

FASCISM

Past . . . and Future?

Part One

I: RISE OF FASCISM 1919-1934

INTRODUCTION

The story is not pretty. It is the story of fascism, a monumental attack of the desperate capitalists on the working class. The article presents the stark truth—not only of fascism's ultimate defeat but also of its earlier successes and the catastrophic suffering it imposed on the working class. Fascism's story is shocking and brutal, but in the end the fascist overlords were annihilated.

From the working class springs all life, all material progress. In this century only the working class has vitality. The working class will win in the end no matter what setbacks have to be endured. This is an unshakeable truth. As Lenin said:

Communism is emerging in positively every sphere of public life; its beginnings are to be seen literally on all sides. The "contagion" (to use the favourite metaphor of the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois police, the one mostly to their liking) has very thoroughly penetrated the organism and has completely permeated it. If special efforts are made to block one of

the channels, the "contagion" will find another one, sometimes very unexpectedly. Life will assert itself. Let the bourgeoisie rave, work itself into a frenzy, go to extremes, commit follies, take vengeance on the Bolsheviks in advance, and endeavour to kill off (as in India, Hungary, Germany, etc.) more hundreds, thousands, and hundreds of thousands of yesterday's and tomorrow's Bolsheviks. In acting thus, the bourgeoisie is acting as all historically doomed classes have done. Communists should know that, in any case, the future belongs to them; therefore, we can (and must) combine the most intense passion in the great revolutionary struggle, with the coolest and most sober appraisal of the frenzied ravings of the bourgeoisie. The Russian revolution was cruelly defeated in 1905; the Russian Bolsheviks were defeated in July 1917; over 15,000 German Communists were killed as a

result of the wily provocation and cunning manoeuvres of Scheidemann and Noske, who were working hand in glove with the bourgeoisie and the monarchist generals; White terror is raging in Finland and Hungary. But in all cases and in all countries, communism is becoming steeled and is growing; its roots are so deep that persecution does not weaken or debilitate it, but only strengthens it. (*Left-Wing Communism, Lenin.*)

In the same vein Mao Tse-Tung pointed out:

The reactionary, backward, decaying classes retained this dual nature even in their last life-and-death struggles against the people. On the one hand, they were real tigers; they ate people, ate people by the millions and tens of millions. The cause of the people's struggle went through a period of difficulties and hardships, and along the path there were many twists and turns. To destroy the rule of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism in China took the Chinese people more than a hundred years and cost them tens of millions of lives before the victory in 1949. Look! Were these not living tigers, iron tigers, real tigers? But in the end they changed into paper tigers, dead tigers, bean-curd tigers. These are historical facts. Have people not seen or heard about these facts? There have indeed been thousands and tens of thousands of them! Thousands and tens of thousands! Hence, imperialism and all reactionaries, looked at in essence, from a long-term point of view, from a strategic point of view, must be seen for what they are—paper tigers. ("Talk with Anna Louise Strong," Mao Tse-Tung)

I. THE FACE OF FASCISM

"Those who won't learn from history are doomed to repeat it." — Hegel

Today the workers of the world face a severe danger from the growth of fascism. Nations like Argentina, Portugal and Lebanon are in imminent danger of a fascist takeover. The recent fascist coups in Indonesia and Chile where 500,000 and 50,000 workers respectively were slaughtered leave no doubt what will happen if the fascists succeed. The temporary but undeniable "successes" of the Indonesian and Chilean fascists in crushing the working class movement, of the Israeli fascists in aggressive expansionism have once again attracted capitalists the world over to fascism.

Here in the United States the rapid growth of the American Nazi Party from San Francisco to Minneapolis has been noted. In the East the fascist ROAR has spread from Boston to New

York and as far West as Chicago. And the Ku Klux Klan, four times previously smashed, has begun its fifth resurrection, significantly based now in California, not Mississippi.

Modern fascism came into its own after World War I in 1918. It received a near-fatal crushing defeat in 1945 from workers and communists. This was the first period of modern fascism, 1918-1945. It is necessary to study the history of fascism in its first period, as well as contemporary fascism, in order to draw lessons that will teach us how to more effectively fight. Such is the purpose of this series of articles.

