take it further concretely, deliberately, analysing and then leaving it behind, putting it away on the shelf.
- iii. Hence "the plan". Not once will left society, but "the plan" will. I believe G[race] should work out this. The struggle of "intellectuals for leadership of an immature p't"³⁵ is the broad, undifferentiated universal or, from another point of view, the antithesis between the intellectuals and the workers; and for T'y this deepens and broadens, with every crisis. When the p't moves, no crisis; but the moment it is in trouble the old division reappears. Thus while we end in our "solidarity" between the philosophic concept of man and the concrete problems, L.T. ends in "plan". Thus are the two halves each carried to its logical, i.e., in the

³³ James might have confused the date of the Sixth (Prague) All-Russia Conference of the R.S.D.L.P., which worked from January 5 to January 17 (18-30), 1912, in Prague, and that actually assumed the character of a Party congress (see *The Sixth [Prague] All-Russia Conference of the R.S.D.L.P., January 5-17 [18-30]* [Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 17, pp. 451-486]).

³⁴ The Spanish Civil War took place from July 1936 to April 1939 (Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, rev. ed. [New York: Modern Library, 2001]; George Esenwein, *The Spanish Civil War* [New York: Taylor & Francis, 2005]).

³⁵ A reference to Trotsky's statement, viz., "The struggle for influence over the politically immature proletariat," which appeared in *Neue Zeit* (Nos. 50 and 51 of 1910) which Lenin attacked in "The Historical Meaning of the Inner-Party Struggle in Russia," published in 1911 (*Collected Works*, Vol. 16, pp. 374-92).

contemporary world, its concrete conclusion. The divorce between the revolutionary intellectual & the worker.

That is one aspect of it—our problem. That is why L.T. is always running after some help for the “immature” workers. Its crown is: the bu’cy “in its own way” defends. That means the bu’cy is more capable of defending Russia than the p’t .

(N.B. We have traced the various stages of this to the end, e. g., how L.T. stuck to L[enin]’s analyses of the IInd [Second International]³⁶ & applied it to the 3rd [Third International]³⁷ etc., expected the bu’cy to return to p[riva]te p[roper]ty etc. That in itself is something not unconnected with this that I am searching for: what is the organic method, which can be, I am positive, traced in development, from 1903 to 1940).

Again. Take the Fr[ench] Turn. All adventure. Without excuse, because without theory. (Someone should copy down & circulate the 2 or 3 conversations articles in which L.T. proposed the new international. John has them.) I remember it in France very well. L.T. shouting “Come out now”. “Break,” etc. “You are conservative,” over some political resolution on war or fascism or something. That is the game one can play with Norman Thomas’s party.³⁸

Not for one moment do I say we should not have gone in, abstractly. But then we should have been in until 1941 when the resistance movements began.³⁹

L.T. saw struggles over resolutions at conferences and we and Thorez⁴⁰ and Blum⁴¹ struggling for the dawning understanding of the workers. The process is to struggle for the

³⁶ The Second International was an organization formed by socialist and labor parties in 1889, as the successor of the International Workingmen’s Association (sometimes known as the First International). It was reformist, basing itself on the legitimacy of electoral and constitutional rule. Faced by the crisis inaugurated by World War I, it collapsed and was dissolved in 1916, when the national parties that composed it failed to oppose the war, and instead patriotically supported their national governments.

³⁷ The Communist International (Comintern), known also as the Third International, was organized in March 1919 by Lenin and the victorious Bolshevik party in Russia. It represented a split from the Second International and its constituent parties due to the latter’s failure to oppose what the Bolsheviks regarded as a bourgeois imperialist war. The goal of the Communist International was to create a unified international movement to fight “by all available means, including armed force, for the overthrow of the international bourgeoisie and for the creation of an international Soviet republic as a transition stage to the complete abolition of the State.” It held a total of seven world congresses, starting with the founding congress in March 1919 and with the last one held in 1935, before it was finally dissolved in 1943 (see Brigitte Studer and Berthold Unfried, “At the Beginning of a History: Visions of the Comintern After the Opening of the Archives,” *International Review of Social History*, Vol. 42, no. 3 (1997): 419-447; Kevin McDermott, *The Comintern: a history of international communism from Lenin to Stalin* [Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1996]; Kevin McDermott and Jeremy Agnew, *The Comintern: A History of International Communism from Lenin to Stalin* [New York: St. Martin’s, 1997]; Tim Rees and Andrew Thorpe, eds., *International Communism and the Communist International, 1919-43* [Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998]; cf. Al Richardson, *The Comintern and its critics* [London: Porcupine Press/Socialist Platform, 2001]).

³⁸ The Socialist Party of Norman Thomas (1884-1968), American socialist, social reformer, and frequent Socialist Party candidate for political office.

³⁹ Cf. Ian H. Birchall, “With the Masses, Against the Stream: French Trotskyism in the Second World War,” *Revolutionary History*, Vol. 1, no. 4 (Winter 1988-89);

<http://www.marxists.org/history/etol/document/france/france01.htm>.

⁴⁰ Maurice Thorez (1900-1964), leader of the French Communist Party.

understanding of the party, preparing for the great historic movements which propel parties and internationals out of the masses. (Why doesn't Grace come to our assistance, and define the thing.)

Methodologically, a key transition point, I want to repeat, is that L.T. found himself with the liquidators at Brest-Litovsk, and once more in 1923, he was wobbling all over the place, but paying allegiance once more to Stalin's party, which was fast being filled up with liquidator elements. Liquidation 1903-1914; War !!!![;] 1919; militarization[;] 1920 T. U. dispute. (N.B. L.T. at first had a majority. Please document this, Rae); 1923, the party; then the bu'cy etc. The same people more or less & L.T. always in the same relation to them.

(To be continued)

INSERT FACSIMILE PAGE ITEM #1 HERE!

⁴¹ Léon Blum (1872-1950), the leading architect of the Popular Front in France, in the aftermath of the right-wing demonstrations in Paris in February 1934. The solidarity achieved between Socialists, Radicals, and all other opponents of Fascism paved the way for Blum to head the first Popular Front coalition government in France in 1936-1937 (cf. Joel G. Colton, *Léon Blum: Humanist in Politics* [Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1987]; Helmut Gruber, *Léon Blum, French socialism, and the Popular Front: a case of international contradictions* [Ithaca, NY: Western Societies Program, Center for International Studies, Cornell University, 1986]; and John T. Marcus, *French Socialism in the crisis years, 1933-1936: Fascism and the French left* [Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, c. 1976]).

Please type up.

I would like to hear from the both of you. The end is clear. The centrist, narrow, fear of rev'y policy, fear of internationalist agitation, immediate demands "altho' we are for the rev'n at once if it comes," all this is the end of a chain.

I can receive everything you send, but please double enclose them and tape the inside envelope too. The last one, copy of speech, was insecurely fastened. Will start sending speech to-morrow.

Regards,
J.

Regards to J[ohn]; hope he is flourishing.

Document #4

[Pyramid Lake Ranch, Sutcliffe, Nevada, n.d.]

[Grace]:

There are three points[:]

- 1) The "I", the intellectual, the party, the state[.]
- 2) The party as seen by the IVth [International] as "the vanguard". Sure it is, but the content given to it makes it ridiculous[.]
- 3) The workers are "deceived". L.T. was to write on leaders. He actually wrote a sentence on it re ["The USSR & The War"].⁴² He sees them as corrupted, from above.

Look it up, will you? As soon as they reach, are lifted to a certain spot, position, by the workers, the bourgeoisie corrupts them. Work at it. Look also, quote for comment all round. L.T.'s analyses of the German Social-D[emocra]cy in *Bolsheviks & World Peace*; and again in *The New Course*. L.T. thinks they are corrupted from above, routine[,] large treasury etc; put the three passages together (and send me a copy); add to them a careful selection of quotes from his work on the unions from which Frank⁴³ quoted so heavily. He seems to say what we are saying. "The t. u's became part of the state[.]" etc. He really be is working from the opposite end. He thinks, he sees, the state, forcing the unions in to work with them.

We say, as L[enin] would have said, state-capitalism capital at the stage of development, its economic content and forms discipline the unions. For L.T. this incorporation is a political fact—the state holds a pistol at the head of the u[nion] leaders. For us it is an economic

⁴² Leon Trotsky, "The U.S.S.R. in War," written September 25, 1939, *The New International*, Vol. 10, no. 11 (November 1939). Pp. 325-332.

⁴³ Frank Monaco, a member of J-FT.

manifestation. Result? We say that the union bu'cy is to be removed. Its functions must be carried out by another type of worker organisation. The revolution alone, the genuinely permanent rev'n alone can break this. It is for us a part, an organic part of the decaying social order. Hence hence, we can see the 3rd-Int [International] for what it is. L.T. never did and his followers to-day can't.

The intellectuals struggle over the immature p't . How mad L[enin] was; called them vulgar formalists etc. But, note, Stalinism in W. Europe owed its allegiance, its raison d'etre etc to the Kremlin. If you read the M'fto [Manifesto] of 1940,⁴⁴ wh[ich] was written after the Stalin-Hitler p'ct, where the C.P. had not behaved as he said, you will see the terrible mess L.T. was in and the synthetic, subjective "solution" he reached. Some will, some will not . . . Some undoubtedly are "brave" etc. etc.

Now for 2.

This method, "dualism"—I agree. I await your analysis.

We are "the vanguard". But the conception is that "we" grow. We are misled by false theory and the peculiar experience of the R'n Rev. The B'ks & M'ks dominated the R'n organizations. The second Intl started as a great social force. The Third [International] had one great lease of life 1919-1933 and then another after W.W[.] II; in the first it was rev'y; the second reactionary. The Fourth [International] will be formed in violent opposition to the Third—millions upon millions forming it in action.

We have pointed this out, often enough, but the intellectuals, party[,] state bu'cy kind of thinking in essence sees all increase of mass consciousness and all increase of our growth to correspond. The fact, the ideas we know. Sharpen up the method. For this is precisely the way Brother Chaulieu is thinking.

In a rev'y period all sects are reactionary. It is because the impetus, drive[,] impulse, accumulating negativity, this is decisive. Our little polemics etc are important. But in relation to the basic contradictions of society, and the [*convenience?*] of "emergence," the unity [vs] no unity[,] split etc, are fantastic. This is not Leninism, nor Marxism. What is it? What is it? L[enin] didn't care about the P. R. [Permanent Revolution]—not a damn. The liquidators said: break up the party. He split on that. 1917: Unity is impossible. L.T. agrees? Good. Unity. Compare his resolution & ideas on unity with the Inter[*rest of name illegible*] and L.T.'s.

Note too how the false method always throws you back to a previous method, or manifestation of a previously correct method or throws you forward into Utopia.

NB. L[enin] fought on the war.

1938. The whole IVth [International] thought that the war would be the deciding issue. Wrong.

⁴⁴ Leon Trotsky, "Manifesto of the Fourth International," written May 28, 1940, *The Fourth International*, Vol. 1, no. 5 (October 1940): 124.

I have repeatedly seen this in intellectual work of all kinds; and it is particularly noticeable in the history of military operations. The ideas that spring from the living concrete relationships of one period are faithfully & passionately applied to another, succeeding period and become reactionary or at least a drag. L.T. never never grasped the Leninist method in full. His mistakes are too consistent, one after the other; except 1905 & 1917. Very very carefully, we shall have to show how the Leninist ideas in their context, their concrete manifestation in policies, the first IV congresses, were repeated and given a different "orientation" because of shifts in class and international relations.

Document #5

[Pyramid Lake Ranch, Sutcliffe, Nevada, n.d.]

My dear G[race]

[*First three lines of the letter are blacked out . . .*]

I got the *Neue Zeit* article. It is a revelation. There, complete, is the structure of his [Trotsky's] mind, the categorizing of immature p't and intellectuals; (the two go together) and, all in all, the opposite pole to Lenin's article. Our quote in the B-S [*The Balance Sheet of American Trotskyism*] about economic content is the thing. A drastic analysis, in concrete terms, should be made of this article and the others; connecting a) attitude to economic content (b) to proletariat (c) to party (d) to intellectuals (e) to factions etc etc all fitted into the whole conception behind it. Then from there we can move forward (the scissors opening) and back. Somewhere in this is hidden the P[roletarian] R[evolution]. Is it the conviction of the immaturity of the p't and its need for the intellectuals that make the bourgeois revolution intolerable? This can form a useful personal hypothesis for examining the material. The proofs are there, or they do not exist.

To-day, however, I am concerned with something else. God forgive me, but I have a 10,000 word thesis that needs only writing down to get it into order (as a draft) and for all the implications to be seen. It is the relation of the method of thought of conflicting (serious ones) political views. This is for you, R[ae] and myself by the way, nobody else, we cannot overwhelm people and this is very tentative, for the public. I am not sure of the thing as one ought to be and I reserve the right to keep things dark until I am sure of them in outline at least. In my own head it is not tentative at all.

I believe that Bolshevism, i.e., the correct rev'y policy, is what Hegel calls Reason. Connected with this is Mind and Spirit. I'll go into that later. At any time, the correct method is using Reason. The incorrect method, closest to it, will be using—what method? I believe it is Understanding, but not "ordinary" Hegelian (?) Understanding but reflective Understanding.

On P. 56 of the *Logic* (J & S) Vol (1) is the key passage. This should be typed in here. [[I got it typed and I enclose it.]] I simply cannot copy it down. But I shall go on as if it is.

Now follow this closely, with the passage before you.⁴⁵

[. . . But *reflective* Understanding assumed possession of Philosophy. We must learn precisely what is meant by this expression, which indeed is frequently used as a catch-word; by it is to be understood generally the abstracting and separating intelligence which clings tenaciously to the separations which it has made. Directed against Reason, this intelligence behaves as *crude Common Sense* and maintains the view that Truth rests upon sense-reality, that thoughts are *only* thoughts, meaning that it is sense-perception that first endows them with substance and reality, that Reason—in as far as it is merely Reason—can spin nothing but idle fancies. In this renunciation of Reason by itself, the concept of Truth is lost; it is restricted to the cognition of merely subjective Truth, of mere appearance, of something to which the nature of the thing itself does not correspond; *knowing* falls back into *opinion*.

[But this turn which Cognition takes, and which has the air of being a loss and a retrogression, has something deeper behind it—something upon which the uplifting of Reason to the loftier spirit of the newer Philosophy chiefly depends. That is, the ground of this now everywhere prevalent idea is to be sought in a perception of the *necessary conflict* with each other of the determinations of Understanding. The reflection already mentioned is this, that the immediate concrete must be transcended, and must undergo determination and abstraction. But reflection must, just as much, transcend these its own separate determinations, and forthwith relate them to each other. Then at the standpoint of this relating, the conflict emerges. This relating activity of reflection belongs in itself to Reason; that transcending of these determinations which attains to a perception of their conflict, is the great negative step towards the true concept of Reason. But this perception, being merely partial, falls into the error of fancying that it is Reason which is in contradiction with itself, and does not recognize that the contradiction is just the lifting of Reason above the limitations of Understanding, and the dissolution of these. Instead of starting from this point to make the final step upwards, knowledge, recognizing the unsatisfactory nature of the determinations of Understanding, flies straight back to sensible existence, thinking to find therein stability and unity. But on the other hand, since this knowledge knows itself to be knowledge only of appearances, its insufficiency is confessed, yet at the same time it is supposed that things, though not rightly known in themselves, still are rightly known within the sphere of appearances; as though only the *kinds of objects* were different, and the one kind, namely Things in themselves, did not fall within knowledge, and the other kind, namely Appearances, did so fall. It is as though accurate perception were attributed to a man, with the proviso that he yet could not perceive Truth but only untruth. Absurd as this would be, a true knowledge which did not know the object of knowledge as it is in itself, would be equally absurd.]

Directed against the creative conceptions of Bolshevism (inevitability of socialism, maturity of the p't for whatever tasks society faces it with) this type of thinking behaves as crude Common Sense and maintains the view that Truth, a correct policy, rests upon sense-reality, that thoughts are only thoughts, meaning that it is sense-perception that first endows them

⁴⁵ *Hegel's Science of Logic*. Trans. By W. H. Johnston and L. G. Struthers. 2 vols. (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1929), Volume One, pp. 56-57.

with substance and reality, that is to say that the proletariat is to be judged only by what it does, the stage it has concretely reached, and all expectations of great developments are nothing but the spinning of idle fancies. This is the understanding of Menshevism . . .

But this turn of thought has something deeper behind it. It is recognized that there is a conflict between the various determinations that "Understanding" has put forward. The Mensheviks realise that their determinations, bourgeois revolution, role [of] proletarian part, peasant revolution, role of liberals etc, socialism, do not form a harmonious whole. They have recognized that the immediate concrete must be transcended and undergo determination and abstraction. They are not vulgar empiricists. They attempt a Marxist, i[.]e[.], a socialist analysis. It is their attempt to do this, to join again in some whole the determinations they have worked out, almost have inherited, which causes, & brings out the problem. For any kind of reflection, i[.]e[.], the necessary creative re-construction, without which we are the crudest materialists, every kind of "reflection" must transcend these determinations, and forthwith relate them to each other. "Then, at the stand-point of this relating, the conflict emerges." Here it emerges indeed.

This "relating activity," this power to unite the divisions, the determinations, we have worked out in a higher synthesis, is the function of "Reason." To be able to transcend these determinations while recognising their inescapable conflict, is the great negative step towards true Reason. So far so good. But Understanding here, being Reflection, only of a partial character, believes that Reason, the true creative concept, is in conflict with it; and does not recognise that Reason is only Reason because it can lift, it must lift itself above the limitations of Understanding.

Instead of starting from this point to make the final step upwards, knowledge, recognising the unsatisfactory nature of the determinations of Understanding, flies straight back to sensible existence, thinking to find therein stability and unity. (That is precisely the basis of "immediate demands," consciousness, ever-higher transitional slogans⁴⁶ [[in France to-day!]] and the whole bag of tricks.) Hegel's final sentences are priceless.

"It is as though accurate perception were attributed to a man, with the proviso that he yet could not perceive Truth but only untruth."

It seems to me the final methodological characterization of our subject of study, this whole section from H[egel]. Having to make the transcendence, it make it (sometimes) in words, but falls back always to sensible existence.

⁴⁶ In April 1946, the International Pre-Conference of the Fourth International adopted a resolution that declared in part:

On the other hand, in view of the as yet unstable policy of the bourgeoisie and the relationship of forces between it and the parties based on the workers, the slogan '**For a Workers' and Farmers' Government**' is concretized in the formula systematically addressed to the old conservative leadership: '**For a Socialist-Communist Government! Break with the Bourgeoisie! Take Power, All the Power!**' . . . this slogan is a **transitional slogan**, whose purpose it is to prepare the masses for revolutionary action and to help them to understand, by the very logic of their action, the necessity of going beyond the framework of bourgeois democracy ("The New Imperialist Peace and the Building of the Parties of the Fourth International," April 1946).

Now here are involved very profound problems of thought. I cannot go into all, except one, but this is decisive. Shachtman⁴⁷ & Co see the tiny parties of the IVth [International], (and not only Shachtman.) They see the terrible crisis. They have to relate this to the ultimate objective—the fundamental “presupposition” of socialism. “. . . at the standpoint of this relating, the conflict emerges.” They cannot make the leap. They tumble back into sensible existence. But the leap is to see that our conception of the party, its growth and its development must change. I have abstracted “the party”; there is the proletariat itself, and the whole complex of society. But as long as we know we have made an abstraction, it will serve.

Now, however, and we are here on the very edge of a precipice, (I hope you see it) Marxism separates itself from Hegelianism (tho’ I am never very sure of this, I believe Hegel is maligned, but in any case it is necessary to be on the safe side). This conscious transcendence of determinations which seem to be an insoluble contradiction, is not proof. But it is the beginning, the indispensable, to rational cognition. With it, you can then explore. The proof is in what you find. Old stuff? Yes, but it is wise to say these things.

We have found so much, that it is obvious our method is better than the other methods which find nothing; or nonsense, mountains of it. But I believe we have here the relation, the methodological relation, between how we think and how those who are closest to us think.

As always when I go into these problems I am aware of my limitations.

But I have build up a whole series of observations on some of the key passages of the *Logic* and the *Phenomenology*⁴⁸ (to a much lesser degree). I want to get it all down, sooner or later, so as to get the method over the contrast in methods right, for us, for me. I need it. According to what you say, I shall be able to proceed. I am able to send the quote—someone has typed it for me.

I am very anxious that you should understand this. Many of the things I shall say may seem old stuff. Everything can’t be new. But I believe I have got hold of a process of clarification, which I find invaluable. I can’t help remembering always that in 1914 L[enin] settled down to a) study of Hegel (b) *Imperialism* (c) *State & Revolution*. There was a great clearing-up, preparation for the New International. We now have to do a similar clearing-up, which is of course a projection forward. There are many things we cannot do. Only the proletariat can do them for us. We have to wait. But the study of the State was under weigh before the 1917 Soviets contributed the new State for Lenin. Our eyes at any rate are opened. We have plenty to do, and one of them is the clearing-up of the intellectual method. This for me as you see is

⁴⁷ Max Shachtman [Ernest Haberkern] (1904-1971), a major figure in the history of the American Trotskyist movement beginning in the thirties, editor of the movement’s theoretical journal *New International*, and the leader of the minority section of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) that split with Trotsky over the nature of the Soviet Union to form the Workers Party in 1940 (Peter Drucker, *Max Shachtman and his left: a socialist’s odyssey through the “American Century”* [Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1994]; cf. Max Shachtman, *Race and Revolution*, ed. by Christopher Phelps [London and New York: Verso, 2003]).