Fascists say many things, spin many theories, but fascism is best known for its deeds. Indeed, it is futile and pointless to search the writings of fascists to find out their "theory." "Fascism is less a policy than a state of mind," said the Fascist, published by Mussolini. This nonsensical statement can only trap the unwary. For the Italian fascists pursued a definite "policy" regardless of their "state of mind." Following are extensive quotations from three bourgeois historians intended to give the reader a taste of what fascism is like in action.

The bourgeois author Tascal⁴ states:*

By the end of 1920 the fascists were making habitual use of "punitive expeditions" to extend their influence. These were employed on a large scale in Julian Venetia, where the fascist groups were openly supported by the local authorities, and where the struggle against "bolshevism"—i.e. against Workers' Co-operatives, Sickness Funds and Culture Clubs, inherited from Austrian Socialism—was accompanied by a violent oppression of the Slovene and Croat populations. The headquarters of the Slovene associations in Trieste was set on fire in July 1920, and in October the socialist daily, *Il Lavoratore*, was attacked, and the Chamber of Labour in Fiume destroyed. This form of action, while it was intensified in Julian Venetia, where it drew much support from nationalist aspirations, spread into the Po valley, where it acquired the characteristics which were dominant up to the time of the march on Rome. In the Po valley, the towns were on the whole less red than the country, being full of landowners, garrison officers, university students, officials, rentiers, professional men, and tradespeople. These were the classes from which fascism drew its recruits and which officered the first armed squads. Thus an expedition would usually set out into the country from some urban centre. With arms provided by the Agrarian Association or by some regimental stores, the blackshirts would ride to their destination in lorries. When they arrived they began by beating up any passer-by who did not take off his hat to the colours, or who was wearing a red tie handkerchief, or shirt. If anyone protested or tried to defend

* See note on sources and footnotes at the end. Number refers to specific cited author and work.

himself, if a fascist was roughly treated or wounded, the "punishment" was intensified. They would rush to the buildings of the Chamber of Labour, the Syndicate, or the Co-operative, or to the People's House, break down the doors, hurl out furniture; books, or stores into the street, pour petrol over them, and in a few moments there would be a blaze. Anyone found on the premises would be severely beaten or killed, and the flags were burnt or carried off as trophies.

The expedition usually had a definite object, which was to "Clean up" a neighbourhood. They would then draw up at once outside the headquarters of the red organization and destroy it. Groups of fascists would round up the "leaders," mayors, and town councillors, the secretary of the "league," or the president of the cooperative. These were forced to resign and banished for ever from the district, under pain of death or the destruction of their houses. If they escaped vengeance was taken on their families. "Punitive expeditions set out every day," says Chiurco in his **History of the Fascist Revolution**.* "The lorry load of fascists arrives in a given district, and they announce themselves to the head of the League. They begin with a discussion or; then either the head of the League gives way or persuasion is followed by violence. He generally does give way. If not, the revolvers have their say." If he still resisted he was done away with. They planned and directed all the expeditions without any interference from the local authorities, was arrested at Ferrara for being found in possession of a revolver. "As soon as the news became known the town was in a ferment. Columns of fascists would come to his house at night and trick him into coming out; as soon as he opened the door they would shoot him down on his own doorstep. Such people would often let themselves be taken away in order to spare their families the tragic sight. Next morning they would be found dead in the field to which the fascists had brought them. Sometimes the fascists amused themselves by taking away their victims in a lorry and, after torturing them, leaving them naked:

... tied to a tree, hundreds of miles away. To maintain the terror they used to send out and publish all kinds of threats and orders, without the slightest sign of interference from the magistrates or the government. Thus the Marquis Dino Perrone Compagni could with impunity send the following letter, in April 1921, to the mayor of a village in Tuscany:

"Sir, Since Italy must belong to the! Italians and cannot therefore permit herself to be governed by people of your sort, speaking for your fellow-citizens who are under your administration I advise you to resign your office of mayor before Sunday, April 17. If you refuse, you alone are responsible for the consequences. If you take it upon yourself to draw the attention

of the authorities to this generous, kindly and humane advice your time allowance will expire before Wednesday the 13th—a lucky number. Signed, Dino Perrone Compagni, 1 Piazza Ottaviani, Florence."