⁴⁸ G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit* [1806], translated by A.V. Miller with analysis of the text and foreword by J. N. Findlay (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).

not abstract. I am linking it directly with L[enin]'s practice in building the party. Did you see, I am sure you saw, R[ae]'s summary of her views? It was something!

Thanks for all the work on Guérin.⁴⁹

As ever,

J[immy]⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Daniel Guérin (1904-1988), anarchist thinker and writer, was one of France's leading revolutionary activists as well as a key figure in the anti-colonial struggle in France (David Berry, "Un contradicteur permanent": The ideological and political itinerary of Daniel Guérin," in Julian Bourg, ed., *After the Deluge: New Perspectives on the Intellectual and Cultural History of Postwar France* [Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2004], pp. 149-174; David S. Bell, "Daniel Guérin (1904-88)," *Biographical Dictionary of French Political Leaders since 1870*, ed. by David S. Bell, Douglas Johnson, and Peter Morris [New York: Simon & Schuster and Association for the Study of Modern and Contemporary France, 1990], pp. 191-193). Guérin spent almost two years in the U.S., in 1946-1947, doing research preparatory to his study of America (*Où va le peuple américain?* 2 vol. [Paris: Julliard, 1950-51]). He spent time with James and invited him to translate his book, *La lutte de classes, sous la première république, bourgeois et "bras nus" (1793-1797)* (Paris: Gallimard, 1946). James accepted the invitation, but although he began working on it in Nevada, and made several subsequent attempts, he never succeeded in completing the translation (the book was eventually translated by Ian Patterson and was later published as *Class Struggle in the First French Republic: bourgeois and bras nus 1793-1795* (London: Pluto, 1977) (see N. Carlin, "Daniel Guérin and the working class in the French Revolution", *International Socialism*, no. 47 [Summer 1990]: 197-223). James's work on the translation and the significance that he attached to Guérin's work are well documented in *Special Delivery: The Letters of C.L.R. James to Constance Webb, 1939-1948* (pp. 32, 317, 321, 341, 361). Constance Webb, who did the typing of James's early drafts of the translation, recalled Guérin's presence in New York and friendship with James:

When Guérin visited New York he spent a lot of time with us. He was never, as far as I know, a member of any of the groups, but he sometimes attended meetings. Daniel was a pleasant and generous man. His home was in Paris and he had a large estate in the country where he invited artists to live when he was absent. He did not charge them anything at all . . . Many of the Johnsonites did not like Guérin, who, although married, never hid the fact that he was gay. In our small group, there was a new recruit, an attractive young man, well built, blonde, with a sweet smile. Daniel took a liking to him and when he left to tour the U.S. he took the young man along. There were some raised eyebrows by comrades as well as a buzz of unpleasant gossip. Nello [Note: "Nello" was C.L.R. James's nickname, it was short for "Lionel"] saw nothing wrong in the liaison and I always thought the arrangement was fine, although I kept this to myself. The youngster, who was, after all, about eighteen years old, would receive an intellectual and physical education. It was not a case of seduction per se, because we had all pretty much known that the young man was also gay (Webb, *Not Without Love*, p. 232).

In addition to his books on the popular movements of the French Revolution, Guérin was the author numerous works, including *Fascism and Big Business* (New York: Pioneer Publishers, 1939); *Negroes on the March: A Frenchman's Report on the American Negro Struggle* (London: New Park Publications, 1956); *Anarchism: From Theory to Practice* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970); and the autobiographical *The Brown Plague: Travels in Late Weimar and Early Nazi Germany* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994). To mark the 100th anniversary of his birth, an international conference was organized at Loughborough University, U.K., September 17-19, 2004; it included an important paper by Ian Birchall that dealt with "Daniel Guérin's Dialogue with Leninism".

⁵⁰ "Jimmy" was how James was known among his political associates, taken for the initial "J" in his party name, "J.R. Johnson".

Regards to Ike.⁵¹

I cannot resist adding this. Our presupposition, our end[,] our whole (the concluding part of it, is socialism, its inevitability.) Dialectical thought moves between the actual, and the actual in the light of this ultimate. But the ultimate limit, the indispensable support of our thought[,] that too develops. Socialism for us is not what it was for L[enin], still less for K[arl] M[arx]. We can be more concrete. This developing concreteness (and the developing antagonisms) make the logical concept: the inevitability of socialism, a moving, developing thing. But if this develops, then everything [else] with it as one of the poles of thought must alter. I know that I have been doing this unconsciously for a time and now for two years at least quite consciously. It is to be judged by results. But I do want to get the thing perfectly clear and get L.T. nailed philosophically to the last inch, so that every time I apprehend something, I have a frame.

Document #6

[Pyramid Lake Ranch, Sutcliffe, Nevada] Saturday Sep 10th [1948]

[Rae:]

I am a little nervous about circulation. I dropped some ideas to G[race]. Please handle it.

I am working out these notes, and do not want to be misunderstood. I am tracing lines and trace them exclusive of other considerations. Furthermore T[rotskyis]m is the repository of the traditions of B[olshevis]m. I, however, we, deal with divergences exclusively—later we can draw the balance.

Now. Subjective I; intellectuals (all of us); party in power; state of workers; bu'cy; nationalised property & plan. Now each is a stage of negation of capitalism. In *Invading [Socialist Society]*,⁵² a seminal work, and a good one, we trace the relation of each one to the bourgeois conception of the time.

Now in R[ussian] R[evolution], as in Fr[ance], all future tendencies appeared, all; it always happens thus.

Now in 1903, capitalism needs freedom. Hence bourgeois intellectuals play the role of liberal bourgeoisie in the rev'y movement. Later M/ks [Mensheviks] in Feb-Oct [1917] give the classic portrayal of super-profits. The type is organic. They have no super-profits but they represent the world [of the] 2nd In'l.

⁵¹ Saul Blackman, an Army veteran., was a member of J-FT.

⁵² J.R. Johnson, F. Forest, and Ria Stone, *The Invading Socialist Society* (New York: The Johnson-Forest Tendency, 1947). The phrase "invading socialist society" was borrowed from Engels ("In the trusts, freedom of competition changes into its very opposite—into monopoly; and the production without any definite plan of capitalistic society capitulates to the production upon a definite plan of the invading socialistic society," *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, first published 1880 (Marx/Engels, *Selected Works* [Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970], Vol. 3, pp. 95-151).

B'm [Bolshevism] comes into its own, because it is the party of monopoly capitalism. The intellectuals do not fight discipline. They are all for discipline from 1920 on. This is the classic struggle of our day—B'm as usual in advance—forerunner.

Now for completed state-capitalism. Now it includes imperialism. The labor bu'cy (why in Christ's name Ch[aulieu] does not do this work instead of chattering about split I don't know) the labor bu'cy, master of the unions (qualitatively different from the 2nd Intl) is imperialistic thru & thru, either from above, e.g. U.S., or from below, France, Italy etc. The first necessity now is discipline, not in the party, but in production.

The thing is to trace the critical nodal points of difference between L[enin] & L.T. and relate them to the stages of produc'n and remembering always that the R.R. anticipated if we know how to read, the problem of to-day.

Another approach (Grace should work these out rigorously in methodological terms. That is invaluable for us.) As I say, another approach.

L.T. & L[enin] both say: only the p't can: apparent agreement on the fundamental. But L.T. begins with subjectivity—the intellectuals struggling for mastery of the immature p't. We should spend a month in digging out the implications of this “immature.” But, for the time being, what begins as a slight (apparently) difference of organisation (and L.T. built the history of the IVth [International] on that), constantly widens.

Note, as I have pointed out earlier, L.T. not only failed in 1912 to put forward a Leninist policy; to 1917 he (i) theoretically rejected defeatism (ii) organisationally kept up his ties with the liquidators.

He was against the war, as he was against the Mensheviks; but he was opposed to Lenin also; and I am certain that he was against the bu'cy but had Lenin been alive he would have been opposed to Lenin too.

The climax is that as the R'n power consolidates he has to choose and chooses definitively. The qualitative change in the choice leads him squarely in the camp of the bu'cy.

[break in the text] . . . party.

The “centrism” of Kautsky & Co—note this please, L[enin] insisted that they were a [marsh]—who were opposed to the war, but found itself expressed in L.T.'s equivocal policies[.]

The precocity of the 3rd In'l, its need to control the pt finds its reflection in L-T's plan[.]

Now we approach plan. There is a terrible trap here and we need great courage and faith; also we need great method. (Good old dialectic.)

For we cannot demonstrate plan by the proletariat. It is absolutely impossible. Nobody in the world could have demonstrated how the Fr. Rev'n was going to attempt to solves its problems. That is where G[uérin] is so valuable in his admirable inter'lsism [internationalism].

L[enin] knew this. All he could say was: this force of workers could do better than the bourgeoisie: the capitalistic method of labor.

NB. Subtle & intricate. I repeat: who could have proved or foreseen the sections, the clubs, the paper of Hebert,⁵³ the rev'y army . . . the desperate, the simple human attempts to realise political democracy in its completeness (i[.]e[.] socialisation but they couldn't know that).

The coming rev'n will make all previous ones look like preparations, anticipations. We cannot know how the p't will organise production. We can no more know that, than we could have foretold the Commune or the Soviet & the [*historical?*] general strike in 1905. This means of course a field-day for the Philistines. Abstract, cloud-gathering etc. They are the practical men.

- (1) We have to ignore them.
- (2) We have to demonstrate the inevitability of our conception.

Now here all the resources of the dialectic and our own ingenuity have to be used. We have to show that any other conception of the rev'n is hopelessly inadequate and [therefore] reactionary. 1871, 1905, 1917; they all lagged behind—all. L.T. lagged behind L[enin], despite his grandiose P[ermanent] R[evolution], but L[enin] lagged behind in 1905. If you lag behind in feeling expectation you cannot see the present.

(The Fr. Party⁵⁴ has had 4 clear years to prepare itself for the prol'n rev'n. To this day, after it is as clear as day that the Bruening⁵⁵-Hitler; Republic—Fascism same in G[ermany], 1929—1933[,] is being repeated in France on a higher plane, they are still fiddling with “ever-higher transitional slogans”).

If you cannot see the future and you cannot hold fast the contradictions and see immediately what represents the future, & build on that—Further, unless you pose, however abstractly, the full situation, then alternatives come as ‘Stalinism, maybe bu[reaucrati]c coll[ectivis]m; maybe we had better get along with b'cy.’

Now we have done part of this; the philosophical concept of man; the real, economic situation; Lenin's concept of self-mobilization in 1917; we have (negatively for the most part) shown the situation in the factories.

We have not done the study of the birth of the C.I.O.; the study of production contracts which, I repeat, contain in embryo, the basis of the future society, for those who know the factory and know Marxism). We have not done what only Ch[aulieu] can do for us—in

⁵³ Jacques-René Hébert (1757-1794), the chief spokesman for the Parisian sansculottes (extreme radical revolutionaries) during the French Revolution. He and his followers, known as Hébertists, were largely responsible for pressuring the Jacobin regime of 1793–94 into adopting the most radical measures of the Revolutionary period (cf. Morris Slavin, *The Hébertistes to the Guillotine: Anatomy of a “Conspiracy” in Revolutionary France* [Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994]; and Charles B. McNamara, “The Hébertists: Study of a French Revolutionary “Faction” in the Reign of Terror, 1793-1794,” Ph. D. diss., Fordham University, 1978).

⁵⁴ *Parti Communiste Révolutionnaire (Trotskyiste)*.

⁵⁵ Dr. Heinrich Bruening was German Chancellor, 1929-1932.

France—delineate the different strata of workers & petty-bourgeois intellectuals. He does not do it because he does not understand it, that's all.

But, for us, the chief or one of the chief roads is to show

- (1) The history of, i[.]e[.] the development of, these ideas in the R. Rev'n.
- (2) The development of them in T'ym [Trotskyism].
- (3) Their development in general.

When L[enin] says that L.T.'s all-inclusive means distrust of the p't, we have in germ "the plan".

Now we have to establish philosophically but historically, in society (not in the writings of philosophers, Grace, though we can't do it without that) that "plan" is mediation from above. I may have written it before, but——

The Fr R. attempted a truly d'c [democratic] society. It got the constitution & parliamentarianism, the Napoleonic state, and the Code Napoleon; all on the basis of industrial capitalism.

Now the workers, or the rev'aries, let us placate the Phlistines, only to be able to strangle them in a minute, society wants the workers to rule. That is our revolution, the rev'n of to-day. Now all our rev'y folks see this as the workers led by the party. But the content of this rev'n is production.

The Sp[anish] Rev'n and the state of the world show that as clear as day. The Sp[anish] Rev'n began in 1931 with nonsensical [demands] and by 1936 had reached workers' management of production. (Our neglect of this rev'n is one of the most shameful and revealing features of our movement.) Furthermore, ["Negrin⁵⁶-Stalin"] (as our friend [Guérin] calls it) defeated Prieto-Azana⁵⁷ as Stalinism defeated Anglo-American imperialism for control of the disposition of the proletariat.

The whole picture is very very clear. W.W.II begins there. But the p't has so far spoken its most powerful piece precisely in the factories of Spain in 1936-37 until the combined bu[reaucracie]s beat it down.

Now no party led this. None. Like the Fr Rv, the [Paris] Commune, 1905, Feb'y 1917, it came. It is the greatest, i.e. the deepest rev'n so far. We have played with this rev'n. It was first and foremost a rev'n in production. As far beyond 1917 as 1905 was beyond the Commune.

I look thru mentally our writings (the IVth [International] as a whole). They don't impress me very much. The Sp[anish] Rev'n in reality passed us by as a theoretical experience.

⁵⁶ Juan Negrín Lopez (1887-1956), prime minister of Republican Spain (1937-1939) during the last two years of the Spanish Civil War.

⁵⁷ Manuel Azana y Diaz, president of the Second Republic before the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War.

The bureaucracies smashed it; Social-D's, the Anarchists and the Stalinists. As I remember it and look back at my own ideas on the Sp Rev and I read all the stuff I am amazed at the superficiality of the ideas I held. I understand what eats Munis⁵⁸ . . .

Now our task is to use Fr Rev'n; Russian Rev'n, Sp Rev'n, with our eyes glued on prod'cn; and the synthesis which is always substituted for the rev'n of the period. [[Note by the way that German bayonets & then Stalinist & American bayonets alone kept the Fr. resistance out of complete mastery of the factories.]]

The whole sequence of the rev'ns—beginning with the Fr (1789) should be reworked and written from this basis.

The Fr. Rev must begin the truth of politics, political d'cy is in prod'cn. The Fr. Rev'n discovered that. It discovered also that the truth of politics is self-mobilization. We have to show both.

I have been reading some anti-Rev'y historians. The “collectivism” of the Fr Rev'n in its later stages was amazing. You have this peculiar combination of economic centralization (from above) and political self-mobilization of the masses. It was bourgeois; revolutionary but bourgeois.

We are at the extreme of that to-day. And later I shall trace a movement of rev'y petty-bourgeois (Marat⁵⁹ & his benevolent dictatorship right over to the petty-bourgeois dictatorships, fascist & Stalinist of to-day—emancipated bourgeois society).

I hope you have this. [[I am writing at moments—before lunch, half-an-hour stolen after breakfast, before . . . dinner. That is not the way to do these things. But otherwise I'll never do it this trip.]]

I hope it is clear: see the whole movement in terms of production. The party must know this and concentrate on this to-day, express it. L[enin] expressed the d'ctatorship of p't & p'y [party] for the bourgeois rev'n; peasant rev'n & politics; the moment he saw the change he went to production.

Is it clear? We build such a past that tho' we cannot demonstrate the future, we leave them with no alternative.

Now, to the R[ussian] R[evolution]. Here the [few] pages R[ae] has done on 1917-on are magnificent.⁶⁰ We need it, all of it. But we need some detail. Irving did some fine work on

⁵⁸ Manuel F. Grandizo Munis (1912-1989), one-time leader of the Spanish section of the Fourth International (FI), who split from it in 1948, following its Second Congress; accused of “extreme left” positions, Munis went on to form *Fomento Obrero Revolucionario* (FOR), resulting in extensive polemical battles waged against the FI.

⁵⁹ Jean-Paul Marat (1743-1793), leader of the radical Montagnard faction during the French Revolution, assassinated in his bath by Charlotte Corday, a young Girondin conservative (see Ernest Belfort Bax, *Jean-Paul Marat: The People's Friend* [London: G. Richards, 1901]).

⁶⁰ According to the *Guide to the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, “In 1947 Forest [Dunayevskaya] undertook an abbreviated commentary on the 12 volumes of Lenin's *Selected Works* for the use of comrades in the Johnson-Forest Tendency;” the *Guide* lists two items: “How to Study Lenin. An 11-page

the R[ussian] R[evolution] T. U's in his talk during the interim [period].⁶¹ He did no research, but he brought out in relation to production some important facts.

Note, my friends, that the H[istory] of the R[ussian] R[evolution]⁶² (and it is the greatest history book ever written) is almost a blank on the economic side. Strange but true. Very very strange and yet not strange. While L[enin] in the S & R'n [*State and Revolution*], *The Threatening*,⁶³ Can the B[olsheviks]; drove this home. How we live and learn. What from July on was L[enin]'s main prop'a [propaganda] & agitation, is almost completely neglected in L.T.'s History of the same period. That we shall correct, positively.

Now I have said before that L[enin] had to jump in a hurry to get a program for Socialism during the rev'n. We are still behind him in 1917. But we (little we, the few of us) can go ahead. The experience of 1917-1923 in production is of primary importance. Rudzutak's theses⁶⁴, and similar stuff, should be, now, our preparation for the rev'n. This, we should say, is the rev'n L[enin] had practically to create W's C of Prod.

We have 1917-1923; the whole business from the union mobilization as Irving [*tersely?*] did it; the political seizure of power; the seizure of the factories by the masses. (Note the reversal here: they seized factories after: it was due to backwardness & L[enin] was terribly scared of doing this.)

So that the masses smashed up Tsarism themselves, and mobilized in the unions, & soviets, and seized the factories themselves.

Now, and this I shall probably do myself, tho' whoever wants to has my blessing, L[enin] in the last days was preoccupied with how to get initiative from the masses. I have all the

manuscript" and the partially missing "An Approach to Lenin's Selected Works. A seven-page manuscript covering Vols. 1-5 and parts of Vols. 6 and 7" (p. 13).

⁶¹ The Johnson-Forest Tendency left the Workers Party in July 1947 and in September 1947 entered the Socialist Workers Party. The period between the two events became known as the "interim period," during which time the J-FT functioned autonomously, issuing a total of twelve "Internal Bulletins" as well as several separate publications: *Essays by Karl Marx selected from the Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts, The Balance Sheet, World Revolutionary Perspectives and the Russian Question, The Invading Socialist Society, and The American Worker*.

⁶² Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution*.

⁶³ The reference is to Lenin's *The Impending Catastrophe and How To Combat It*.

⁶⁴ Yan Ernestovich Rudzutak (1887-1938), Latvian secretary general of All-Russia Central Council of Labor Unions from 1920 to 1921. His trade union theses were adopted and developed in the resolution, "The Role and Tasks of the Trade Unions," at the Tenth Party Congress; cf. V. I. Lenin: "The serious mistake they (and I above all) made was that we 'overlooked' Rudzutak's theses, *The Tasks of the Trade Unions in Production*, adopted by the Fifth Conference. That is the *most* important document in the whole of the controversy," speech delivered January 19, 1921, on the "Party Crisis" (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, pp. 43-53). According to the memoirs of one Bolshevik leader, Anastas Mikoyan, before his death in 1924 Lenin proposed that Rudzutak replace Joseph Stalin as the secretary general of the Communist Party (Anastas Ivanovich Mikoian, *Memoirs of Anastas Mikoyan*, translated by Katherine T. O'Connor and Diana L. Burgin [Madison, CT: Sphinx Press, 1988]). On May 24, 1937, Rudzutak—a member of the Central Committee of the All-Russia Communist Party from 1920 until 1937, a candidate member of the Politburo from 1923 to 1926 and from 1934 to 1937, and a full member of the Politburo from 1926 to 1932—was arrested and accused of Trotskyism as well as espionage for Nazi Germany. He was found guilty, sentenced to death, and subsequently executed (Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar* [New York: Knopf, 2004], pp. 223-4, 239-41, 246).

references noted in my Vol IX, and legibly. The last essays, particularly “Co-operation.”⁶⁵ Further very careful reading will show that he was working on two levels, the administrative, which L.T. had emphasized, and this initiative.

To understand him well you have to have clearly in mind the Civil War, the factory c'tte period of the rev'n, Vol VII I think or VIII; and realise that by 1923 he was saying: we have a similar crisis and must meet it in a similar way.

I have to make a jump. The experience of 1917-1923 in production is the basis of our propaganda to-day. Historically & to draw abstract conclusions from it we go into practice.

You can see at once that this is Bolshevism such as we have not seen since 1923: Nobody, absolutely nobody has even thought of this. When we pose it, if we do it properly, the terrible inadequacies of our theoretical past will be seen without much talk. (Does Grace see this clearly?) They will read and hear when we speak, and the light will break in on them. The workers will see it and the serious people will begin to look around them in the factories and learn how to see & what to say, and how to talk, and write.

And then, finally, we can tackle T[rotsky] and “his plan” directly. L[enin] knew the role of the 1905 p't in the bourgeois rev'n. And he knew the role of the p't in Feb-Oct 1917, and he knew the role of the p't after 1917. The history of the R.R. show L.T. was way way behind L[enin] in 1917. And the Platform of 1926, God help us, its t[rade] u[nion] policy is a catastrophe.⁶⁶

Read it. And comment upon it (and by the way, I know we all have a lot of work. Let us just get extracts and write comments on each other's notes. Don't attempt anything too big. I am not. I am merely clarifying, noting down ideas. When we have all the stuff etc we can put it together and the essential lines will emerge. Take it easy.)

Now, after the big rev'y analyses in terms of production; after 1917-1923; (positively) and after R[ae]'s (1928-1948) negative, while we take up T-sm [Trotskyism] (1908-1948), its pitiful inadequacy appears. It is a policy based on the intellectuals, the new petty-bourgeoisie (this needs a lot of working out, a lot: to get it clear and to prevent its being misunderstood.) It has not appealed to rev'y workers. As a theory it had nothing to say to them (you understand: nothing: that is an exaggeration.) Before 1917 L[enin] said: d'c republic, 8 hour day: after 1917, workers' control of production. In 1920 Rudzutak's theses.

But what should have been the main burden of all our analyses of Russia, that is only perfunctory and in fact non-existent. Schwarz⁶⁷ & Co & Popovitch or whatever the hell their

⁶⁵ Lenin, “On Cooperation,” written January 4 and 6, 1923 (*Collected Works*, Vol. 33, pp. 467-475). James's reference to “Vol IX” was most likely in reference to Vol. IX of the *Collected Works of V.I. Lenin. Completely revised, edited and annotated* (New York: International Publishers, 1927-), described as “the only authorized English translation of Lenin's writings from 1893 to 1924,” and the only edition authorized at that point by the V.I. Lenin Institute in Moscow.

⁶⁶ Leon Trotsky, *Platform of the Joint Opposition* (1927), Chap. 2: The Situation of the Working Class and the Trade Unions.

⁶⁷ Solomon M. Schwarz (1883-1973), a Russian Social Democratic labor organizer in the early years of this century, co-author (with Gregory Bienstock and Aaron Yugow) of *Management in Russian industry and agriculture* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1944), and *Labor in the Soviet Union* (New

names are do good work but on consumption. That is the new science; calories and politically, outlawing of genocide. (You cannot beat the petty-bourgeois intellectual at ingenuity in finding a hole for himself where he can play at marbles.)

I say: once we do this, immediately everybody will see that this is what is required to-day. We defeat T-ysm in the content and the method combined. (Vast grin from our philosopher, I hope.)

Now, (I have so much to say, and I have 15 minutes only) L.T. from 1905 on declines, 1904 in Russia is his highest theoretical peak—the abstract necessity of the victory of the p't. But he keeps missing the concrete production every time, every single time; because his conception of the role of the p't is organically false. Hence he reaches (i) defence of Russia (ii) complete misunderstanding of Stalinism in Europe etc etc.

We have done all their whole past and present with this, and the false practice; particularly the whole twist, slant, orientation L.T. has given to the past of bolshevism. Got it? So as I move into plan & I will generalise etc, NB: that all this must never lose sight of the fact that we mean at every stage to crucify something

[*break in the text*] . . . that is implied (policy to-day etc). If we don't we waste our time. They will only do what they did on value.⁶⁸ They will all say "of course we agree with you—that is planning, of course." Or they will simply ignore it or answer when they feel safe. But it is the correct method and the most effective, to tie up . . .

[*break in the text*] . . . that and it is more important than all this we are doing. Don't forget that please. But the inevitable end of this decline is "plan," plan from "above" with workers [tasting] consumption goods.

Christ, I have to stop. Just as I am about to nerve myself for the final leap. I am accompanying officially some guests to the other side of the lake. I shall be polite and [social] and talk to the kids etc etc, but I shall be in a fever inside, and then will have to start all over again. But we have the background. And by the way this means a lot of work, extracts etc but the actual stuff to be produced will not be very large.

Document #7

[Pyramid Lake Ranch, Sutcliffe, Nevada] 9/13/48

[*Grace:*]

Just a few points wh[ich] are very troublesome[.]

York: Praeger, 1951), and *The Russian Revolution of 1905: the workers' movement and the formation of Bolshevism and Menshevism*, translated by Gertrude Vakar (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967).

⁶⁸ A reference to the reaction on the part of the leadership of the Workers Party to Raya Dunayevskaya's essay on "The Nature of the Russian Economy," *The New Internationalist* (December 1946-January 1947), which focused on the continued operation of the law of value in the Russian economy.

- 1) In L.T.'s History [of the Russian Revolution] he in great detail destroys the idea that [*highly-skilled?*] people had anything to do with Feb'y 1917. And L[enin] did not go on with it.
- 2) L.T., I am positive, did not so much have a notion about [*history?*] as he ended with it.
- 3) It is absolutely true that L[enin] made the switch to int'ism [internationalism] in 1912. I deal with it in my notes. But it was above all as I say an economic analysis. Imp'sm+Soviets[.]
- 4) We cannot compare the S.W.P. or its development with Russia & B'm [Bolshevism]. That is a trap; from the beginning the B'ks [Bolsheviks] fought for leadership of a mass movement; and in 1912 L[enin] did not say "My arguments are good. Believe me". He said "4/5 of the R'n p't is under our leadership [therefore] my arguments are good."

There are others. But I still think that my plan is correct. To show how step by step L.T.'s early ideas developed, root it in the concrete, and end in the policy wh[ich] defends a nationalist imp'm and all the weaknesses outside of R.

Maybe there is a letter. But I haven't seen it yet.

This last keep or so, circulate.

And by the way, R[ae] only should circulate. And tell her for me that she should say these are just letters. Also she should use her discretion as to the circulation of others beside my own. I think only mine should be. And I think further that the others should read and send back—everybody except Johnny.⁶⁹ Will you go into that with her for me? This everybody by the way does not include you. You are or were our delegate. In these matters you have status. I wonder if you understand that.

Document #8

[Pyramid Lake Ranch, Sutcliffe, Nevada, n.d.]

My dear Rae,

Thank you for your letter. I am glad to see it—I have not had time to study it, but it contains many brilliant and far reaching ideas on a rock-like basis. We are on the way, it is clear. My latest letter (a very long one, and a note a week or two later) you probably have not got as yet (I told Constance explicitly to put them aside until certain other work was finished.) I ask for comment & development of the ideas I raise. You will pardon me if I do not take up your

⁶⁹ Johnny Zupan, a leading militant in the struggle to form the UAW and later union committeeman in Detroit (cf. Martin Glaberman, *Wartime Strikes: the struggle against the no-strike pledge in the UAW during World War II* [Detroit, MI: Bewick/Ed., 1980]; and Nelson Lichtenstein, *Labor's War at Home: the CIO in World War II* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982]).

points specifically. I want to go right on to the end with method and the perspectives as they unroll.

1. Be careful how you formulate on the S.W.P. Put the ideas down freely—it would be crucial to check yourself, but at the same time it is precisely here that real mischief can be done by an idea or ideas which even our select few of readers may not quite see as a logical line, which is one thing, and concrete embodiment which is another and practical policy which is something else again. I suggest also that you do not get too close to the concrete but develop lines and perspectives (of course they come from the concrete). You may have written before you get this; no matter. You can follow up. Both this last letter and the one on Russia and the mode of production and the changes are something new, [unquestionably?] different to all we have done before. You are in the factory. Stay there for a while.⁷⁰
2. R[uth] F[ischer]'s book⁷¹ is a clincher. An absolutely clincher. The facts are there. But before I tabulate them I want to deal with the main point for us. On p. p. she describes the attitude of the German Communist workers who had been through 1918; their regional general assembly where everybody spoke irrespective of rank about what he pleased; and their conception of the decisions of the rank and file and not vice versa. This she says and explains with the simplicity that comes from truth. Now this is it. This is precisely what I have been pushing towards in these notes, in some of them where I take up the party. Any other kind of party is a bourgeois party. (I had hoped to hear from G[race] on this but maybe she hasn't seen that letter yet). That is the essence of the bourgeois regime of bourgeois production and from there of the bourgeois party. I have sketched the co-operative elements, all the socialist elements of production, as the basis of the party.
3. Now, when a body of advanced workers break with bourgeois society and embrace the revolution, & join the party, they become fore-runners of the new type of party, a distillation of the new type of social order. These German workers, having learnt from the experience of the IInd International; bu'cy; sought the only solution: rank and file rule, control, initiative.

(I cannot stay here to relate this to the mode of production, and the particular type of bu'cy as the superstructural representative of the mode of production, and again how the 3rd [International] the superstructural reflection, has become less superstructural being drawn tight to production itself. I leave this to your studies for concrete development and, at second-hand, our factory workers, and in fact any factory-worker). These German workers proposed to lead; to decide; the

⁷⁰ Based on James's comment, one can infer that Dunayevskaya's two essays in this period, viz., "Production Statistics and the Devaluation of the Ruble," typescript, December 3, 1948; and "A Bureaucrat's Fate," *Fourth International* (June 1949), a review of *The Economy of the USSR during World War II* by N. A. Voznesenskii (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1947), were the result of the work outlined in her letter and referred to by James (see *Guide to the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, p. 15).

⁷¹ Ruth Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism: A Study in the Origins of the State Party*. With a preface by Sidney B. Fay. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948.

control they would merely carry out. That is precisely the principle of planning, of revolutionary, of soundest, planning.

4. The idea that the C'l [Central] Ctee has to impose discipline, is a joke to anybody who knows a lot of workers. In a serious strike they impose a terrible discipline upon those who wish to breach the decisions of the majority.
5. Now Lenin knew this. He said it over and over again for the proletariat as a whole; but in 1918 he confessed; we cannot do it—what the proletariat should have done, the party had to do. If we can make this terrible decision in Russia clear to everyone, we shall accomplish a revolution. LT's arguments are not only superficial; they place weapons in the hands of the enemy. Our line would compel them to denounce the proletariat as forever incapable . . . ; apart from its immense positive perspectives.
6. You will see in one of my latest letters that I devote many pages to the bourgeois structure and inevitable bourgeois role of these parties.

Let me again take up a line that I have indicated and which I shall try to make clear. The categories of the *Logic* are stage of development in the process of thought: Being, Essence, Notion, ground, existence, appearance, actuality[,] etc[.], each arises out of the contradictions of the previous, each develops the subject to a higher stage, in each the contradiction is sharper, until the whole leaps, boils over into the Absolute, the completed Idea, the Notion, etc. etc.

Now these parties that we have seen are all stages in the development of the notion of the party. The notion is in the result. I would suggest re-quoting that passage from the *Phenomenology* that I quoted in D.L M'm [Dialectical Materialism] and the Fate of Humanity ["Dialectical Materialism and the Fate of Humanity"].⁷² When LT says that the 2nd [International] & 3rd [International] might join God, that was a joining together of fixed and abstract determinations. He simply does not understand the differences between the two. Sure they join—the 3rd swallows up the 2nd.

In each new category the contradiction sharpens. The logical line of this we have to work out. All over the damned place people talk about "the party" and this, the abstraction of abstractions, allows or rather results in nothing but confusion. Now these German workers make undeniably clear what the party is; and the whole manner in which the Stalinists wrecked them shows what the party is not.

I shall have to take this up again, but we must have clear where we are going theoretically. No God-damned Central Committee, or Planning commission, can lead revolutionary workers. LT blurted out the first part in *Stalin*,⁷³ late but not too late. No c'tte thought up the Commune, or the Soviets or the other great contributions of the workers. To know this is proletarian, and it is going to be a hell of a task to drive out bourgeois ideas. Thank God, we

⁷² James's *Dialectical Materialism and the Fate of Humanity* was one of several documents published by the Johnson-Forest Tendency during the so-called "interim period" in 1947.

⁷³ Leon Trotsky, *Stalin: an appraisal of the man and his influence* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1941).

haven't the task of teaching this to workers. They find it out themselves or they don't find it out.

Now comes the question. Do we propose if our tendency met, to execute the commands and leave all to the initiatives of Yonnie,⁷⁴ Cecilia,⁷⁵ Pete,⁷⁶ Norman[,]⁷⁷ etc. Of course not. Simply because they are not the organized, trained and disciplined proletariat.

I have heard M[ax] S[hachtman] say of the W.P. and I have seen it in the S.W.P. that the initiative etc. come from the leaders. They are quite correct and it is inescapable in these small organizations which are in reality propaganda circles, more or less. Discipline, leadership, and all this assume what is incontestably a bourgeois role. This cannot be avoided. But the conceptions and practice lead to a fatal misconception of what the Bolshevik Party is, particularly because (how we shall have to concretise this) the B/k party fell so far short, of its own gigantic tasks & LT completed the mess. By 1940 he was saying very cautiously but clearly enough some of the things but only a few.

He saw that L[enin] represented the masses outside the party. His whole analysis of Zinoviev⁷⁸ & Co., both in the [History of the] R[ussian] R[evolution] and in Stalin, is wrong. Petty-bourgeois intellectuals, or workers divorced from the masses who became petty-bourgeois in outlook and did not understand. Same kind of stuff as Lessons of October.⁷⁹ Zinoviev was L[enin]'s closest collaborator for years. These men simply did not see what the Soviets represented. They had the bourgeois conception of the party and leadership and plan.

Let us never forget that L[enin] sent them all to hell at a certain critical stage: "You will do what I say or I will go to the sailors." He repeatedly leaned on the masses, on the advanced layer of the workers against the party. And yet no one, no one saw the necessity of the party—and worked so hard to build it. He saw that the resolutions of 1920-21 were "too Russian." Go home and work them out for a year, he said. Imagine that!

⁷⁴ Jack "Yonnie" Feinberg was the husband of Cecilia Deitch; originally from New York, he moved to Detroit in 1947 where he worked as a machinist.

⁷⁵ Cecilia Feinberg (nee Deitch), a member of J-FT, was married to Jack Feinberg; she worked as James's secretary in New York and later married Peter Lang. She is the sister of Selma James.

⁷⁶ Peter Lang, a member of J-FT, was originally from Germany; he lived in New York and moved to Detroit with Jack Feinberg in 1947.

⁷⁷ Norman Weinstein, a member of the J-FT, moved to Los Angeles, California, in 1947; he worked as a shipping clerk and was the first husband of Selma James.

⁷⁸ Grigory Yevseyevich Zinovyev (1883-1936). Zinoviev was elected, in February 1917, chairman of the Council of Commissars of the Petrograd Workers' Commune. At the First World Congress of the Communist International, held in March 1919, he was elected chairman of the Executive Committee. Zinoviev reached the peak of his power in 1923 when with Stalin and Lev Kamenev he became one of the triumvirate that planned to take over from Lenin when he died. In 1935 Zinoviev was arrested and charged with being involved in the assassination of Sergy Kirov. Found guilty he was sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment. The following year he was charged with forming a terrorist organization to kill Stalin and other leaders of the Soviet government; he was found guilty and executed in Moscow on 25th August, 1936.

⁷⁹ Leon Trotsky, *The Lessons of October* (New York: Pioneer Publishers, 1937), was written in 1924 as a preface to a volume of Trotsky's writings from 1917. It was first published in English in the Communist International's news magazine *Impreccorr* February of 1925.

Ruth Fischer's German workers,⁸⁰ revolutionary workers mind you, fit all the things Lenin strove for, wanted to be propagandized, but could not carry out. All the mountainous piles of shit about the bourgeois intellectuals, the political questions, the organizational question (agree on politics but differ on organization), the vanguard party, the dictatorship of the party, etc., all that can be seen in perspective as a degeneration, bourgeois politics, stemming from the degeneration and nourished by the peculiar form the disputes took in semi-feudal Russia. [*Inserted*: Our debates of the past ten years have been for the most part foolishness. They had to be gone thru and that they took that form was due in the first place to LT's policies which bred: a Shachtmanite opposition. That is something to think about.]

The opportunist wings in Europe in Lenin's early days were openly and crudely opportunist. Of that more at another time. The concept "party" we shall have to clarify, and it will need the clarification of proletariat, at each stage, etc etc. LT said in *In Defence [of Marxism]*.⁸¹ "The worker works hard all day & needs at night to come and get the line 'simply and clearly.'" You see the conception behind it. R[uth] Fischer's workers said "this Central C'ite must get the line from us and do as we say"—let us not be scared to take our ideas to the end. I repeat: Any other concept of the party is bourgeois, however much they do on the barricades. And I can tell you I felt good to see the thing concretely there in print, when I had been fumbling at it and trying to reach it by dialectic alone.

I have many many ideas about this business which I have not had the chance to work out but I am thinking of. I have the notes in the backs of books and at the side of pages. Time. Time. Time; and help. Your analyses on the strictly economic basis is worth its weight in gold. But I am equally concerned about what I call the objective, capitalistic, bureaucratic structure & function of these labor organizations. But there are other very difficult problems—problems of method.

I wish G[race] would jot down some notes on some of these problems. I asked her to send you some notes of mine on "Understanding" as a logical category. There is far more that occupies me. Thought, the forms of thought, the categories of the *Logic*, are the intermediary between "the human mind" and "reality"—I feel this is a mess but let the quote save me. The party is a "similar" intermediary between the proletariat and socialism. (The terms of the syllogism are mixed up in it too, but no amount of quotation marks will save me if I try to write that down.) At any rate, H[egel] says [in the] *Larger Logic*[,] p. 44[:]

"When the Critical Philosophy understands the relation of these three Terms so as to make Thoughts intermediary between Us and Things in such a sense . . ."

⁸⁰ A reference to Ruth Fischer's *Stalin and German Communism: A Study in the Origins of the State Party* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1948). Ruth Fischer (1895-1961), a leader of the German Communist Party (KPD) during the 1920's, was involved in the battle inside the party and within the international communist movement aimed at keeping the German party from surrendering to the control of Moscow (cf. Ruth Leviné-Meyer, *Inside German Communism: Memoirs of Party Life in the Weimar Republic* [London: Pluto Press, 1977]). After losing the battle to preserve the autonomy of the KPD, Fischer fled to the U.S. following the Nazi seizure of power in Germany in 1933.

⁸¹ Leon Trotsky, *In Defense of Marxism* (New York: Pioneer Publishers, 1942), a collection of Trotsky's essays and letters from 1939 to 1940 to members of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party which was involved at the time in internal debate over the class nature of the Soviet Union, the nature of Stalinism and the future of the Socialist Workers Party as a revolutionary party.

[When the Critical Philosophy understands the relation of these three Terms so as to make *Thoughts* intermediary between *Us* and *Things* in such a sense that this intermediary rather excludes us from things than connects us with them, this view may be met by the simple observation that these very things which are supposed to stand beyond ourselves, and beyond the thoughts referring to them, at the opposite extreme, are themselves things of thought, and, as being quite undetermined, are just one such thing (the so-called Thing-in-itself), the product of empty abstraction.”]⁸²

The whole bottom half of that page is very important for what I have in mind. When I lived next door to G[race], it was the smallest thing in the world to run in next door and ask her something. But this thing haunts me down here, and I know we need it to think clearly, until the proletariat simplifies everything by some great action.

Just one more word. The U.A.W. is close enough to a proletarian party, or was; close enough. That whole 1936 business and after⁸³ needs to be studied. But we must hope for the best & not be impatient.

The party is an intermediary between That is something. I have that feeling, have had it for a long time, that there is something here of first importance for us. But

Best
[J]

Document #9

[Pyramid Lake Ranch, Sutcliffe, Nevada, ca. September 13, 1948]

[Rae:]

I want to recapitulate some basic propositions wh[ich] must be borne in mind.

- (a) We cannot “prove” plan and convince anybody, any opponent.
- (b) We can, however, show the dialectic of previous concepts, historical developments etc and make our concept of plan seem the only logical answer.
- (c) We must tie up the whole past of T-ysm with this false concept of plan as the climax. This will unfailingly draw the reply.
- (d) Our exposition of prod’cn, of prod’cn in Russia, our presentation of the past will really show up our past [*falseness?*].
- (e) Our method must show us results in analysis.

⁸² Hegel’s Science of Logic, Volume I, p. 44.