The author signed his own name, on paper stamped with the fascio, and added his private address, quite certain that there would be no interference with him and his friends and no official veto on the proposed expedition.

The authorities were "helpless" against the fascist offensive, according to Tasca, who continues:

In the province of Bologna raids and acts of terrorism increased, particularly after the meeting of the fascist provincial congress (April 3), which was celebrated by the destruction of numerous workers' and socialist clubs in the capital. In the province of Ferrara, operations on a grand scale began earlier, at the beginning of March, and reached a peak in May, when the expeditions became "innumerable," there were so many, says the fascist historian, that "one could no longer keep count: leagues, organizations, all were overthrown." On May 26 Italo Balbo, who had roused the population with patriotic songs, while the bells of the principal churches sounded the tocsin. At one o'clock in the morning the Castello Estense was besieged by the fascists, who had mobilized, rounded up their country squadrons and threatened to occupy it. The authorities were forced to free Balbo and he was presented by public subscription with a new weapon to replace the confiscated one." Two months earlier Arpinati, the leader of the action squadrons in Bologna, accused of having committed several murders and other acts of violence, had been set free three days later after similar demonstrations.

In the province of Mantua, which had enjoyed peace since the tragic days of December 1919, the landowners took advantage of the fascist advance to attack the agricultural labour agreement. In Mantua itself the confederate Chamber of Labour and the People's University were destroyed on April 20, and next day, with the aid of fascists who drove up in lorries from the country, the syndical Chamber of Labour, the Railwaymen's Club, and the flat of the socialist deputy Dugoni suffered the same fate. The Agrarian Association announced that in future work would only be given to those on the fascist register. Punitive expeditions wiped out leagues, co-operatives, workers' associations, special attention being paid to league leaders and their homes. At San Giovanni del Doss, after the suppression of the league, wages were reduced and hours of work raised from eight to ten a day. It was impossible to get into the country without a fascist pass. At Buscoldo a lorry drew up one night outside the local co-operative club, a handsome building of which the workers were very proud. Darkness had already fallen. The fascists rushed in, shouting: "Down with the king. Long live d'Annunzio." Some guarded the main entrance, others entered the cafe; with eyes glaring and faces distorted they shouted: "Hands up."

*Official History published by the fascist government.

The workers present, who were playing cards or reading newspapers, obeyed. They were searched, without so much as a penknife being found. The fascists, revolver in hand, forced them to leave, one by one. At the door others lay in wait for them with daggers and bludgeons. The workers all had to run the gauntlet. Blows were rained on their heads and shoulders and they were stabbed in the back. Thirty-eight were thus stabbed, including old men, three disabled soldiers, and a fourteen-year-old child. After this the fascists ransacked the building, broke up the furniture, and destroyed the registers. At a blast from a whistle they got back into their lorry, after emptying the till, and disappeared into the night.

The tradespeople hated the co-operatives as much as the landowners hated the "leagues." At Ostiglia, an important provincial centre, there was a flourishing co-operative store in one of the little town's most beautiful buildings, containing its most popular cafe. The fascist executive stepped in and announced their decision:

"The management of the co-operative are invited to go into liquidation and dispose of their property before the end of May; for shopkeepers have the right to carry on their trade without being crippled by the co-operative." The management with some difficulty secured a month's reprieve, but had to carry out the fascist

decree before the end of June.

And so on, up and down the Italian Peninsula. Thus fascism has a policy—an anti-worker policy. The policy is destroy any and all workers' organizations especially the trade-unions and the workers' political party. But even co-ops or cultural clubs organized by workers earn the hatred of the fascist bosses, who are bent on reducing the working class to a state of virtual slavery.