⁸³ A reference to the sit-down strikes in 1936 that led to the formation of the CIO (see James, *American Civilization*, Chap. 6, “The Struggle for Happiness”).

We are preparing for no crisis. We are not worried about publication. We do not create any excitement among the c' des. A handful of us work out these problems. Sooner or later these questions will demand answers. Furthermore the polemical method is the life of serious politics, the correct method. It was characteristic of L.T. to wage the struggle against Stalinism on the basis "you cannot build socialism in a single country." But of all that & more, another time.

Plan

So now we are clear as to the practical limitations; the immense historical driving-power; the polemical i[.]e[.] the theoretical juxtaposition of two positions, with this we can spread ourselves, for ourselves, about plan, because we know what we are trying to do.

Now (1) Philosophical.

Human social, creative, international intelligence, of the mass, or new forces of intelligence, of Reason, the final form, or rather, the beginning of a new one, is to be applied to prod'cn and therefore to all our affairs. (You cannot prove this to Philistines. But we can assert it, and put them in the position of belittling it or opposing it in a sneaky underhanded way.) It is the transference of "science" from the machine to men. It is the intelligence wh[ich] is to be fertilised by practical activity. That is why the old society has to be swept away so completely that the workers will be compelled to take over.

When I get back these notes (wh[ich] I hope could be soon) I shall develop these points. We have referred to many; but the mass, creative, social intelligence, is a deeply philosophical and deeply practical concept. It will be as superior to the bourgeois mentality as the bourgeois was superior to the feudal. It is a qualitative change in human reason. As we said in *Invading [Socialist Society]*: This can be under way in 10 years. As we showed in *D[ialectical] M[aterialism] & the Fate of H[umanity]*, the suppression of this is what is ruining not only prod'cn but creating monsters of states and men.⁸⁴

This L.T. describes in *U.S.S.R. & War* as follows: Capitalism cannot go on. The productive forces must be organised according to a plan. Who will do it: workers or new class.

Grace must work out this; the mere conception of L.T. is a monstrous conception. It substitutes things for men. The Shachtmanite idea is: you must have a plan. But to plan, the property must be nationalised—[*Inserted*: At least they thought so.] Only the p't can nationalise the property. And this is the central idea behind the IVth [International].

The fallacies must be exposed, systematically. You no doubt have seen already that this conception is grandson, mature, of the immature p't and the intellectuals. In L[enin]'s idea however of the p't as quite mature to do what is required (and that is why he maintained so long that R'a was fit for cpm [capitalism] and cpm only, & was so cautious in 1917); and the

⁸⁴ In *Dialectical Materialism and the Fate of Humanity*, James quoted what he had previously written in *The Invading Socialist Society*: "The unending murders, the destruction of peoples, the bestial passions, the sadism, the cruelties and the lusts, all the manifestations of barbarism of the last thirty years are unparalleled in history. But this barbarism exists only because nothing else can suppress the readiness for sacrifice, the democratic instincts and creative power of the great masses of the people."

intellectuals as Bolsheviks who expressed what the p't would do, there already is the plan in embryo. If you have the party wrong you will have the plan wrong. A whole treatise can be written on that.

So here is a task for G., not too long; only brief ideas; there is a new type of intelligence, Reason, which will create the new relations.

To put "the plan" into the offices (Transitional Program:⁸⁵ the plan "to be revised in the interests of the workers;" and the underlying ideas in the *R[evolutio]n Betrayed*⁸⁶; i[.]e[.] all the documents, and nowhere more than in the 1926 platform); to put the plan into bureaux, blue-prints etc, is to separate the intellectuals; science etc from the proletariat, formally, politically, organisationally.

Note: Such is modern science, modern prod'cn, etc, that if you do not have a new society, new human beings, a new form of social intelligence, then you cannot escape a monstrous totalitarian bu'cy. You cannot. People can see the one. The genuinely new society, they cannot see. Hence the despair & the capitulations; unless you see this, the "plan" becomes the way of maintaining bourgeois intelligence, bourgeois separation of intellect'l & man'l labor etc etc. It is the worst, possible, blue-print of tyranny.

Now, and here we must be practical, L[enin] in 1917, as soon as he saw the Soviets, (tho' he was preparing before Feb'y), opened up with workers' control. His work from 1917-1923, compared point by point with L.T., bearing as we must in mind what we know to-day, will enable us to draw the string tight. G[race] once spoke to me about the subbotniks & L[enin]'s comments. L[enin] shows repeatedly that he had the thing in mind from 1917 on. But later he was baffled by the weakness of Russia—the peasants. But every line in the early days showed he thought as we are now learning to think. In the end he said: "The workers cannot, our workers cannot do it. Can we hold on until the world rev'n . . . (*Better Less*)⁸⁷? The thing begins the day after the rev'n. That is the positive side; a new mentality, released, which will creatively begin the organisation of prod'cn . . .

(2) What will this creativity concern itself with mainly?

Here again (I wish I had one year). We will have to show collective work, that L.T. thought continuously of plan as the tabulating of statistics, the org'n of prod'cn in the shape of prod'cn of goods.

We will show that L[enin] thought in terms of the reorganisation of the social relations of labor. A new relationship among workers, a new social organisation of labor, based upon a

⁸⁵ Leon Trotsky, *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International: The Mobilization of the Masses around Transitional Demands to Prepare the Conquest of Power—The Transitional Program for the Socialist Revolution*, written in 1938 and published in the May-June 1938 edition of the *Bulletin of the Opposition* as a discussion document for the Founding Congress of the Fourth International (World Party of Socialist Revolution) (see *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International; the Transitional Program*, 2d ed. [New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970]).

⁸⁶ Leon Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed: What is the Soviet Union and where is it going?* Translated by Max Eastman (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1937); cf. J.R. Johnson [C.L.R. James, "After Ten Years: Review of Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed*," *New International* (October 1946):

⁸⁷ Lenin, *Better Fewer, But Better* (*Collected Works*, Vol. 33, pp. 487-502).

new conception of discipline, new incentives, new sense of responsibilities, a new mode of labor. In 1920 L[enin] said: throw it on to the workers, what is done well, publicize; do propaganda; same as in his idea of building the party, you worked like hell to hold before the workers what the situation required, confident that it was there, and fighting

- (i) the forces [*close?*] to the workers that impeded this[;]
- (ii) preparing for the workers to leap; so in prod'cn the same principle applied.

It is clearly stated that the plan, the blue-print, is a kind of clerks' job; a book keeper's job; that the new economy, the new unions, the new workers, used these to guide them in the serious business of organising new relations of social labor.

This is what was new; the works of L.T. show not the faintest sign of this as the underlying conception. Is it clear, is the opposition sharp enough? If not I shall try again or one of you try; and as you try see always that it is the struggle of 1904-1914 all over again.

(3) This "plan" is the culmination of capitalist accumulation in its most organic sense.

Think of the great passage in wh[ich] K[arl] M[arx] ends his analysis of the General Law.⁸⁸ The degradation etc we know—there is one thing we have to bring out now. "Depriving the worker of the intellectual benefits of the labor process to the same degree that science is

⁸⁸ Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy Marx/Engels Collected Works* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, in collaboration with Lawrence & Wishart [London] and International Publishers [New York], 1975-), Vol. I, Part VII: The Accumulation of Capital, Chap. 25: The General Law of Capitalist Accumulation:

We saw in Part IV., when analysing the production of relative surplus-value: within the capitalist system all methods for raising the social productiveness of labour are brought about at the cost of the individual labourer; all means for the development of production transform themselves into means of domination over, and exploitation of, the producers; they mutilate the labourer into a fragment of a man, degrade him to the level of an appendage of a machine, destroy every remnant of charm in his work and turn it into a hated toil; they estrange from him the intellectual potentialities of the labour-process in the same proportion as science is incorporated in it as an independent power; they distort the conditions under which he works, subject him during the labour-process to a despotism the more hateful for its meanness; they transform his life-time into working-time, and drag his wife and child beneath the wheels of the Juggernaut of capital. But all methods for the production of surplus-value are at the same time methods of accumulation; and every extension of accumulation becomes again a means for the development of those methods. It follows therefore that in proportion as capital accumulates, the lot of the labourer, be his payment high or low, must grow worse. The law, finally, that always equilibrates the relative surplus-population, or industrial reserve army, to the extent and energy of accumulation, this law rivets the labourer to capital more firmly than the wedges of Vulcan did Prometheus to the rock. It establishes an accumulation of misery, corresponding with accumulation of capital. Accumulation of wealth at one pole is, therefore, at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole, *i.e.*, on the side of the class that produces its own product in the form of capital. This antagonistic character of capitalistic accumulation is enunciated in various forms by political economists, although by them it is confounded with phenomena, certainly to some extent analogous, but nevertheless essentially distinct, and belonging to pre-capitalistic modes of production.

incorporated as an indep't power." This increasing independence of abstract science, its culmination, socially, is "the plan".

Absolutely we must get Engels on planning,⁸⁹ and L[enin]'s two or three quotes when he came back [to Russia] (these are in Vol 1 of the Rev'n volumes. 1917) where he says: planlessness in capitalism ceases and people are scared to accept it. The full revolution is lost, so the book says! Isn't that a hell of a thing? The independence of value is expressed in the fact that the value-producers have to plan to get more value, to satiate the monster.

Socially, it is the blue-print, the plan in the burueax, the statistics, and the science.

Marx's phrase is precision itself. He deals with unemployment, absolute general law, etc. But socially he has been bringing along this science question all the time. He speaks of the individual lost before the enormous bu'c [bureaucratic] organisation of cpl [capital] etc; and now at the end he specifies it in the quote I made earlier. Now we have done a good job in showing how the new society requires a new worker (Grace in the pamphlet.⁹⁰ Unfortunately we cannot drive that home—First we do not control policy, secondly, it is part of the future).

But the negative aspect, that is before us. Science as an indep't power is pretty far removed from the market, thank God. Marx is obviously not talking about that. He says: more science less worker. Now, to-day, science rules. Atomic energy is such a concentration of "independent" science as never was. And either the workers, of the whole world, master the thing, know it, learn in school and factory, the great secrets or they are lost, complete slavery. (Their only d'cy will be to test the consumption aspect, the finished product, whether it went off well or killed enough people). Now the bourgeoisie is planning the thing. The state has it and will always have it, i[.]e[.] the bourgeois state.

(I cannot stop, tho' sorely tempted to take up here what G[race], Ike & I once spoke & even wrote about.)

The new generalization that science is waiting for; the concept of labor: of work. I have thought much about it. Closely allied to this is the nature of scientific investigation to-day; and the certainty that when the population is itself day by day making millions of, billions of, experiments in its daily work, then we shall enter upon such an era of scientific discovery, both of problems to be solved and methods of solution, as will make the early ones look *[sick?]* We cannot do this: it will take us too far and our opponents will just "agree". "Of course!" But it should be borne in mind; and a reference or two, cautious but enough, worked in.

That we have to leave out. But as I saw, the bourgeois state has it, and will have it. To-day we have reached the stage where you say what you want and you go and get it, work it out. Thus the most powerful development of production, a'c e'gy [atomic energy], is the chief and symbol so far, must be planned. What we want, how much we want, when we want, what we shall do without to get it, in this decisive sphere, planlessness is gone. And the workers are thrust back into a night of ignorance, bafflement, uncertainty unknown in the past. "Workers

⁸⁹ A reference to Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, Chap. III, "Historical Materialism".

⁹⁰ *The American Worker*, Part II: The Reconstruction of Society.

control of production” is, under these conditions, a mockery. Remember, too, that vast plants & section of industry feed the atomic energy. This also is international. France, Britain, etc.

Planning is here—bourgeois planning, but planning. Science becomes more & more of an indep’t power, and the degradation & deprivation of the p’t follows. The administration of everything only makes this planning easier . . .

Our primary conclusions are reinforced. The new type of intelligence etc; or the scientists, the intellectuals . . . now for a line of development or method. Contradictions, antagonisms, oppositions etc. L[enin] always saw them, always worked in that framework. Russia: 1905, bourgeois rev’n, agriculture—either the bourgeois war or the proletarian war, and he went into practice with that in mind, seeking the transition, the mediation. Watch your step here. (*Encircled: Appendix. History of R.R. First edition. Vol. I.*)⁹¹ L.T. in 1905 wrote plenty about the advanced proletarians leading the rest etc. This is the difficulty. He saw these things. It is only in his practice that after much trouble you can see his falling away.) L[enin] saw planning the other way. Either they or us. Repeatedly he said it. Theirs was military penal labor; but universal labor service he said was a part of socialism; or could be military penal labor . . .

Now see, on the background of my early points in these notes, what a job we can do on this. Either they or we. But ours is w[orkers] c’l [control] of p’cn [production], and the whole tremendous conception he elaborated and what I have summarised here.

Now they or we. L[enin] saw that; there was “something” inherent in the economic movement, shaping both classes; they and we; and, to-day, our small forces can draw from L[enin]; the plan is inherent; they cannot plan? Nonsense. Their plan is inherent. They must plan; with the knowledge, L[enin]’s “organisation of hunger with the method of genius”! Their plan is the blue-print, the plan of the bureaux; ours is not, our use of the blue-print. It is something entirely different. Their plan is the result of the needs & structure of capital, of bourgeois conceptions, of bourgeois science & use of science; ours is not the opposite, but a qualitative change.

The Fr. Rev’n is absolutely invaluable here. The bourgeoisie had its conception of d’cy. The p’t had its conception. They were not one thing which either could use. That is a philosophical something, wh]ich] needs precise but clear definition. The Fr. P’t had its own conception & method of sovereignty, d’cy, etc. L[enin] was always conscious of this. Before 1904 he saw the prol’n method of building the party; in 1905 he saw the p’n [proletarian]

⁹¹ Leon Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution*, Vol. I (New York: Pathfinder/Anchor Foundation, 1980), Appendix I [To the Chapter *Peculiarities of Russia’s Development*], pp. 463-470).

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method of making the rev'n; the Soviets he saw as the p'n method of govt and w. c. of prod'cn. And we must have the prol'n conception of plan and show what the other is and who hold it.

(4 or 5) Now for some connections. Some; when we connect the thing, and fill it out with the extracts etc we shall see them more closely.

Intellectuals: All inclusive party; immediate demands (all-inclusive demands); Workers' State=automatic rule of workers (here is the all-inclusive party embodied: full democracy for the party): d'cy for the party, that is the trouble; the failure of the party means the loss of the nationalized property; & the failure of the party means the loss of the intellectuals & vanguard workers; in all this the p't is administered. L[enin] says [somewhere] in the extracts G. sent me, "the p't cannot judge" etc. They talk one way, but as soon as we have to decide something, says L[enin], they find that the workers cannot. Grace says Cartesian[ism]. Good. (We need from G, a brief page on Cartesianism; also brief summary of her conclusions on [Lenin's] *W[hat] is to be done?*⁹² and that Introd'cn of 1908,⁹³ summary with extracts etc of what she thinks is its essence.)

There is here, however, philosophically (for our own clarification) a problem which has too long intrigued me. To-day, or in 1848, or in 1871, what is the p't? It consists of workers & the various parties & the vanguard. Past consciousness is in various layers, the 2nd In'l, the 3rd In'l. Future consciousness (God forgive these crude formulations) lie in the vanguard. There is contradiction in all spheres etc, all governed by the basic contradictions with the bourgeoisie, but the W & = all + the prol'n vanguard, i[.]e[.] those in industry + the party that is the concentration of its objectivity + subjectivity, both at various layers, but all together forming a whole.

Now you cannot speculate upon consciousness. You judge of the demands for society, you work out the section of the class which is decisive, you assume, you know, that there is a receptivity struggling to be born, you open fire on all who suppress this. You are confident that the subjectivity of the vanguard, the mass vanguard will create, concretise the abstract ideas of the subjective factor, the party, and draw behind it backward layers. That we agree on. To keep pace, to represent this violent consequence before it comes needs profound philosophical economic, political concepts within wh[ich] you see the contradictions etc. That is why, even with plan, you propagandize. G. says L[enin] would have laughed to scorn the idea of an immature p't. Quite correct. There was one immature p't. The Russian p't in power. That could be immature. No other. For to say the p't is immature is to say it cannot perform the tasks designed for it by history. It is terrible, just terrible to think that after 1905 L.T. could say the p't was immature. But, so it was!

Now so far so good! What, however, is the opposite method? This has to be drawn abstractly, to the limit, before we can practice, i[.]e[.] analyse its manifestations. I have to seek a good

⁹² Lenin, *What Is To Be Done? Burning Questions of Our Movement*, written 1901-1902, first published in March 1902 (*Collected Works* [Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1961], Vol. 5, pp. 347-530).

⁹³ The reference may have been to Lenin's 1908 preface to the first edition of *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism: Critical Comments on a Reactionary Philosophy* (New York: International Publishers, 2d ed., 1927).

single example: I cannot touch upon all. It also cannot be “plan” for you cannot “prove” plan. I feel more and more that the key-quote is our old friend

“Instructive organic communist beginnings” (Fill it in)⁹⁴

It is perfect. For one thing it does what these notes do not always do for beginners, (and malicious people) it separates L.T. from all non-rev'ies of whatever stripe. Good job too. This is no Menshevik, or B/k scared of the tasks. The essentials are there, but abstract. (Grace again; do some concrete work on these questions for us, sister).

It seems to be concrete, it takes into consideration the readiness of the p't in this period of crisis. It seems contemporary. But it is abstract. For see how we do it.

We say: After imp'm, state-capitalism. We say the two bu'cies [bureaucracies] represent the consciousness of the labor org[anizations] of imp'm and of state-cpm [capitalism]. We say that the degradation in Russia, the defeat in G'y [Germany], and the underlying social structure, etc etc the psychological urges of to-day determine the type of outburst.

The conflict is between the repressive bu'cy and the exploding p't of the period of the decline of the rate [of profit] i[.].e[.] state-cap'm. Ours is the Leninist method. Spain, France, C.I.O. prove that the consciousness is there. We seek to build the party on that. It is “instructive & organic” but both these ideas have a concrete place and time. And the concrete conclusion is: the merciless exposure of economic org'n & social function of bu'cy (and the U.S. bu'cy partakes of the characteristics of the 3rd [International]: v[ery] important to remember.)

Now we cannot prove plan. But let us remember that L[enin] said “Russia must change its agricultural system. They or us. Their way or ours” The liquidationists were the enemy. He said repeatedly “Their planning or ours.” (And, once again:) The time is ripe of monopoly ± the Soviets. There is monopoly planning & Soviet planning, & L[enin] saw Soviets as no man saw them. Without these, and I mean every syllable, L[enin] would have stuck to his d'c declarations of the p't & the peasantry. Socialism looked at R[ussia] through all the windows, it was thru the windows of the Smolny⁹⁵ it was looking.

Now to-day we have “international” economy, plants, big plants of bourgeois planners; the tremendous organisations of the 2nd [International] & 3rd [International] helping in the planning, or the disrupting! Now it is their planning vs ours. No instructive organic in the abstract but this precise economic and social situation.

Smash these bu'cies, self-mobilise to smash them; smash them internationally; (the only way to-day) publicise the scientific data, broad-cast the whole, (I cannot stop to develop this) and you have a social order, in which plan is only statistics. The economy would collapse without a plan. Plan would be “constitutive” (here we are again, Grace).

I haven't quite made it, I know, but someone else can develop it. Nor the chaos of the market, and the need to regulate market chaos, that is their plan; but the whole structure

⁹⁴ Presumably, the reference was to a quotation found in Trotsky's writings.

⁹⁵ The Smolny Institute building, in St. Petersburg, was used by Lenin, in 1917, as his headquarters during the October Revolution; it was also Lenin's residence for several months.

(international) of the world especially since W.W.II, the concrete struggle against the two bureaucracies; atomic energy and all its implications, and what we call the psychological needs of modern society, these for their realization carry within them, the plan.

I'll try again some different lines. You remember *Historical Tendency* . . . hand in hand goes . . . that long list, technical cultivation of the soil, the training, formation of⁹⁶ The subjective reflection that is a plan. It cannot be otherwise. There is no other motive force for the economy

Our task is to see that, point out the enemy, and watch the economy and the working-class for signs . . . now here we establish one thing very necessary for us (the connection between the act of rev'n and of prod'cn.) L[enin] made no distinction. Soviets to the power and to control prod'cn. Here is the new economy, he said. There it is, look at it.

We have that? Good & clear? I hope so. Because that tells us what we have to do; but it is the people of a climax. It tells us what L[enin] did in 1903, 1905, 1917, 1921, 1923 and it tells us what L.T. did not do.

I shall not work it out. I am tired. Every line of this is scribbled on my knee, constantly getting up and running out to see how things are going etc. But only two thoughts remain to be said and one apparently stray strand made ready for incorporation, and then I can leave this and go off to the final part: The C.I.O.,⁹⁷ the U.S. economy & the T.U. movement. Thank goodness, that is only to say what they should do.

⁹⁶ Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Part VIII: Primitive Accumulation, Chap. 32: Historical Tendency of Capitalist Accumulation:

As soon as this process of transformation has sufficiently decomposed the old society from top to bottom, as soon as the laborers are turned into proletarians, their means of labor into capital, as soon as the capitalist mode of production stands on its own feet, then the further socialization of labor and further transformation of the land and other means of production into socially exploited and, therefore, common means of production, as well as the further expropriation of private proprietors, takes a new form. That which is now to be expropriated is no longer the laborer working for himself, but the capitalist exploiting many laborers. This expropriation is accomplished by the action of the immanent laws of capitalistic production itself, by the centralization of capital. One capitalist always kills many. Hand in hand with this centralization, or this expropriation of many capitalists by few, develop, on an ever-extending scale, the co-operative form of the labor-process, the conscious technical application of science, the methodical cultivation of the soil, the transformation of the instruments of labor into instruments of labor only usable in common, the economizing of all means of production by their use as means of production of combined, socialized labor, the entanglement of all peoples in the net of the world-market, and with this, the international character of the capitalistic regime. Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolize all advantages of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the working-class, a class always increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united, organized by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself. The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production, which has sprung up and flourished along with, and under it. Centralization of the means of production and socialization of labor at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. Thus integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated.

⁹⁷ Congress of Industrial Organizations.

The two things

The Bolshevick party was as inherent in Russia as plan is in the proletarian world to-day. L[enin] said so. He drew it from the factory: and saw himself as expressing the positive side. Now the struggle [*at hand?*] is to create [*historically?*] some chart or to-day of the objective & subjective aspects of what constitutes the contemporary proletariat. We have to be careful here and show France, Spain & U.S. in 1936 in logical & historical sequence and the bu'cies as the enemy of this present consciousness. The key to it is the following observation: It is absolutely fantastic to believe that the Spanish p't was more advanced in communist beginnings than the U.S. prol't. All that the Sp p't showed in 1936 and far more the U.S. prol't has. But the relative power of cpl is greater here. It can transform the bu'cy hence the consciousness of the p't is constantly blinded, twisted, distorted, corrupted. But it exists! And the exploding U.S. proletariat will plan automatically. It will not fumble and feel its way around like the Russian and the Spanish.

Now either you work clearly & sharply for the inherent, defined and worked out or you seek a compromise to the right. (Except for anarchists who are not germane to our issue in this problem at this stage). You seek to substitute forces whatever you can get and broad organisation and broad demands, to supplement what seems to be the lagging consciousness. L.T. talked always about the vanguard classes, but to take another example he repudiated L[enin]'s defeatism, because of what I have explained.

And secondly and finally, there is a change that takes place in Trotskyism after the victory. The same theoretical weakness wh[ich] does not see what is inherent and recognise subjective & objective etc, this carries in the same way but in altered, relatively altered circumstances. The weaknesses feared, however, are now to be overcome by the party and the state; and to the end despite any amount of reconstruction, the p't is left in charge of the bu'cy. The consciousness of course is international. It starts from the highest peak of int'l consciousness; i[.]e[.], for the U.S., the Spanish Revolution,⁹⁸ the economic structure etc.

Now, whenever you are against the bourgeoisie, for the rev'n, but do not definite [define it] in these terms, you get Trotskyism.

The most concrete way is to reduce to the method as expressing the content and another method as expressing stage by stage a different content, until the climax, wh[ich] is the defence of one imperialism against another and the effective substitution of the bu'cy for the p't as "guardian" of nationalized property, in its own way. In backward, i[.]e[.] semi-colonial

⁹⁸ The term 'Spanish Revolution' refers to the social revolution that unfolded inside Republican controlled territory during the Spanish Civil War, during which much of the Spanish economy was placed under workers' control; the social revolution was particularly strong in anarchist-controlled areas like Catalonia where the figure of worker self-management was placed as high as 75%, with factories run by worker committees and agrarian areas run through collectivized communes (Stanley G. Payne, *The Spanish Revolution* [New York: Norton, 1970]; Sam Dolgoff, *The Anarchist collectives: workers' self-management in the Spanish Revolution, 1936-1939* [Montreal and New York: Black Rose Books, 1990]; Stuart Christie, *A Study of the Revolution in Spain, 1936-1937* [Hastings, East Sussex: Meltzer Press, 1998]; Murray Bookchin, *The Spanish Anarchists: the heroic years, 1868-1936* [Edinburgh and San Francisco: AK Press, 1998]; Julián Casanova, *Anarchism, the republic, and civil war in Spain, 1931-1939* [London and New York: Routledge, 2005]).

colonial countries, to be precise, the colonial bourgeoisie could be given certain electoral concessions etc. But in a state of nationalized property, structurally beyond the bourgeois normal type, to make these concessions to the b'csy [bureaucracy] is to be the victim of a terrible series of blinders.

There are many other aspects. We move through the past and “plan,” a certain concept of plan is our climax. The proof is so to speak behind us. The proof cannot be in front of us. We have to work in that field. But the proletariat will prove. Wasted effort is misdirected effort, a mis-judgment of relations, and therefore shooting wild. I think I have been round and about and in and out and at least hacked out different approaches all moving to the same conclusion. Now there is some positive work to be done, to illuminate the previous and to act as a basis of practice on the illumination that we will get from it. This is almost exclusively connected with the U.S.

R[ae] is doing the U.S. economy.⁹⁹ It must be as comprehensive as possible. There is nothing yet like it anywhere among our people—nothing. It must show how “plan,” is inherent in the structure. That the advance economy will show. But it should also show how two kinds of plan are inherent in it.

Of late years there are a type of skilled workers, who are becoming “aristocrats,” not of super-profits, but in actual technique & scope of their activity; not like the carpenters or plumbers, but machine-tool workers etc. What is their role?

The whole struggle with the foremen, for & against the workers is of singular importance.

We should look & see what roots we can find for the bureaucratic structure in production itself. But the problem is not at all one-sided. It is highly probable that in many industries, or important ones, there is no room at all for bu'c strata or a basis. Hence the insecure position of the bu'cy and the tense situation. In Ger'y & and the USSR, the bu'cy, political propaganda, party cadres, welfare etc., i[.]e[.] huge, excessive, held together by spies & police. These poor fools of bu'cats in the U.S.: have all the responsibility & not even the means of self-defence.

This whole work, the scientific aspects, i[.]e[.] the role of Science, the type of party, rev'y party; instructions between types of unions and types of struggle & bu'cy, etc, Reuther¹⁰⁰ & John L. Lewis,¹⁰¹ oppositional types, etc—all this is a theoretical work, but it must be supplemented by close observation of the p't in the factories. There is no need to fuss and “organise” over this. But the c'des in position must do it. Johnny must do the C.I.O., from 1936. Nobody has seen the necessity of doing this, nobody understands it. They haven't the

⁹⁹ Cf. Raya Dunayevskaya, “The Decline in the Rate of Profit and the Theory of Crises,” part of a 1947 manuscript entitled “State-Capitalism and Marxism,” the initial draft of what was to become *Marxism and freedom; from 1776 until today*, with a pref. by Herbert Marcuse (New York: Bookman Associates, 1958), the greater part of which was written before the 1955 split between Dunayevskaya and James.

¹⁰⁰ Walter P. Reuther (1907-1970), president of the United Automobile Workers (UAW) and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO).

¹⁰¹ John L. Lewis (1880-1969) was the president of the United Mine Workers of America (1920-60) and founder and first president of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO; 1936-40) (see Robert H. Zieger. “Lewis, John L.”; <http://www.anb.org/articles/15/15-00412.html>; *American National Biography Online* Feb. 2000).

perspective. And Phil¹⁰² has been doing a systematic study of one factory. That I know the Detroit c'des, without fuss, without organising it, without proclaiming their efforts or their discoveries to anybody, without creating a clique of observers, should do this, should be stimulated to do it just as a party of their normal procedure. Irving will have a lot to say about W; plenty I am sure, once his eyes are opened.

We have to know what we are looking for; otherwise we cannot see anything in its development. Once before in a letter to G. I wrote my idea of the relation between organisation and spontaneity in 1903 & 1948 that has to be worked out, fully & completely, and with the U.S. in mind. (I would like a copy.) I don't see how we can move a step without the C.I.O. done properly. Everything else is guess-work, everything else. It is characteristic that there are no serious studies of France 1936, the C.I.O., and the Sp[anish] R[evolution] in our movement. Not the maneuvers with Lewis & Green¹⁰³ but the mass upheaval. Johnny is the person to do it. He may need some help. But no rush, excitement, yelling, busy, and being filled with excitement . . . I express myself strongly. Read it mildly.

At the end of all this for us is the party. Ch[aulieu] is so busy denouncing the leadership and getting mad over them and Yugoslavia¹⁰⁴ that he does not pay attention to his business. (The idiot doesn't know that if he wants to split, all he has to say is you are defencist, I am defeatist. In Europe these are antagonistic lines. I split. He and Sh[achtman] & M[uni]z, right and left, do not say that. And do you know why? Because they know by now that the masses are not dividing along that line. If they thought they saw a division opening they would try it. But they fool around and snarl.) But tho' Ch[aulieu] is in the best position to do it in Fr., we must do it here. It is obvious to anyone, that Bolshevism was rooted in the sharpness of class relations in Russia. The type of party evolved there.

Now what is the modern type of party? We have done some work here . . . we have indicated it. We have said the 2½ millions in the C.P. in Italy is a qualitative change in the party. The M.R.P.,¹⁰⁵ the de G'lle [de Gaulle] Rassemblement,¹⁰⁶ these are types of

¹⁰² Phil Romano, co-author, with Grace Lee, of *The American Worker*.

¹⁰³ Philip Murray (1886-1952) was the organizer of the United Steelworkers of America from 1936; he also played an important role in the formation of the CIO, serving as president from 1940 until he died.

¹⁰⁴ The French Trotskyist response to the expulsion of Yugoslavia from the Cominform (Communist Information Bureau) in June 1948 was to propose an alliance with Tito, a proposal that precipitated a certain amount of opposition on the part of leftist elements in the Fourth International (cf. Michel Pablo, "Yugoslavia and Permanent Revolution," *Fourth International*, Vol. 11, no. 1 [January-February 1950]: 18-23).

¹⁰⁵ The popular French *Mouvement Républicain Populaire (MRP)* was founded in November 1944, following the liberation of France from German occupation during World War II. The party, which was in the European Christian Democratic tradition, consistently won some 25 percent of the vote in elections during the rest of the decade of the 1940s, providing crucial electoral support of the early governments of the Fourth Republic (cf. Willard Ross Yates, "Power, Principle, and the Doctrine of the Mouvement Républicain Populaire," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 52, no. 2 [June 1958]: 419-436; Ronald Irving, *Christian Democracy in France* [London: Allen and Unwin, 1973]; and Daniel Powers, "All roads lead to Rome: French and German Christian Democrats, the nation-state and the construction of Europe, 1945-1950," Ph.D. diss., Georgetown University, 1999).

¹⁰⁶ The *Rassemblement du Peuple Français (RPF, or Rally of the French People)* was founded in April 1947 by Charles de Gaulle (1890-1970) on a platform of opposition to the constitution of the French Fourth Republic. The movement, after scoring some initial success, gradually lost impetus and support; following de Gaulle's withdrawal from active politics in 1953, it was wound up in September 1955 (see *De Gaulle et*

mass movements of our time. We went so far as to say that we are positive when it comes in the U.S. it will be tremendous. I think we can see a qualitative change. They burst out between 1933 and 1938. Then came the Resistance. After that came the rush to the parties, by the petty-bourgeoisie and the p't to the Stalinists.

Now the decisive role has passed to the T. U.'s. It is there the C.P. wages its battles, however much it is kicked around in Parliament. We have indicated that there is a change from the days when Zinoviev wrote his resolution¹⁰⁷ to to-day.

I think that we are in a for a new type of party, mass party that is, in which union, soviet and the old political party will be all closely knit together. The economy is tying the unions together in economic life; politics and economics are being fused; the state, the bourgeois state is totalitarian; it is responsible for everything, for every God damn thing. The only alternative is a state of the workers, which means a state so all-embracing that it is no state & is the population as the state, the state has to reach it almost before it disappears, begins to wither. There is no choice.

Anybody who understands the modern world, modern production & modern accumulation particularly in a country like the U.S. must understand that either the state begins to wither away at once or it will grow. And it seems to me therefore that the mass party will correspond. How? I do not know. But all our experience & our logic shows that the party in the U.S. will not be as in Russia in 1912.

Further. We have stated clearly that the bu'cy in the U.S. (every bu'cy) functions as it does because it is mortally afraid of the p't. It must submit to Truman,¹⁰⁸ because it knows that the only alternative is a rev'y outburst. J.P.C.¹⁰⁹ says that its basis is its "pickings". Maybe in the old days & such people as Dave Beck,¹¹⁰ Hutchinson,¹¹¹ Tobin,¹¹² etc. But, pickings or no

le Rassemblement du peuple français: 1947-1955 [Colloque: Fondation Charles de Gaulle; Centre Aquitain de recherches en histoire contemporaine, Bordeaux, November 12-14 1997] [Paris: A. Colin, 1998]; Jacques Baumel, *De Gaulle, l'exil intérieur* [Paris: Albin Michel, c2001]).

¹⁰⁷ It is unclear what resolution by Zinovyev James is referring to.

¹⁰⁸ Harry S. Truman (1884-1972), 33rd president of the United States (1945-53).

¹⁰⁹ James P. Cannon (1890-1974), founder, along with Max Shachtman and Martin Abern, of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in January 1938; and national secretary of the SWP until his death in August 1974. In the 1939-40 struggle in the SWP over the attitude to be taken toward the Soviet Union in the coming war, Cannon along with Trotsky argued that the USSR should be defended against imperialism, despite the policies of Stalin. Max Shachtman, James Burnham and Martin Abern split over this issue in April 1940, taking 40% of the organisation with them, including the Johnson-Forest Tendency, to form the Workers Party of America (see James P. Cannon, *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party*, written 1939-1940 [New York: Pioneer Publishers, 1943; *The History of American Trotskyism* [New York: Pioneer Publishers, 1944]).

¹¹⁰ David Beck (1894-1993), executive vice president of the Teamsters Union; replaced Daniel Tobin as Teamsters president in 1952 (see Dennis Wepman. "Beck, Dave"; <http://www.anb.org/articles/15/15-01258.html>; *American National Biography Online* Feb. 2000).

¹¹¹ William Levi Hutcheson (1874-1953), president of the Carpenters Union. At the AFL convention, John Lewis of the Mine Workers threw a punch at Hutchinson that has come to be regarded as the opening event of the industrial labor movement of the thirties in America (see (see Michelle Brattain. "Hutcheson, William Levi"; <http://www.anb.org/articles/15/15-00357.html>; *American National Biography Online* Feb. 2000).

pickings, I would like to know how exactly Reuther & his tribe could fight a serious fight. I believe that they welcome certain aspects of Taft-Hartley.¹¹³ I am positive they welcome the transference to the courts and “the law,” where they can “struggle” and—suppress the workers.

Now, I simply cannot see a real mass party in the U.S., of the p’t, and any kind of social peace or demonstration. I do not say a study of the economy must prove this. I say any student of the economy must be aware of this. I cannot see how a serious party, in the U.S., transcending craft, and industrial, occupational boundaries, a party, tied up with the unions (in Trinidad & the W.I. [West Indies] as a whole by the way, union leaders are political leaders & vice versa. Bustamante,¹¹⁴ political boss of Jamaica, is union boss) can fail to find itself in continuous & violent conflict with the govt and the bourgeoisie.

Why the economic conflict is immediately political conflict, & why conflict is inevitable, the administrative role of the bu’cy, the sharpness of the edge, all this is embedded in the economic structure. The type of struggle, the type of party, and “the plan” as spontaneous emanations from proletarian self-mobilisation, all this is rooted in the American economy. We cannot know for certain. But we have the past to guide us. The Commune came like a bolt from the blue. The form it took was unforeseen and unforseeable by anybody. The Soviets did the same in 1905. In 1917 they changed Lenin’s view and lifted our movement [to] a new stage.

If now we have a qualitative change in economic structure, state-capitalism, it is reasonable to expect a qualitative change in political mobilization, in social mobilization, economics & politics. The rush to the CP has helped us here. The new party will be a social party, embracing everything. It will be the state, and therefore there will be no state. That is what killed the Russian party—politics & economics were too wide apart. Lenin knew this and could not solve it. That is why in 1920 he had to say: the party rules, and the unions must fight the party for the workers’ interests.

I believe in the U.S., that gap will be closed tighter than tight; and this will be because of economic necessity. Lenin was caught short by 1914, and 1917; the development of cpm [capitalism] had proceeded further & further than he had thought both in the world at large & in Russia. No one has ever done, or I have never heard of any serious study, of precisely why the R’n workers, in 1905, in particular, formed Soviets. I have read no account. But we have here the C.I.O., and the tumultuous years that have followed.

¹¹² Daniel Tobin (1875-1955), Teamsters Union long-time leader forced to cede authority over the union in 1947 to executive vice president David Beck (see Sandra Opdycke. “Tobin, Daniel Joseph”: <http://www.anb.org/articles/15/15-00696.html>; *American National Biography Online* Feb. 2000).

¹¹³ The Taft-Hartley Act, formally Labor-Management Relations Act of 1947, was sponsored by Sen. Robert A. Taft of Ohio and Rep. Fred A. Hartley, Jr., of New Jersey, amending the previously pro-union Wagner Act of 1935. It was enacted over the veto of President Truman. Among its provisions, the act outlawed the closed shop; required unions to give sixty days’ advance notification of a strike; authorized eighty-day federal injunctions when a strike threatened to imperil national health or safety; restricted union political contributions; and required union officials to deny under oath Communist affiliations.

¹¹⁴ Alexander Bustamante (1884-1977), spokesman of the 1938 labor uprising in Jamaica and president of the Bustamante Industrial Trade Union (BITU).

To conclude, a mass party in the U.S., millions, workers, the various industries, struggle with the bourgeoisie, victory, and automatically “the plan” is born. A committee of the various industries will meet and say: we must have such and such to live. In a long drawn out war, they will plan for the war, but the proletarian victory will dictate a plan. It will not be: the capitalist, or rather the modern economic system must be planned: who will plan it. That is wrong from top to bottom. The economic system sharpens the class struggle and the victory of the p’t says immediately: We must have a plan. In Russia, the p’t won a political victory. Then, later, they seized the factories. Then, later, they said: an economic plan—the party said it. In the U.S. it will be entirely different. A student of the economy must know that. And show it.

As I say, there are innumerable other approaches. I have not revised a line of this. Later I shall get these in sequence, the different notes, and the comments (the comments on the notes) and then we shall be able to boil it down to the logical & historical movement that travels like a tank.

I, by the way, lost my job to-day. A nice mess, but I am glad. It only means financial stress, but I shall be able to think and write.

Document #10

[Pyramid Lake Ranch, Sutcliffe, Nevada, ca. September 15, 1948]

[Rae:]

Part II

I had to stop this letter and am now beginning without having finished or even taken up the question of the *Logic* seriously. (I have however read my notes on the party which G. sent to me typed and on the whole I am satisfied with them.)

The Ruth Fischer extract ought to be typed. Note that Stalin in Germany went into the factory—the cell, to corrupt the party there. This is of extreme importance, extreme. They go to the base—there is nowhere you can get in more fundamentally than this.¹¹⁵

Of the same quality is the action committee from the factories. They control the job. He not only must sell his labor-power to live. He must also carry out the commands of his rulers, the political command, or he starves. Every form of the new social order is infected with the most counter-revolut’y content. Either of the oppositions contains the other in its own concept. This is a great law of the dialectic. Now state-capitalism fills the form of the proletarian state. But, dear friends, the labor movement, the non-revolutionary organisation of labor, equally assumes the complete form of capitalism itself, of state-capitalism. And inside each of them, as Hegel says somewhere, the opposition is at breaking-point.

Naturally, I have a great deal of information in my head, but we need a very serious concrete analysis of the structure and function of an old steel union like Lewis’s and one like the

¹¹⁵ Fischer, “Stalinization of the German Party,” Chap. 23, *Stalin and German Communism*, pp. 499-514.

UAW. The UAW I want to repeat had a number of proletarian aspects. You remember the *Balance-Sheet*.¹¹⁶ We must not overdo this, but once we remember they were the capitalist society, and were not revolutionary consciously, then in what interested them they insisted that the Ex'ctve C'tte always bring back proposals for them to decide. They saw the committee as carrying out their wishes. But nobody can do this work unless he has certain ideas in his head.

I am waiting patiently to get some observations, notes, comments, random thoughts from Irving & Johnnie. Johnnie, I believe, is about to write. He must understand that I would never let these notes in the light of day until after some final position was drawn up. What I want from him and Irving & everybody in fact is no more than this: letter of Sept 15th Page 3. para 2, and then some comment. That's all. No theses necessary. Particularly they should all see the Ruth Fischer passage.

Let me warn again, however. It would be fatal to believe that the WP [Workers Party] or the S.W.P. or such like can be like that. There is no substitute for the masses of revolutionary proletarians.