In Spain the fascists proved they would happily exterminate any number of workers who fought back. Not only activists but any workers who even participated in strikes were slaughtered. Thomas,¹⁵ recognized bourgeois authority on the Spanish Civil War recorded that

The casas del pueblo and left-wing newspaper offices were closed down. Strikes were made punishable by death. Private rail and road movement was banned. Throughout Nationalist Spain, all Masons, all members of Popular Front parties, all members of trade unions and, in many areas, everyone who had voted for the Popular Front in the elections of February were arrested and many of these were shot. "That's Red Aranda," the Monarchist Count of Vallelano remarked to Dr. Junod, the astonished Swiss Red Cross representative, while driving past the town in August, "I am afraid we had to put the whole town in prison and execute very many people."

The number of executions varied from district to district, according to the whim of the local commander or authorities. Civil Governors and officials of the Civil Government, if they had been appointed by the Popular Front Government, were almost always shot. So were those who sought to maintain the general strike declared at the time of the rising. The wives, sisters and daughters of men executed sometimes shared their fate. Often they would have their heads shaved, and their foreheads daubed mockingly with some working class sign such as the letters UHP or UGT. Then they might be raped. These atrocities had a special purpose. Though the rebels* were well armed, they were few in number. In a place such as Seville, the large working-class population had to be terrified into acquiescence of the new order before the nationalist commanders could sleep peacefully in their beds. Hence, not only did the rebels feel bound to act with extraordinary ruthlessness towards their enemies, but also they had to act openly, and expose the bodies of those whom they killed to public gaze. All that the Church officially insisted upon was that those killed should have the opportunity for confession. "Only 10-percent of these dear children refused the last sacraments before being despatched by our good officers," recorded with satisfaction the Venerable Brother at Majorca. Mourning, however, was generally prohibited even to the relations of those who had thus made a good death.

Day after day, from the time of the success of the rising, the arrests continued. Who knew with what crime those taken would be charged, or whether they would ever come back? The French Catholic writer, Georges Bernanos, who was at the time in Majorca, described how men were arrested by the Nationalist armed gangs "every day from lost villages, at the time when they came in from the fields. They set off on their last journey with their shirts still clinging to their shoulders with sweat, with their arms still full of the day's toil, leaving soup untouched on the table, and a woman, breathless, a minute too late at the garden wall, with a little bundle of belongings hastily twisted into a bright new napkin: Adios: Recuerdos." In most cases, however, the arrests were made at night, and the consequent shooting also done in the dark. Sometimes the executions would be single, sometimes collective. Sometimes, the official in charge, out of compassion, would arrange for a generous supply of wine to be at hand, so that the doomed might steep their despair in the wisdom of intoxication before death. The next morning, the bodies would be found. Often these would be of

distinguished members of the parties of the Left, or of officers loyal to the Republic. But no one would dare to identify these corpses. For example, the corpse of Colonel Mena, the head of the Civil Guard in Burgos, a loyal Colonel of a cavalry regiment, and five other well-known citizens of that city were condemned to rest for ever beneath a tomb marked "Seven unidentified bodies. Found on the hill near the 102 km stone on the road to Valladolid."

After a while (at least in the north), the exposure of corpses to the public gaze was suspended, on the request of General Mola. He declared himself inconvenienced by the bodies on the roadside. Hence-forward, the executions occurred discreetly, in the orchards of a remote monastery or among the boulders on some desolate hillside.

Of course it was the Nazis who polished and perfected the methods of the early fascists in Italy and Spain. In the war against the Soviet Union special execution squads of Einsatz commandoes were set up to murder every Communist, every Soviet officer, every Soviet commissar and every Jew that fell into Nazi hands. Here the Nazis took racism and anti-communism to its logical conclusion. The U.S. best-seller **The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich** by Shirer¹² using only captured Nazi documents or testimony at Nuremberg by the Nazis themselves is not prone to exaggeration. Shirer states:

An eyewitness report by a German of how a comparatively minor mass execution was carried out in the Ukraine brought a hush of horror over the Nuremberg courtroom when it was read by the chief British prosecutor, Sir Hartley Shawcross. It was a sworn affidavit by Hermann Graebe, the manager and engineer of a branch office in the Ukraine of a German construction firm. On October 5, 1942, he witnessed the Einsatz commandos, supported by Ukrainian militia, in action at the execution pits at Dubno in the Ukraine. It was a matter, he reported, of liquidating the town's 5,000 Jews.