But—unless you have this concept in your head, the result is calamity. Curiously enough, as we found out long ago, [*Inserted*: May 1946, WP] the first result of such a concept[,] is an intensive education of the party. I noted the disintegration in France in the letter G. sent. The only thing I wish to say at present is this. I cannot conceive that a leadership with our policy and our method, in a situation such as France has been in for 4 years, could disintegrate at this time. Impossible. We might not grow and that I doubt, but disintegration? Impossible. The “ever-higher” transitional slogans end in “ever-lower” organisational results.

Imagine! War and revolutionary crisis. The bourgeoisie in such a mess as Marx & Lenin could never have concretely imagined. And this is the time these folks disintegrate. And I have to say of these, as of Shachtman. They will rather disintegrate than settle down (years have been thrown away) to a systematic exposition of what, today, 1948, is the revolution, the way to make it, the need for it, the alternative without it, the inevitability of it, all the things that we have been pointing out. No. Not yet. To-morrow.

Before I end this there are two aspects of this work which are of fundamental importance. One is behind us. But it must be remembered. The differences between us and the IVth [International] majority are long ago established in principle. 1) They are defencist on Russia, which means, whatever they say, defeatist in most of Europe. 2) Their attitude to the Stalinist parties, whatever they say. They wobble on both. But we have made it clear that in a war, any party today which wants to challenge the Stalinists must realise that they will be anti-war too. When they say: Not Washington, Moscow; the rev'y party must say: Neither Washington nor Moscow. Life will show. They wobble from side to side.

Our position is clear. The masses act on such broad, simple ideas. The Stalinist Party will say A to B, the masses want B to A. Direct clash. Chauhieu does not understand that. (But that understood, what we are doing is of the utmost importance for us.) If the IVth [International] persists with its “defencism” & wobbling, it will be in a crisis, in which all

¹¹⁶ Johnson-Forest Tendency, *Trotskyism in the United States, 1940-47—Balance Sheet: The Workers Party and the Johnson-Forest Tendency* (August 20, 1947).

problems will be posed. Already we are the only alternative. We have demonstrated in the most unmistakable fashion that a rev'y tendency can be a) Bolshevik in orientation b) defeatist [on] Russia c) revolutionary.

Trotsky never believed this possible and this fits in with his whole theory. If it should so happen that an explosion & crack up take place, and the masses will pose this, or the organisations, as a result of experience, if this should happen and some of us have to go our own way, then there is not going to be any splitting off like the WP and Munis, seeking to rebuild or reorganise or come back into the IVth [International].

No, sir. We shall be the last to leave. We precipitate nothing. During the war if it comes before a rev'n, and war will follow a rev'n, then here our main enemy is not the S.W.P. but the American bourgeoisie. But if we do have a split, then the split will be a split, that split will be the organisation[al] end of Trotskyism, and we will break with the whole bag of tricks, repudiating it completely, and making it our first task to finish away with it. That Chaulieu is really quite infantile. Precisely because that is the only split which can have any perspective, any sense, I have little political respect for people who play with the idea.

Finally, closely connected to all this, is a recognition of both our limitations and our perspectives, which are unlimited. The comrades have to dig themselves deep into the factories and make and keep contacts with workers and their families; to keep their jobs and keep quiet. The policy general & local of the S.W.P. should be rigidly followed. But above all they should concentrate on staying where they are and tying themselves to the proletariat by a thousand invisible links. Anyone who gets into any dispute with the S.W.P. leadership or policy should receive neither sympathy nor even a hearing. (This of course does not refer to people like Irving or Johnny.) The reason for this is not only tactical, and necessary for the c'des to learn to live as party members.

It goes much deeper. The proletariat must be judged on an international scale. 1936 in France brought 1936 in the U.S. Revolution, tremendous mass upheavals, are on the order of the day. Nothing else can save society—bourgeois society has no forces to arrest the descent. Other people, many, say these things. We mean them, and draw conclusions and act upon them.

One of the most astonishing features of present day society is the fact that “revolutionary” action of the most pronounced kind is the accepted practice of all governments. The plan of Western Europe for the defense against Russia is based upon delaying action probably on the Rhine and then, continental resistance movements. It is being organised by the general staff of Western Europe. Thus far more than in the last war, the “underground,” the “sabotage,” the “popular mass movements,” are an organic part of bourgeois society. The society has reached a stage where these actions, subversive of all organised authority, discipline, acceptance of the “status quo,” tearing up the people from their roots, become the necessary means of existence for the rival imperialisms. The congenital idiots will ask “but what about the party?” But babies [*break in the text due to a missing page*] . . .

[*continued*] . . . injection, the impulsion, the drive to take the party as a party into the proletariat and proletarian struggles. All things considered J.P.C. has done that job. I would not have done it exactly his way. But that is neither here nor there. We can do nothing about that, nothing. You need a mass party and a mass revolutionary movement for that. Otherwise

it is a slow, painful business. But in so far as we with our absolutely insignificant forces need any scope, we have created it. The rest will have to wait.¹¹⁷

I am quite satisfied with what the S.W.P. is doing, given their fundamental Trotskyite policies and that I do not propose to change by talk. All we can do we have done, educate our people, and sink them into the proletariat, into it, in the factory, in their homes, observing them, studying, writing letters about that, and not stupid gossip, this is it. One must know what one can do and what one cannot do. The proletariat will move. If it does, bourgeois society is doomed.

Therefore we have limitations, great limitations, and possibilities, immense possibilities. One good revolutionist is worth thousands of chatterers. L.T. was right there. In a factory, in a warship, in a regiment, they will do their work. Let them be strong, confident, sure, self-reliant. There is absolutely no need to "encourage" them.

My advice is: leave them alone. Let them be party members. If at any time the division becomes unbearable, and we do not control that, it will be written across the skies. On some concrete decision, far-reaching issue, the S.W.P. like the IVth [International] will say "Do this" and [we] will say "Do that"!

The clash will be head-on, direct, inescapable. And the people who are serious will choose sides. I now am sure that M[ax] S[hachtman]'s people follow him as a leader; that J.P.C.'s people follow him because they believe that his is the road of the revolution. It is the exact opposite of what M.S. and his followers teach & preach. They disagree on policy & follow Shachtman.

Precisely because the SWP are serious they do not brim with disagreements and support Cannon's line & Cannon's method. If C's line & method come into direct conflict with the revolution, then they are far more likely to split than M.S.'s bunch. At any rate, that is the heart of my troubles. And the comrades must be left alone, to make a real integration into the S.W.P. They must be left alone in the letter and in the spirit. It is easy to say nothing but by manner, discrete silences, humphs, "of courses" etc give the impression that all sorts of things are going on or "a day" is being prepared.

The freedom and sharpness of these notes and the comments should not encourage anyone to act or give encouragement to any one to act other than by the decisions we took at the [SWP] Convention both in it and outside. Except for those who are seeing these notes, the horizon remains cloudless. The comrades will come rushing to find out. Is? Isn't there? etc. The responsible ones must be responsible. All that they should be told is: listen to the S.W.P., dig in, talk responsibly to people; observe the proletariat; learn all they can . . . Enough.

The news from France is pitiful. And I repeat, If we were in charge of a party, with weekly press and journal, we could not disintegrate at this time. It is the greatest condemnation of the Majority. We are disciplined but we have to think. That's all: to think.

The *Logic* thing must wait.

¹¹⁷ The J-FT eventually left the SWP in 1951 (see *The Balance Sheet Completed: Ten Years of American Trotskyism*, August 1951, handed in as the J-FT left the SWP).

J.

Document #11

[Pyramid Lake Ranch, Sutcliffe, Nevada] Sep 15th-Sep 20th [1948]

NOTES

Qualitative Change from CP.

The new Int'l must be of a qualitatively different type. It could not be a mere repetition of the 3rd Int [International], this time rev'y, or rev'y once more.

That was precisely one of L.T.'s greatest mistakes.

He thought that it was all a matter of intelligence, everything, the foundations were now fixed. And we had to fight the bad leaders for position.

In reality, the defeat of the German p't, in 1933[,] or rather its destruction, made it inevitable that the new organizations of the workers would be different, qualitatively.

The first is the U.F. [United Front] in the streets in 1934 which saved Fr[ance] from Fascism.¹¹⁸

The second is the complete self-mobilization of the Sp[anish] workers; seizure of factories, economic reorganization etc. The R. R. was not like this, in Feb'y 1917, nor even in Oct'r (in important senses at least). As for the Commune, that looks parliamentary compared to the Sp. Rev. So production moves, so moves the party.

¹¹⁸ Instigated by a variety of fascist and semi-fascist groups, serious riots were provoked in Paris on February 6, 1934. The riots led to the fall of the government of Edouard Daladier, and was followed by the creation of a "national unity" government. The Trotskyists called for popular resistance by calling, unsuccessfully, for a general strike (Pierre Naville, *L'Entre-Deux Guerres: La Lutte des Classes en France 1926-1939* [Paris: Etudes de Documentation Internationales, 1975], p. 62; Alexander, *International Trotskyism*, p. 348). Duncan Hallas has explained the link between the 1934 riots and the "French Turn":

That same February [1934] the fascist Croix de Feu staged a riot and attack on the French Chamber of Deputies in an attempt to exploit popular indignation at the government corruption, exposed by the Stavisky affair, to bring down the Daladier government and open up the road to a dictatorship. It's near success provoked a general strike in Paris on 12 February in which Communist Party militants demonstrated alongside the "social fascists" . . .

The French Trotskyists were now totally without influence. Their main demand appeared to have been met and, although they sharply attacked the dangerous and unprincipled "mutual amnesty" of criticism between the bureaucracies, they could no longer get a hearing amongst even the most advanced workers . . . In these circumstances Trotsky proposed the then radically new tactic of entry into the SFIO [French Socialist party], the "French Turn" ("Against the Stream—The Origins of the Fourth Internationalist Movement," *International Socialism*, No. 53 [October-December 1972]).

Now this has been traced but we have only scratched the surface. Our enemy is the concept of "betrayal"[.] For example: The Commune made mistakes. It was in a bad strategic position. But it was not what we will call "betrayed".

In 1905 the p't, without big organizations, created Soviets, and fought a good rehearsal for later, 1917. There was no "betrayal".

In 1917, however, something new begins. The workers revolt. Then, a workers' organization, in this case not well organized, would not even tell the peasants to take the land . . .

In 1918, a powerful replica of the Mensheviks & Social Rev'ies of 1917, destroy[ed] the German Revolution. Much has to be said about this but this much is clear already.

- (i) The Commune & 1905 had no such internal enemies. The undeveloped, unorganized p't suffered from its own internal weaknesses and inexperience. Its spontaneous powers had free rein. Workers' state, dic'p [dictatorship] of the p't, general political strike, mobilization on factory, economic, basis etc, all coming from below—unchecked, and giving a new dimension, in each case to proletarian struggle. Workers by themselves make historic leaps. Within their organizations they are massacred. They seem unable to make a step.
- (ii) But in 1918 the German p't created little except some soviets, and those not in anything as universal or [permanent?] as Russia, either '05 or '17.

The organizations of IInd In'l killed the creative power of the p't .

This thing had appeared in the Soviet leaders, Mensheviks, in Russia after Feb'y. It is seen in its maturity in Noske¹¹⁹ and the others.

Here again the Fr Revn is invaluable. The proletarians go from stage to stage developing, creating, organizing, until they reach 1794.

The German p't, the Austrians, of 1918 cannot even make an experience. The workers' org'n stifles them after the first outburst, even before.

Thus the org'ns, in 1918, serves the bourgeoisie, but serves it chiefly by preventing a free development such as 1871 & 1905. These may seem obvious things. They are not so to me for some time now.

1933 was the climax of what began in 1917. Both these organizations capitulate without raising a finger. Once more this is the crisis year: 1933. And here again L.T. has created a mountain of confusion with his false ideas & his false method.

We say that the German C. P., obeyed Stalin etc. which is all true. Absolutely. C. P. had a grip on the p't, and Stalin had a grip on the CP etc etc. All true. But—leaving the objective

¹¹⁹ Gustav Noske (1868-1946), right-wing German Social-Democratic politician and defense minister of the Weimar Republic from 1919-1920, infamous for his brutal suppression of the German communist insurrection in Berlin in 1919.

aspects alone, it is clear that 1933 is just the climax of 1917, 1918, 1923, & [has] to be included. (The labor organization has a development of its own. Noske did not obey anybody; the German C. P. leaders, the C. P., of '33 were far more developments of Noske-ism than they were "tools" of the Kremlin.[])

In fact, I don't want to be too iconoclastic, but surely it isn't too much to say, that these labor organizations created the Kremlin.

(I hope by the way there is going to be some steady, sober, brooding over and working out of these ideas and various others, I have indicated. They are "new," tho' they may not seem so.)

They created the Kremlin. They went with Stalin always, in the majority. There never was any serious revolt against him outside . . . O.K.

But be that as it may, the labor organization has a life of its own. Its main function is to crush the creative power of the p't. That is the danger. That is their function. That is their purpose, in the philosophic sense. Whether it is Noske, or Kremlin-dominated, C. P'ers, or At[t]lee¹²⁰ or anyone else, that is their function.

INSERT FACSIMILE PAGE ITEM #3 HERE!

¹²⁰ Clement Attlee (1883-1967) was the leader of the British Labour Party, 1935-1955, and prime minister, 1945-1951, following the upset victory of the Labour Party at the end of World War II. He is largely credited with the creation of the modern welfare state in Britain and the decision to grant independence to India (cf. Phillip Deery, "A Very Present Menace"? Attlee, Communism and the Cold War," *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol. 44, no. 1 [March 1998]: 69-93).

Furthermore there is a qualitative change, in the discipline—the discipline of the C. P. is what it is, because of changes in capitalism (basically) but the C. P. is a development of the IInd In^l; in all essentials.

Since '33 we have seen the p't making its great creative efforts. But the labor organizations develop to correspond. They reach the climax where they (having sought the proper imperialist protection) will themselves organize action committees and strike blows, & good ones too, at the bourgeoisie.

Therefore there is a development, continuous from 1917 on to 1948, looking at the Third [International], as a new category of labor organization. But at the same time there is a tremendous development of width and depth and variety in proletarian outbursts from 1871 to to-day. (Who can spend some time tabulating this?)

Now the latest manifestation of proletarian development is the mass rush to the C. P. in Fr and Italy. It is a post-war phenomenon. The Spanish workers moved irrespective of party; workers, peasants, soldiers. But the Italians & Fr did not form Soviets. They sought, these masses, an organization, either in the party or in the T. U. which was under control of the party anyway. They keep a grip like a vice on the masses.

This is what I call tracing the past, so that the future bursts out from it. We cannot prove the future. Only the p't can do that. But it is clear that we can draw a conclusion or a few conclusions that cannot be logically refuted and open our own eyes. For example[:]

The new, the IVth In^l [International], must be a dialectical combination, of the spontaneous outbursts of the past. But spontaneous as it will be, it will be the result it will be “charged” with experience. The pro't, from its experience, will have rejected bureaucracy, inside & outside of Russia. All we (but it is a lot) can do, is to draw the lessons. But the p't to-day is learning what bu'cy is, and what it means. This is a tremendous lesson. It did not know this in 1917. It will destroy bu'cy and will create a network of orgns wh. will exclude all possibility of its revival. (I ignore for the sake of the argument, the objective, economic basis.)

Again, I would like to see someone work at this. Naturally, it is related on the one side to the stage of production. I have outlined that. This time I prefer to deal with some superstructure, just in outline. But bu'cy as such in relation to capitalism, we have not developed, still less in relation to the proletariat.

There is a dialectic of the party, and it is closely linked with workers' bureaucracy. The B'k Party came from circumstances where the workers did not have to choose between it, and big mass organizations; or between party & unions etc. It represented an organization of struggle, the chief one, the obvious one, never-to-be-forgotten.

- (i) It came “spontaneously” out of the Russian p't. Capitalist development, the unions, the party, the Soviets, the political general strike, all came within a few years, a very few. It was a period of extraordinary creativeness—up to 1905 and 1905 itself. As soon as the movement rose again, the B/ks took the lead.
- (ii) They were leading 4/5 of advanced workers in 1912-1914.

INSERT FACSIMILE PAGE ITEM #4 HERE!

The Bolsheviks beat the Mensheviks fairly and squarely. The workers had a choice and chose right, they were never “deceived,” not for long.

1871, the same

1905, the same

Why, after 1917, begins the terrible series of “betrayals,” of “deceptions,” etc.

Stalinism, says L.T., they “deceived,” “betrayed” the workers, etc. True, on the surface. But I am by now mighty sick of all this struggle for influence of the 2nd, 3rd & IVth [International], over the immature prol’t, the same p’t which is constantly being deceived.

In 1871, 1905, 1917 the p’t made mincemeat of the liberal bourgeoisie. In France [17]89-93, stage by stage the workers discarded one party for another.

What has happened to them since 1912?

L[enin] gave us a key. Economic basis super-profits,¹²¹ we have developed it: administrators of capital we call the bu’cy of to-day.

But we must go further, I think.

These are bourgeois organisations, in structure, in ideology, in every conceivable aspect. As the worker cannot make use of the bourgeois state but must smash it, so he cannot make use of these organisations at all. They must be smashed. We therefore have to smash them theoretically.

What is needed is a detailed analysis, not a compilation, of them as bourgeois organisations, their source of strength, their features etc, why they must behave as they do. The choice of doing differently must be removed from these leaders’ heads, and their conduct placed in the organisation objectively.

These things are as difficult as hell to get down the first time. Each needs an uninterrupted week and much discussion. But I think that last sentence “The choice . . .” did get some place. I’ll try again, however.

If in 1871, 1905, & 1917 (tho’ of course there is a dual movement here) and in (1789-1794) and for that matter in (1640-1649) for the program of Cromwell’s Army was a miracle; and they seized the person of the King at one stage to make the bourgeoisie sit up; tho’ this is of merely historical interest, or rather, more historical interest than otherwise) if all this, what is it that begins (and continues) this terrible list of “deceptions” in 1918? Here are some observations:

¹²¹ “Obviously, out of such enormous superprofits (since they are obtained over and above the profits which capitalists squeeze out of the workers of their ‘own’ country) it is possible to bribe the labour leaders and the upper stratum of the labour aristocracy. And that is just what the capitalists of the ‘advanced’ countries are doing: they are bribing them in a thousand different ways, direct and indirect, overt and covert,” Lenin, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, preface to the French and German editions (Lenin, *Selected Works in Three Volumes*, Vol. I).

It is rooted in the structure & function of capital itself: We who live in 1948 should have a better, clearer answer, than Lenin. He saw the peril and worked like a hero to ward it off. Trotsky to his dying day never understood that there was a problem here. He continued to advance “correct” v “incorrect ideas”. One day the workers will learn!!!! For Lenin this was life and death. I can see why now. We should feel the same way.

Now while in general we are on the correct road, I have arrived at the conclusion that the answer is in the very nature of the workers’ bureaucracies, as organs of capital. Lenin said this was “the main social support”. That went very far for 1918. We say “they administer capital”. But we ought to see the full significance of “social support” to-day better than he did. We say “without them capital could not exist”. It is not-enough. They “are” capital. We must tie them together organically. Their quality is changed.

In *Invading S[ocialist] S[ociety]* we showed that in the C.P., the struggle between cpl [capital] and labor was balanced on a razor’s edge.¹²² It is not enough. The idea of some intellectual deception still hangs around & that must be rooted out. We can say, we have said, but not sharply enough: The revolution is against the bu’cy. But we need to sharpen. It is against the whole bureaucratic organisation, the whole type of organisation which the bu’cy merely embodies.

We have to make clear that not we but history has shown that we do not substitute rev’naires [revolutionaries] for bu’crats in the bu’c organisations. It cannot be done. We do not renew the leadership. We substitute a new type of org’n; i[.]e[.] the p’t substitutes it. Mere talk of “committees” is good, but it is an abstract universal. Again we cannot prove the positive; but we have 30 years of “betrayals” and “deceptions” behind us to analyse. We have not done it.

We have only begun to break out of the subjective net L.T. cast around us. We can only break out objectively. I wrote to G[race] once and that letter should be brought out: Lenin did not have to fight for “spontaneity”. He had to fight for organisation. He had to organise the workers; in Russia; in 1903.

To-day the task is to free the workers from the stranglehold of the labor organisations. They are entirely different tasks. With the close-knit structure of modern society, and the experience of organisation, knitted into the workers, spontaneity to-day means automatically a higher type of organisation. The Soviets in 1917 gave the Bolsheviks an arena, i[.]e[.] the workers created the possibility for them. But in Spain, the rev’n was made. The power was not in the streets. It was in the hands. It wasn’t that the workers lacked organisation.

That is the lesser truth, at least for us now. It was that there were organisations which were determined at all costs to prevent the workers taking power—preferred victory by Franco. And to this day prefer it.¹²³

¹²² *Invading Socialist Society*, Chap. I (e): The Nature of the Party 1947, pp. 20-22; Chap. II: State Capitalism, pp. 23-29.

¹²³ Cf. Burnett Bolloten, *The Spanish Civil War: revolution and counterrevolution* [New York and London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991]; Ronald Radosh, Mary R. Habeck, and Grigory Sevostianov, eds., *Spain Betrayed: The Soviet Union in the Spanish Civil War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001);

Now we have said. They fear the prol'n rev'n. it is a leap into the abyss. They see no force to conquer the chaos because they do not see the creative power of the p't . They see only the workers whom they administer. All this is good, but we want to go further, absolutely must.

They know capitalist prod'cn. They see what is required. That a lot of rebellious workers (without an organisation) should or could run the economy strikes them with horror. They cannot see an alternative.

That too is good. But it is all subjective, too much so at any rate. That organisations are capitalistic, reflect capitalist production, and face destruction by the prol'n rev'n, which objectively is directed against them. This is not the fakers in the 1917 Soviet. There was a workers' creation, soviets, and in this prol'n org'n the struggle was fought. The Mensheviks did not have what they had in Germany.

The workers are not so much deceived as they have to create entirely new forms to overcome these castles of the bu'cy. They are not so much deceived as baffled. The defeat, the destruction of these embattled outposts of capitalist corruption, requires the beginning of that revolution, which is permanent, of the state which is withering away from the first moment. The workers are enchained, trapped, held in a vice, from which they cannot escape, except by the final, the ultimate effort. They were not thus enchained, trapped etc in 1789; 1821, 1905.

Note what has happened to the deceiver theorists. They say point-blank after a time . . . ¹²⁴

The road out is to see them objectively unable to perform any other function, origin, function, structure, growth, development. Naturally we have touched on this in many places. G[race] has some good work in the Phil [Romano] pamphlet.¹²⁵ But nowhere among us, and therefore nowhere anywhere else, is there any concept, any hint of what these monsters are, and what they mean. Munis on Spanish Rev'n is pretty good here.¹²⁶ He sees something.

Document #12

[Pyramid Lake Ranch, Sutcliffe, Nevada] Sept. 27 [1948]

I had written the previous in bed some days ago. Before looking at it I tried again to-day to conclude the ideas. It is all one thing tho' [.]

The whole concept of the party—the bourgeois party—the handing over of the power to a special group, of people, however, fairly elected, this has to be concretely smashed by us theoretically. Lenin kept on saying: to a man, the workers must govern and control, etc.

Stanley G. Payne, *The Spanish Civil War, the Soviet Union, and Communism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004).

¹²⁴ The break in the text at this point is the result of the two succeeding pages being lost.

¹²⁵ *The American Worker*.

¹²⁶ Grandizo Munis, *Jalones de Derrota: Promesa de Victoria (España 1930-1939)* (Mexico: Editorial "Lucha Obrera," 1948).

The immaturity of the R. Rev. [is] proved by this, that he had to say it so often. 1871 & 1905 just made these tremendous advances.

The Philistines will howl. Let them. I am not speaking here of how a group of people, or a body of workers get together and form an ideologically based formation. I am not speaking of what Lenin did in the Russia of 1903. I am attacking an objective phenomenon and its terrible consequences for our theory before our eyes.

The Social-D's, the 3rd In'l, and "Plan" are all one. You know Michels' book on the inevitable degradation of the socialist organizations.¹²⁷ Absolutely correct; absolutely; and he cannot be refuted, except by people who break resolutely with the bourgeois concept of the victorious rev'y party as a proletarian, honest, sincere, self-critical group of leaders, leading people, reorganising society democratically. The complete impulse, drive, etc. comes & must come from the proletariat. And we had better stop fooling; because unless the vanguard in Europe and the U.S., we, theoretically, & the pr't, actually, completely overturns the bourgeois regime, & not turn it inside out, but sublimate it make the victory of the p't something more than a substitution of proletarian party for bourgeois party, then China, India, Africa etc., much of Latin America, have a gloomy perspective even in our minds.

I wrote the first part of this days ago. I fell ill, & I wrote it at intervals in bed. I think it is messy, but only because it is abstract and new. We have nothing to go upon. Churchill is absolutely sincere when he says "I don't think this planned economy can work and keep democracy." I enclose a cutting C[onstance] sent me. We have worked out in many ways the creative power of the p't as the solution—a very good job altogether, very[,] very good. But these parties remain. I repeat, they have to be demolished, inside & outside. Naturally here too we have to trace the historical development and its logical reflection, for we cannot prove anything positive, but these organisations are positive enough and waiting for the blows. Do you know? I cannot think of one single serious analysis of them in all the years of our movement, not one. Corrupt leaders; that is all, not a damned thing else.

Again I appeal to G[race] specially. Forget the building of the party, practice, for a moment. What is the relation of the party to the mass, in bourgeois society. Trace its development until it lands in the Nazi party. It leads, it rules, administers, it formulates; it is, dear sister, the political manifestation of the division between intellectual & manual. Even within the bourgeoisie itself this principle exists. In the decline of bourgeois society it becomes overwhelmingly clear. The principle of authority, the bu'tic [bureaucratic] mass of capital, at all times, repeats (?) itself in the bourgeois political party.

Now as Guérin points out, there was another democracy, in fact the sole genuine democracy, limited as it was, i[.]e[.] the Greek city-state. Rousseau understood it, and I am sure Voltaire & Diderot & Montesquieu and the rest had this in mind, when they rejected democracy. They were not recycling parliamentary fakery. R-u [Rousseau] said plainly that it was not suitable for large states. The thing came up again in 1776 and in *The Federalist* the distinction was clearly made between democracy and the republic. That fantastic character Colonel

¹²⁷ Robert Michels, *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy*. Trans. By Eden and Cedar Paul. Glencoe, Ill: Free Press, 1949.

McCormack¹²⁸ points out vigorously that the U.S. in 1776 became a republic—not a democracy. And he is right, tho' his victory isn't of much use to him.

Now our conception of the party is vitiated by bourgeois ideas and these workers' organisations. 1871, 1905, the initiative, the creation, came from the workers, and in 1940 L[eon] T[rotsky] went very[,] very far in showing that the Soviet, with party members inside it, taking a leading part bien entendu, with press etc, but the Soviet led the Central Committee.

The w[orking]-class always initiates a new kind of party, where its own freedom and initiative can be expressed. The B'k Party grew up, not under a bourgeois, but under a feudal society. And its main task was organization. L[enin] based it theoretically upon certain aspects of c[apitalist] production, the proletariat of his day. I have no doubt of this: that whereas he said: Organize[,] etc[.], because that is what the revolutionary spirit of the workers needed, in concrete Russia; today the rev'y spirit, the political power, requires the opposite: break up the workers' organisations that are killing the workers. All these organizations are headed for "plan;" but surely if all this is correct, then we must theoretically pose, in 1948, a new conception of the essentially proletarian relation between the party & the mass as opposed to the bourgeois[i.]e[.].

I think over L[enin]'s writings of 1917-1920. He had some illusions; also he organized with extreme strictness and determination. War & civil war compel you to watch the concrete; but the whole, is permeated with the idea of the masses, to a man, as leaders, organizers, builders, creators. It is astonishing in retrospect. These were not "flourishes." They were no more flourishes than those things M[arx] wrote in *Capital*, which we have brought to life for the second time, the first time being 1917. Lenin, vanguard of the vng'd of the v'gd of the v'gd, in an impossible historical situation, spent most of his time, expressing, propagandizing for what the p't ought to do. Propaganda, not administration, tho' he administered superbly. Here was an ideal forced out of an inadequate content. This inadequate content put the B'k Party in a unique position which rapidly, rapidly destroyed it. But it is clear that if the content, a fully developed proletariat, had been adequate, the relation between party and mass would have been different, fundamentally different.

We will learn a lot from reading L[enin] with this in mind. But meanwhile we have seen the exact antithesis of this grow up and mercilessly destroy revolution after revolution, and now in its latent form, prepare to lead the p't into slavery. These C.P. folks cannot conceive of any alternative. Like Churchill, Burnham,¹²⁹ Philip M'y [Murray] and the rest, but more so, they

¹²⁸ Robert Rutherford McCormick (1880-1955), popularly known as Colonel McCormick, newspaper editor and publisher of the *Chicago Tribune*, well known for his idiosyncratic and conservative views. In referring to McCormick, James was probably aware of McCormick's recently published *The American Revolution and Its Influence on World Civilization* (Chicago: n.p., 1945) (cf. Lisabeth G. Svendsgaard. "McCormick, Robert Rutherford"; <http://www.anb.org/articles/16/16-02435>; *American National Biography Online* Feb. 2000).

¹²⁹ James Burnham (1905-1987), formerly co-editor of the *New Internationalist*, official organ of the Socialist Workers Party. In 1940, Burnham opposed Trotsky's view that the Soviet Union had remained a "workers' state," a split that led to his formal resignation from the SWP in March 1940. Shortly after, Burnham published what would be his most notable work, *The Managerial Revolution: What is happening in the world* (New York: The John Day Company, 1941), which argued the thesis that the most powerful influence in the world was that of a "new class" of managers, bureaucrats, and technicians. Burnham

have the bourgeois conception of party leadership and followers. The place to crack it open is by the analysis of these parties, not their betrayal, but their deep objective roots and objective role. But this can only be done if we mentally transcend the conditions they represent and objectify. And, for we are politicians, not literary people, in posing this question properly, in answering it concretely, we lay the basis for the utter destruction, not only by implication, but directly of LT's horrible, absolutely horrible, misconceptions of these parties.

I be in bed and wonder particularly at the conversations with Spector¹³⁰ with which he launched the Fourth International; and the conversation also where he said the 2nd and the 3rd might one day join up. He simply never saw, & this can be proved without the slightest difficulty, he never saw L[enin]'s method of analysing what the 2nd stood for in terms of production; and he never saw it, neither in 1915 nor in 1923, because he never saw the workers' parties as anything but parties expressing "the needs" of the workers, and a contradiction between right and wrong people fighting for the leadership. The *Neue Zeit* article proves it to the hilt. Our task is to clear up the past mess by doing all that has not been done. High, high up on the list, and the list is not a series of a+b+c+d, but a sequence in which all the constituents fit into a logical series, high up on the list is the disbanding of these organizations.

We must be prepared and guard ourselves against people who will cry "Anarchism," "Spontaneity." I remember Gates¹³¹ & Shachtman. It is only demagogy with them; and with the rest it is much worse, much much worse. But the only serious & profitable way to answer them is by rigorous analysis not of their damn-fool theories but of concrete problems and contemporary phenomena. And we can always tell them: "Look at us from 1941-1948. We are not so hot. We have headaches and bellyaches aplenty. But you tell us how the essence of Bolshevism on its organizational side was better applied by you." I am firmly of the opinion that the W-P could have been liquidated by the IVth [International] innumerable times during 1945-1948.

quickly became the leading intellectual figure of the American conservative movement, spending the rest of his career as senior editor of William Buckley's conservative *National Review*, and one of the most fervent anti-Communist ideologues in America (see Kevin Smant. "Burnham, James"; <http://www.anb.org/articles/07/07-00502.html>; *American National Biography Online* Feb. 2000; and *How Great the Triumph: James Burnham, Anticommunism, and the Conservative Movement* [Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1992]; cf. James Burnham, "Letter of Resignation from the Workers Party," May 1940, *Fourth International*, Vol. 1, no. 4 [August 1940]: 106-107).

¹³⁰ Maurice Spector (1898-1968), chairman of the Communist Party of Canada during the 1920s, became converted to Trotskyism in 1928, while attending as a delegate the Sixth Congress of the Comintern in Moscow. Spector was accidentally handed, through a slip up in the apparatus of the congress, a copy of Trotsky's *Critique of the Draft Programme of the Communist International* with its scathing criticism of Stalin and Bukharin and the theory of "socialism in one country". Upon his return to Canada, Spector organized a branch of the Communist League of America in 1929; two years later he co-founded the International Left Opposition (Trotskyist) Canada. He relocated sometime thereafter to New York; he presented the International Report at the founding convention of the Socialist Workers Party in 1938, but dropped out of the SWP and the Trotskyist movement the following year. Later he became the editor of a children's magazine sponsored by the Labour Zionist movement ("Maurice Spector," *Wikipedia*, <http://www.answers.com/topic/maurice-spector>).

¹³¹ Albert Gates (Glotzer) (1908-1999), a leading member of the Socialist Workers Party until he split away with Max Shachtman in 1940 to form the Workers Party of America; later on he was a leader of the Social Democrats USA (see Albert Glotzer, *Trotsky: Memoir and Critique* [New York: Prometheus Books, 1989]).

J[immy]

By the way, how is it that nobody takes up some of the smaller links in the chain! Am I striking no sparks? I am particularly interested in the theoretical and practical development of the conception that the concrete of a truly dialectical development (Leninism) is always substituted in a succeeding age by those whom time has left behind.

Grace does not even drop me a line, saying a word about all the things I refer specially to her. I do not want theses, finished programs etc. I am setting the problems out, and trying to link them all together, in the general direction they should take. In France e.g. the c'des are going to be asking some fundamental questions very soon. All this tripe about "ever-higher transitional slogans" will disappear like the wind. We have never, never, precipitated issues. We are too small, too weak. But they come. Soon some or many of the questions posed here are going to rear up like giants and demand attention. We shall be the last to speak. But if necessary we shall speak clearly and firmly, without heat. All sects are reactionary. But this is what we think. No hurry, no excitement; we were good members in the WP; we should be 100% times better in the S.W.P.

I want to say that I hope no one who sees these things will in the slightest degree, even hint of them to members of our tendency, our former tendency. That would be a crime. But tomorrow we may be called upon to answer once more the questions wh[ich] are rising and have been rising with a steady intensity since 1944. If the movement is faced suddenly with a grave crisis, and Europe is on the brink . . . (note how Stalin repeats step by step all Hitler's moves, the disarmament, the friendship, the "aggression," the threat to leave the U.N.; there is I am sure a grand Munich on the way, which will mean nothing), others beside ourselves will ask questions. I have seen the signs already, unmistakeable . . .

Patience, my friends. The contradictions of bourgeois society are so acute that it faces us all with almost insoluble contradictions within our own selves and our own existences. We have to be complete members of the S.W.P., or rather I should say, you all have to be; complete, without reservation; and yet at the same time some of us have to work out these explosive ideas. *[I know?]* the example of Meyer.¹³² He is a good guy. He gives all he has, but at the same time his private thoughts and ideas are his own. And never does his development of his own ideas affect his determination to incorporate himself and all his friends completely into the S.W.P. Contradiction? Show me any social or political organisation or idea to-day that is not torn by the same. The serious man is he who can transcend them in thought & in his own sphere until the proletariat does so in society as a whole.

¹³² This was most likely a reference to Meyer Schapiro (1904-1996), professor of fine arts at Columbia University, 1928-1965, and renowned art critic. According to Frank Brenner, "In the factional struggle that split the Socialist Workers Party, then the American Trotskyist movement, in 1939-40, Schapiro—although he never joined the party—was one of the few intellectuals who sympathized with the proletarian majority led by James Cannon" ("Meyer Schapiro's life and work—An appreciation," *The IWB Online*, April 8, 1996, http://www.wsws.org/public_html/prioriss/iwb4-8/iwb4-8.htm).

Editorial Note

The next document to follow refers to a preceding letter and its contents, for which Document #13 is the continuation. This letter has not been found—a very unfortunate loss, since the letter contained, based on what James says, his initial description of the “Plan” or architecture of “Notes on Dialectic,” including the first part of “Part I”. It is uncertain whether James was describing what had already been written at that stage or what he was projecting was still to be written.

Document #13

[Pyramid Lake Ranch, Sutcliffe, Nevada, ca. September 27, 1948]

Here is some more detail of the Plan; the second part of Part I will consist of three sections. Section A deals with the nature of Consciousness as explained in the Preface and Introd'cn to the *Phenomenology*. Section B then takes up the labor movement from 1848 and puts it consistently and not only by illustration, in some sort of dialectical order.

This gives the opportunity to establish the basic principle of the *Logic*, the unity of opposites, contradiction, as the organic movement of mind and the objective world. I do it, however, ad hoc, i[.]e[.] I show it at work. You need know no *Logic* to see it at work.

Then in Section C I take some passages from the Smaller [*Logic*], the Larger [*Logic*], the *Phenomenology*, key-passages, and I explain them in terms of what we know now. They are, however, general passages. Always general, then more and more concrete.

Part II will take up *The Logic* directly. I do not intend to try to do in 80 M.S.S. [manuscript] pages what H[egel] did in 900 printed pages.

As I see it now, I shall do two things.

- (i) I shall take two or three key movements—Identity. Difference. Sublation—and talk about them a little, what they mean, what they do.
- (ii) I shall then discuss Quantity into Quality and perhaps one or two elementary things from the Doctrine of Being. No summary. Thousands of those are in books, courses etc. They teach nothing. I aim at movement, method. By this time we should be ready for Section 2 of Part 2. This is the real stuff. Essence. And then by this time I quote passage after passage, and expound. No attempt to teach all Essence. I don't know it. But the *Logic* will be placed side by side with modern politics and our politics. From there we go straight on [to]
 - a. The Notion and chiefly
 - b. The Theory of Cognition

That being over we come to the last part [P]art III.

Part I will consist of a concluding exposition of Trotskyism: not too much *Logic* now.

Part II of Part III will take up modern society and the proletariat: dialectical in content and form but without logical phraseology. This will take up the party as such.

Part III will take up practice. Some theoretical study of the tasks of the day and our own perspectives.

To-day, Friday, I have the last parts of [Part] I done. But I have to revise it. I have been in Reno for three days—on vacation so to speak, but thinking things out. I brought 2 Vols of Larger [*Logic*] & 1 volume of Smaller & *Phenomenology*. I have been here since Wednesday. A rest. I have been working out the new points. To-night I shall be back in Reno and shall write at once on Part II—Large Part II. I shall not revise the parts of Part I which I shall have until I hear from you. It will do no harm to you or me. All ideas, suggestions, criticism etc are welcome. Any passages G[race] thinks of importance in the *Logic* she should just say: Page so and so top part and then say: refer this to T[rotskyis]m or Menshevism or whatever it is. A tentative idea is good enough. NB: I am alone here, and this work is the darndest headache.

This should go to R[ae]. All these notes should. About the M.S.S. as it comes, I see no need for long typing now. Once C[onstance] and G[race] have read it, it can go to R[ae] untyped—but

REGISTERED

I have no urgent need to have it typed at present. And again, if it is OK with you, and you all read it together, I would be glad. Later, an abbreviated version can be made which, by leaving out all the “Trotskyism” can have more general circulation.

I think that does it.

Document #14

[Pyramid Lake Ranch, Sutcliffe, Nevada]
Friday 4 o'clock Oct 22 [1948]

I had just mailed the little notes on yellow paper—and asked that they should be circulated—and circulated always means a copy of them back for me, particularly these brief ones about dialectic—they are my way of writing down my ideas—and I need them urgently—but want the rest,—or rather, the others, to see them too (superb sentence), as I was saying, I was just on my way to get the wagon back at 4, to get home at 5, and once being in the dungeon to start work furiously until 7, and go on after dinner, when the boss met me & said: let's go in later. I was all set to work. Thinking over in the bus on the way down—and there off. But here I am, six hours. So I shall improve the shining hour. Please send these back quickly.

Let me say again. Comment, not theses, will help me to get the ideas more clearly. These are more than notes this time, this thing on dialectic. I shall put down some of the points and develop them.

One of them is beating in my head. It is this. In 1920, the T. U. discussion was one of those knots, where everybody draws his own conclusions, given his own individual basis of course. Now Lenin's contribution was the most astonishing thing in all his career. We have not appreciated it. He separated the proletariat as political ruler, guardian, administrator, owner, yes owner of the state-property, from the proletariat as laborer, worker, toiler. The cleavage was unmistakable. He said: the proletariat as worker in its union must be able to oppose the proletariat as political ruler. How we have not seen the supreme significance of this before makes me see how much we have to overcome of the past.

That is the division, that is the contradiction. The proletariat in its unions was to protect, protect, & if you please, the economic and cultural interests of the workers, against the state.

I do not know how far you who are reading this agree with my treatment of the party. I believe that in bourgeois society, in capitalist society, the proletariat as every other formation, must bear within itself the proletarian form of the contradiction. If not here is an organism which escapes the fundamental contradiction. Obviously ridiculous. In its most striking form, it is expressed by the contradiction between the party and the masses. (I was working my way through this, or rather to this, through the *Logic*.)

Hegel says thought is intermediary between us and things or rather Kant said so. Now us is us, an animal, an object; a special object; things are outside us. The link is thought. Hegel says without thought we are nothing. Marx says without labor: I have no wish to prove Hegel wrong. That has been done. Now we are; also objects are. Both have being. Thought is the means by which we the being know. We are the "knowing" of the world. There is a contradiction between man and nature, the knowing and the being of the universe. There is a notorious philosophical conflict over being and knowing (Grace, fill in).

The proletariat has being: as a worker. His union, is himself as being organized. But the classic union deals with wages and empirical things. But the party, the political party, with a proletarian philosophy of life, that is the thought: the means of knowing, of the proletariat. All men, as being, as objects, what Hegel calls "us," we make contact with other being, other objects, by thought. But workers, as special beings in bourgeois society, make contact with other beings, by the party.