My foreman and I went directly to the pits. I heard rifle shots in quick succession from behind one of the earth mounds. The people who had got off the trucks—men, women and children of all ages—had to undress upon the order of an S.S. man, who carried a riding or dog whip. They had to put down their clothes in fixed places, sorted according to shoes, top clothing and underclothing. I saw a heap of shoes of about 800 to 1,000 pairs, great piles of under-linen and clothing.

* "Rebels" here refers to the fascists led by Francisco Franco who organized a rightwing uprising against the popular front government.

Japanese Invaders parade through Hong Kong.

Surviving prisoners watching from blocks nearby remembered how for a time the signal for the orderlies to pour the crystals down the vents was given by a Sergeant Mo!! "Na, gib ihnen schon zu fressen" ("All right, give 'em something to chew on"), he would laugh and the crystals would be poured through the openings, which were then sealed.

Through heavy-glass portholes the executioners could watch what happened. The naked prisoners below would be looking up at the showers from which no water spouted or perhaps at the floor wondering why there were no drains. It took some moments for the gas to have much effect. But soon the inmates became aware that it was issuing from the perforations in the vents. It was then that they usually panicked, crowding away from the pipes and finally stampeding toward the huge metal door where, as Reitlinger puts it, "they piled up in one blue clammy blood-spattered pyramid, clawing and mauling each other even in death."

Twenty or thirty minutes later when the huge mass of naked flesh had ceased to writhe, pumps drew out the poisonous air, the large door was opened and the men of the Sonderkommando took over. These were Jewish male inmates who were promised their lives and adequate food in return for performing the most ghastly job of all.* Protected with gas masks and rubber boots and wielding hoses they went to work. Reitlinger has described it. Their first task was to remove the blood and defecations before dragging the clawing dead apart with nooses and hooks, the prelude to the ghastly search for gold and the removal of teeth and hair which were regarded by the Germans as strategic materials. Then the journey by lift or rail-wagon to the furnaces, the mill that ground the clinker to fine ash, and the truck that scattered the ashes in the stream of the Sola.

*Those traitorous Sonderkommandos who survived migrated to Palestine; many of them became the backbone of the Israeli fascist Stern or Irgun gangs and practiced what they learned from the Nazis on Arab villagers in Palestine. After Israel was founded, the former Sonderkommandos became the core of the Israeli secret police and elite comandos.

There had been, the records show, some lively competition among German businessmen to procure orders for building these death and disposal contraptions and for furnishing the lethal blue crystals. The firm of I.A. Topf and Sons of Erfurt, manufacturers of heating equipment, won out in its bid for the crematoria at Auschwitz. The story of its business enterprise was revealed in a voluminous correspondence found in the records of the camp. A letter from the firm dated February 12, 1943, gives the tenor.

TO THE OFFICE OF THE S.S. AND POLICE, AUSCHWITZ:

SUBJECT: Crematoria 2 and 3 for the camp.

We acknowledge receipt of your order for five triple furnaces, including two electric elevators for raising the corpses and one emergency elevator. A practical installation for stoking coal was also ordered and one for transporting ashes.

The correspondence of two other firms engaged in the crematorium business popped up at the Nuremberg trials. The disposal of the corpses at a number of Nazi camps had attracted commercial competition. One of the oldest German companies in the field offered its drawings for crematoria to be built at a large S.S. camp in Belgrade.

For putting the bodies into the furnace, we suggest simply a metal fork moving on cylinders.

Each furnace will have an oven measuring only 24 by 18 inches, as coffins will not be used. For transporting the corpses from the storage points to the furnaces we suggest using light carts on wheels, and we enclose diagrams of these drawn to scale.

Another firm, C.H. Kori, also sought the Belgrade business, emphasizing its great experience in this field since it had already constructed four furnaces for Dachau and five for Lublin, which, it said, had given "full satisfaction in practice."

Following our verbal discussion regarding the delivery of equipment of simple construction for the burning of bodies, we are submitting plans for our perfected

cremation ovens which operate with coal and which have hitherto given full satisfaction.