The bourgeoisie does not need a political party. It needs a state. But a political party expressing its essence, its way of learning, knowing, no. Why not? Bourgeois society is capitalist society and capitalist society is capitalist production. Capitalism, the bourgeoisie, subjectively organizes production, "the agent" of capital, it organizes scientific life, its social responsibilities. The society provides the bourgeoisie with a way of knowing. Capital is its being, and the bourgeoisie's function, as agent of capital, provides it with knowing. It needs a political party to fight the aristocracy and to fight the proletariat.

Finally the bourgeoisie carries on the intellectual labor of the capitalist world. That is its function. [*Inserted: The material & the organisation of*] thought for it, an appreciation of what is happening, are automatically provided.

Far different with the proletariat. (Its only way of knowing anything, as proletariat, is to oppose, & organize to oppose not only industrial oppression, but that knowledge which springs so automatically from bourgeois society.) But can the prol't organize a scientific

society to oppose bourgeois science? An art club to make a proletarian art? All this is nonsense. It can have one effective type of organisation, a political organisation which is its knowing, as its union is, [it] represents its unconscious declaration of its being as separate, independent, the being of a distinct class. That is as native to it, as bourgeois being is native to the bourgeoisie. And Marx in the Gotha program¹³³ has said that the union is the real organisation of the p't which can never be destroyed. If even they do destroy it, they immediately create a labor front as in Ger'y.

To return. The proletariat must have a party. By the union it protects its economic and cultural interests. That is the elementary necessary of its existence. But by its party it challenges the bourgeois administration of society, and the bourgeois conception of society. By it the proletariat seeks to have a social conception of its own. It may think otherwise. But a proletarian national organisation is no longer for criticism, for amendment. It proposes, there is inherent in it a proletarian administration of society.

All this the bourgeoisie knows. It opposes the formation of parties of the proletariat. It suppresses them without mercy.

Hitlerism is the most perfect example of the bourgeoisie and its essential attitude to politics. H's main purpose was the suppression of the proletarian political organisations. But he suppressed the bourgeois political organisations as well. And most important, like Napoleon, he suppressed all politics. His party was not a bourgeois political party. His party was a new form of state, and the state, as I say, is the essential bourgeois organisation. Hitler derided politics. His party was a military formation. The chief function—police activity. The state is "bodies of armed men"!! The Hitler soi-disant political party was the essence of the state of the bourgeoisie, bodies of armed men, made manifest a twentieth century praetorian guard. Why the people followed is another matter.

Politics is a luxury of the bourgeoisie. It is the intellectual life of the professionals in bourgeois society, because there the economics of the bourgeoisie is concentrated.

Now before I go any further, I must say that I was walking very circumspectly around this idea. (It has vast consequences.) The moment, the second, that L[enin] said the party on the one hand & the proletariat in its unions on the other he exposed the fundamentally bourgeois character of the proletarian state. (I propose for example to challenge without mercy all this crap about distribution, and the use made of [Marx's] innocent statement that in the first stage of Communist society distribution would have to be according to a bourgeois norm.)

¹³³ *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, drafted April-May 1875, first published until 1891 (Marx/Engels, *Selected Works* [Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970], Vol. 3, pp. 13-30), was Marx's critique of the draft program of the United Workers' Party of Germany. Lenin later described the significance of Marx's statement:

The great significance of Marx's explanation is, that here too, he consistently applies materialist dialectics, the theory of development, and regards communism as something which develops *out of* capitalism. Instead of scholastically invented, 'concocted' definitions and fruitless disputes over words (What is socialism? What is communism?), Marx gives analysis of what might be called the stages of the economic maturity of communism" (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 471).

As I say I was walking circumspectly around this idea. The Hegelian concept of thought as that which makes us knowing in regard to things: the purely Leninist concept of the [party] as that which makes the proletariat knowing in regard to society. Knowing in thought for Hegel is the specifically human function. The party is the specially proletarian knowing. (Grace sends me a letter in which she says Lenin's Party, that type of party solved the contradiction between being and knowing. I did not see the full import at first[:] the proletariat itself confines itself to this distinction between being and knowing? It never does when it is self-acting. Never, Never, Never.

In the French Revolution, Babeuf¹³⁴ and his Society of the Equals¹³⁵ came at the end of the revolution, in its decline. The embryo proletariat acted in the districts, in the sections, and through the popular societies. In 1848 it burst out in a revolution—a tremendous mass movement, and then the radical bourgeoisie strangled it. In 1871 it formed a state—one shot. It was nothing—and then it was the dictatorship of the proletariat. In 1905 it formed Soviets.

In 1917 it formed Soviets on such a scale as to alter the whole prospect of Russia. I'll say this till everybody tells me to shut up. The Soviets made Lenin change from bourgeois democracy for Russia.* (*Inserted: *If T'y had seen the Permanent Rev'n as a basis for political action then he would have understood the 1905 Soviets. As far as I can see few people did. I cannot [ever] remember L[enin] calling for them in 1912!*)

The Spanish Revolution was superb in this respect and so the CIO; the proletariat never organizes a party. It organizes a mass movement, including everybody within reason. And the greatest political party in history could function because of the Soviet. The party usurped the functions of the Soviet.

But it is unquestionable that the native impulse, the organic movement, constantly increasing in intensity throughout the years is a mass organisation, the absolute reverse of exclusiveness. And we have said that this rush to the Communist Party is a sign of the maturity of the proletariat.

JF [Johnson-Forest] proposes to form such a party as will abolish the party. A party of many millions of active members is no longer a party. A party of many millions of organized workers, a majority of the population, could not possibly have needed to tell unions to protect themselves against the party. (Lenin in the last part of *Left-Wing Communism*¹³⁶ and in the

¹³⁴ François-Noël Babeuf (1760-1797), political journalist and agitator during the French Revolution whose strongly egalitarian doctrines as well as strategies and tactics are believed to have been precursors to subsequent left-wing movements in the nineteenth-century (see Ian Birchall, *The Spectre of Babeuf* [London: Macmillan, 1997]).

¹³⁵ A reference to the secret society organized by Babeuf (later known as the "Conspiracy of Equals") that plotted an armed rising with the aim of provoking an uprising against the bourgeois regime of the Directory and establishing a revolutionary dictatorship of the plebian masses as a transitional stage to "pure democracy" and "egalitarian communism." The plot was betrayed to the government in May 1796, and after a lengthy trial Babeuf and his co-conspirators were executed at the end of May 1797 (*The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia, Sixth Edition* [New York: Columbia University Press, 2003; cf. Ernest Belfort Bax, *The Last Episode of the French Revolution; being a History of Gracchus babeuf and the Conspiracy of the Equals* [New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1971, 1911]).

¹³⁶ Lenin, *Left-Wing Communism: an Infantile Disorder*, written April-May 1920 (*Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 17-118).

first part too made many remarks which to-day need clarification. I cannot stay to do that. I am clarifying my own argument.)

Now Lenin's long struggle against liquidationism assumes a new quality. The party may be underground. But without its independent party, the proletariat cannot even make a socialist criticism of bourgeois society; it has no means of judging how to act. All this in bourgeois society.

But precisely because all this is so necessary to the proletariat in bourgeois society, it follows that it is not of the essence or rather the "truth" of the proletariat. I cannot here go into Engels's argument that class society caused men to think as they do. But it is a fundamental of the new society that there will be no politics. Politics will be the administration of things. The being of the proletariat and the knowing of the proletariat will be one. That is why the party as the response of the proletariat to bourgeois society must be driven home.

So far so good. But does the . . . NB. I have thrown over the ink. One page is partially ruined. I may have to write in some words. You smile superiority? I am writing in a cafeteria, at the counter, perched up. I left the library and had dinner here, and decided to go on working here.

But if the proletarian party as we know it is a function of bourgeois society, then except in a revolutionary crisis, i.e., when the masses are in motion, it will partake, express, reflect the ideas and organisation of bourgeois society.

The bourgeoisie does not need a mass bourgeois party. The feudal lords came together and talked, all of them; then they went about their business—governing. The bourgeoisie's business is production. Representation is possible and effective for the bourgeoisie. The proletariat cannot use representation. Representation for it is a sign of its passivity, of its bourgeois being, as being in bourgeois society. The whole organisation must take on this character, tends to it. That is what Trotsky saw—and never saw anything else. It is a wonderful case of Essence and Appearance. The organisation begins by tending to routine, bourgeois organisation, etc. But this is only the lesser half of the process.

IT AUTOMATICALLY MUST FIND ANY OBJECTIVE BASIS.

It seeks out, it organizes, those elements in the proletariat which will maintain the stability of the structure. The Second International found them in the labor aristocracy. And Ruth Fischer, who records accurately but cannot think, not dialectically, does not understand that the bureaucracy created by Stalin in the German Party found those elements who were opposed to bourgeois society but whose distinguishing social characteristic was acceptance of the passivity of the proletariat. She talks of fur-coats and pay and privileges and then loss of these. If that is what corrupted them then the proletariat and its leaders deserve all the distrust the tired radicals pour on it.

The CP modelled itself on its teachers, in Russia, 1923! Which turned out to be the essence of bureaucratic and would-be totalitarian control. And, as Ruth Fischer shows under the expert guidance of the Stalinists, they set out to consolidate their power in the factory. It is an automatic process, always driving in the direction of reducing the proletariat to passivity, strengthening the divorce between its being and its knowing. But it does not stabilise at the old level. The proletariat does not lose its gains. But they become stabilized, ossified, fixed

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categories. The process of knowing has ceased to move. The proletariat has only one way of developing further. It creates a whole mass activity, soviet, shop-stewards etc! and its/the new knowledge [and] more results from "To a man." Lenin was frantically urging this. All the workers to a man, to a man, to a man, every cook.¹³⁷

But this meant the abolition of the party in the sense we have known it. It is not anarchism. There is a state: to crush the bourgeoisie. But the proletariat is not divorced from knowing (by the way, knowing is not reading in books as being is not eating and procreating.)

"The proletariat is revolutionary or it is nothing."¹³⁸ (K[arl] M[arx]) It is worse than that. The p't is rev'y or its weapon of knowledge becomes a weapon used against it. There is neither malice, nor evil intention, nor criminality, nor love of coats, or trips to Russia or fear—it happens that way.

The proletariat has sustained some terrific defeats. They overwhelm people. The arguments used against them are shocking, demoralising, utterly false. The argument revolves around the personal dishonesty ("pickings," as J.P.C. calls it) of the bureaucracy. Human nature, you see is corrupt. But infinitely worse is the implication that the proletariat has a free choice. It can choose between "us" and them, and unfortunately it chooses them.

All this is very new and, I feel, difficult. Lenin touched on it once during World War I when he spoke about "why" the workers had to go to the war. Every individual worker was told: you come and go or you are jailed or shot. But we have to take the thing much further. The worker's faculty of "knowing," in the comprehensive sense, in the most comprehensive sense, is the party (I am not talking about little wisps in the wind like Johnson-Forrest). It hampers, obscures and totally fights to keep him there where he is.

It automatically acquires an organisational form. The organisational form is essentially bourgeois. It must be. For this type of party is not native to the proletariat.

I have to go faster than I intended. So prepare for jumps. Bob [*Chestnut?*] is in town. There is a dance. The cafeteria is closing from 9-12. Tonight of all nights. Anyway.

¹³⁷ "But when every labourer, every unemployed worker, every cook, every ruined peasant sees, not from the newspapers, but with his own eyes, that the proletarian state is not cringing to wealth but is helping the poor, that this state does not hesitate to adopt revolutionary measures, that it confiscates surplus stocks of provisions from the parasites and distributes them to the hungry, that it forcibly installs the homeless in the houses of the rich, that it compels the rich to pay for milk but does not give them a drop until the children of all poor families are sufficiently supplied, that the land is being transferred to the working people and the factories and banks are being placed under the control of the workers and that immediate and severe punishment is meted out to the millionaires who conceal their wealth--when the poor see and feel this, no capitalist or kulak forces, no forces of world finance capital which manipulates thousands of millions, will vanquish the people's revolution; on the contrary, the socialist revolution will triumph all over the world for it is maturing in all countries" (Lenin, *Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?* written October 1, 1917 [*Collected Works* [Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972], Vol. 26, pp. 87-136).

¹³⁸ "The working class is revolutionary or it is nothing" (Marx to Engels, February 18, 1865, quoting letter to Johann Baptist von Schweitzer, February 13, 1865, *Marx/Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 94).

The proletariat will only be able to "be" and "know" when its knowing is as natural to it, as bourgeois knowing is to the bourgeoisie. Hence this conflict between its being and its knowing is native to it as long as bourgeois society exists. In this respect the Russian bureaucracy is the most bourgeois of all existing organisations. (Another day a job must be done on bureaucracy as essentially capitalistic & why.)

Now I am going to make a big jump or several. Not only is this conflict between the proletariat and the party native to it. Not only is the proletariat not deceived. Now, get ready:

There is no other way that it can learn to be itself.

I am too much in a hurry to write that as large as I wanted to.

There is no other way.

There is no other way.

There is no other way.

It is not "deceived." I am not "deceived," if I have to do what I do in order to get some place. The deception is a mere appearance. Why am I so sure? I'll tell you why.

Because that process I have described, is the identical, the absolutely identical process that Hegel describes as the process whereby thought moves forward and he says it cannot move forward any other way. That is its nature. In fact the whole conflict of philosophy is, I think, just this, and between being and knowing and the same thing is reproduced in the proletariat with a startling parallelism.

The objective basis of thought I have emphasized [*Inserted: in Notes on Dialectic*]. I have not over-emphasized here the objective basis of the degeneration of proletarian "knowing." The process is not over-simple.

You will see now the significance of Understanding. I am presuming you have read the Notes so far. "Understanding" in the proletarian "knowing" is the result of the passivity of the proletariat, i.e., its capitalistic being, and the ossification of the categories previously established by the proletarian process. Established. Lenin could write as we write. The thing had to be established. And until the Soviets came a second time & in amplitude, he didn't know what positive to write. But that is for us, the few, to remember.

The thought of Understanding is the bourgeois corruption, organisational and fixed, limited, finite, for the reasons I have tried to show.

The political conclusions I can only briefly hint at. The one I am particularly concerned with here is the whole attack upon the enemies of Bolshevism. If we clarified, sharpened, and organized what I am saying here, the whole basis of the propaganda would be altered. It would be made objective, instead of subjective.

(They are sweeping around and under me. I have to go. I shall probably have to finish in a drug-store I know. This is the only cafeteria for Negroes. What a mess! A Bolshevik document has to be written under these circumstances! Talk about democracy.)

Practically, then

(I am now in the park, sitting in the open—it is 9:20 and I am writing by a street-lamp. I am a sight for the passers-by)

—practically the revolutionary party must be revolutionary. The proletariat is revolutionary or it is nothing. The party is revolutionary or it simply is not. It goes backward. It reinforces the bourgeoisie.

Now I can imagine some sneering sceptics saying “All that talk and so tame a conclusion.” As you know by now, before two or three more pages he will be torn asunder.

Revolutionary is an abstract universal. But first of all, it is a universal. The W.P. was not revolutionary either in its agitation or its propaganda.

I see that the French Party¹³⁹ has now arrived at the conclusion that the whole situation in France depends upon the spontaneous action of the workers against de Gaulle.¹⁴⁰ Yet these God-damned sons of bitches, and I tell you I haven't the nerve or the habit of writing words which will express how I feel, have fought us for years as anarchists, semi-syndicalists; they had low slogans and then higher and then ever-higher: they said you must mix them carefully—the low ones with the higher, not too much of one, not too much of the other, such a pile of variegated shit as you never saw.

In 1944 we told them, in the article on “Retrogression”: a second revolution, break up the bourgeois army, break up the bourgeois state, form your committees, ceaselessly explain what the soviet power is.¹⁴¹ The immediate needs are the starting-point, the occasion only to

¹³⁹ *Parti Communiste Révolutionnaire* (PCI). “Early in 1944 the POI [*Parti Ouvrier Internationaliste* or Internationalist Workers Party], CCI [*Comité Communist Internationaliste*] and Octobre groups agreed to unite into a single organization, Parti Communiste Révolutionnaire (PCI), which became the French section of the Fourth International. Only the Lutte de Classes group stood aside from the reunification” (Birchall, “With the Masses, Against the Stream,” see also Alexander, *International Trotskyism*, “French Trotskyism During World War II,” pp. 356-376).

¹⁴⁰ According to Birchall, “The Trotskyist movement retained a certain degree of influence up to the time of the Renault strike in 1947, before falling apart in a series of debilitating internal disputes” (“With the Masses, Against the Stream”).

¹⁴¹ J. R. Johnson [C.L.R. James], “Historical Retrogression or Socialist Revolution: A Discussion Article on the Thesis of the IKD—Part. 1: The Theory of the Question,” *New Internationalist*, Vol. XII, no. 1 (January 1946): 25-29; “Historical Retrogression or Socialist Revolution—Part II: The Test of Events,” *New Internationalist*, Vol. XII, no. 2 (February 1946): 59-64. This is what James wrote:

Marxism in Germany today demands withdrawal of occupying troops, right of free press and the right to organize. That has not one whiff of retrogression. But it demands today a revolutionary provisional government elected by the people *to destroy capitalism in Germany*. (And we might say boldly also that if the occupying armies were to withdraw tomorrow, we would summon the people to arm themselves and carry out this program in a revolutionary manner.) A superb slogan, of deep historical significance, has already come out of Germany. “Not National Socialism, but the Socialist Nation.” This in the light of their dreadful past has meaning for all Germany. This is the appeal the German workers must make to Europe. This must be coupled with slogans embodying ideas such as: Do not take away the factories. Do not limit our production. Let us join the European working class in a new European socialist order.

make a revolutionary propaganda. Those bitches argued for months whether to vote yes or no for the bourgeois constitution. Their “ever-higher transitional slogans.” Now they discover “spontaneity.” And as usual with the utmost crudity. Revolutionary is not an abstract word. The German people suddenly appeared in the biggest mass demonstration since 1848. I saw the pictures. Germain¹⁴² told G[race] that his new position on Germany would be accused of Shachtmanism.

Which brings me to the second or rather third and last point. Rev’y, yes, but what exactly? We have written much but I am now seeing it more clearly than ever. Every political body of thought has an organisation. You had before 1905, the liberal bourgeoisie; after 1905 Menshevism. After 1923 Stalinism. Each of these stands out and not by accident. Each is Understanding. But Understanding has to be carefully placed. Now watch this. If Stalinism is today what it is, it means that the workers, everywhere, are ready to repudiate that [which] I have written so often. Parliamentarianism, private property, national defense and isolated national action.

Now, wherever you are, you begin from there, or you are behind the workers. But Understanding has an organisational form and not by accident. And therefore your main fire, the whole direction, is to destroy this organisational form and no other.

The bureaucracies must be destroyed. The “spontaneous” action of the workers must destroy it. Everywhere the struggle is between the self-acting workers and Stalinism; not between Menshivism and the need to build a new Third International labelled Fourth. We have said this. Sure. But Hegel, good old Hegel, says that “an old man repeats the prayers he said as a boy, but now with the experience of a life-time.”¹⁴³

Nothing else but this will counter the bourgeois propaganda that a free Germany means war once more. This is the way to pose now before the German people and the rest of Europe a unified Europe, the Socialist United States of Europe . . . The retrogressionists, however, in full accordance with their theory, obviously had abandoned the German revolution, even after the altogether magnificent revolution of the Italian workers, which should have wiped away all doubts about the recuperative power of the proletariat under fascism. For them the Socialist United States of Europe was no unifying slogan but a phrase. Their revolution in the occupied countries was “democratic-political.” But the formation of factories committees and soviets for Germany or Italy, the beginning of the socialist revolution, as Trotsky envisaged it in 1938, that their conception of the proletariat did not allow them to see at all (“Historical Retrogression or Socialist Revolution—Part II: The Test of Events”, *The New International*, p. 62).

¹⁴² Ernest Mandel aka Ernest Germain (1923-1995), Belgian Trotskyist and economist, member of the leading body of the Fourth International ((International Secretariat, later United Secretariat, and International Executive Committee of the Fourth International) from 1941 to 1995; author of many notable works, including the massive two-volume *Marxist Economic Theory* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1968), *Late Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1978), and *Long Waves of Capitalist Development: A Marxist Interpretation*, based on the Marshall Lectures given at the University of Cambridge, 2d rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1995); cf. “What Should Be Modified and What Should Be Maintained in the Theses of the Second World Congress of the Fourth International on the Question of Stalinism? [Ten Theses],” *International Information Bulletin*, (April 1951).

¹⁴³ “The absolute idea may in this respect be compared to the old man who utters the same creed as the child, but for whom it is pregnant with the significance of a lifetime” (*The Logic of Hegel translated from The Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, translated by William Wallace, with a foreword by J. N. Findlay [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975], §237, p. 375).

P.S. I want this. If you cannot type it, send it back.