We suggest two crematoria furnaces for the building planned, but we advise you to make further inquiries to make sure that two ovens will be sufficient for your requirements.

We guarantee the effectiveness of the cremation ovens as well as their durability, the use of the best material and our faultless workmanship.

Awaiting your further word, we will be at your service.

Heil Hitler!

C. H. Kori, G.M.B.H.

In the end even the strenuous efforts of German free enterprise, using the best material and providing faultless workmanship, proved inadequate for burning the corpses. The well-constructed crematoria fell far behind at a number of camps but especially at Auschwitz in 1944 when as many as 6,000 bodies (Hoess put it at as many as 16,000) had to be burned daily. For instance, in forty-six days during the summer of 1944 between 250,000 and 300,000 Hungarian Jews alone were done to death at this camp. Even the gas chambers fell behind and resort was made to mass shootings in the Einsatzkommando style. The bodies were simply thrown into ditches and burned, many of them only partly, and then earth was bulldozed over them. The camp commanders complained toward the end that the crematoria had proved not only inadequate but "uneconomical."

The Zyklon-B crystals that killed the victims in the first place were furnished by two German firms which had acquired the patent from I.G. Farben. These were Tesch and Stabnow of Hamburg, and Degesch of Dessau, the former supplying two tons of the cyanide crystals a month and the latter three quarters of a ton.

This then is fascism in practice.

II. FASCISM AS A FORM OF THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE BOURGEOISIE*

The bourgeoisie announced its accession to power 200 years ago with the slogan "Liberty, equality and fraternity" promising "Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." One hundred and fifty years later the slogans changed to the "Führer Principle," the "superman theory of Aryan supremacy," and the "final solution to the Jewish Question," promising death, destruction and crematoria. Sergeant Moll of Auschwitz and Lt. Calley of My Lai typify the petty fascist

* Editor's note: In the previous issue of this magazine, a comrade wrote questioning our calling fascism another face of liberalism. We think the subject well may be settled within this article and particularly in this section.

official of latter day capitalism, while C.H. Kori and Dow Chemicals carried out the capitalist laws of free enterprise to their logical conclusion.

This history of fascism will show:

(1) Fascism was not an isolated phenomenon in Italy, Spain and Germany but had a world wider movement active in virtually every country;

(2) Fascism was not an accidental abomination of a few fanatics but the carefully conceived creation of the ruling classes of the world.

That fascism took state power in Italy, Germany, Spain and Japan is well known. Not so well known are the following facts:

- A fascist dictatorship took power in Hungary even before Italian fascism was a mass phenomena. The Hungarian fascists later eagerly allied themselves with Hitler, took part in the invasion of the Soviet Union and happily transported 550,000 Hungarian Jews to the Nazi death camps.

- A homegrown fascist movement took power in Austria with no outside help and three years later delivered the nation to Hitler on a silver platter.

- Norway and Denmark were not so much overrun by German troops as they were freely delivered to the Nazis by home-grown fascist cliques, that in one case included many leading military and civilian figures (Norway) and in the other (Denmark) all the leaders of the former "democratic" government.

- Homegrown fascist gangs every bit as vicious as the Nazis were placed in power by the bourgeoisie in such diverse nations as Finland, Portugal, Rumania, Greece, Argentina, El Salvador, China and many other nations.

- In "democratic" France there was a huge and powerful fascist movement financed by the bourgeoisie, protected by the leading politicians and military men that fatally weakened any French military effort against the German Nazis and then took power under German protection in 1940.

- In "democratic" Britain there was a movement of similar prowess and similar purpose; and this was the case, allowing for local variations, in the U.S., Sweden and virtually every nation except the Soviet Union.

In later articles we will examine all these fascist movements in more detail, but for now we want to establish that fascism was a world-wide phenomena, not restricted to any one or several countries. As for the second point, that the ruling capitalist classes were the behind-the-scenes bosses of fascism and all its crimes, the above-quoted facts describing how I.G. Farben* and other large German companies built the crematoria and gas chambers only begin to tell the story:

- The biggest armaments capitalist in Germany

* After the war IG. Farben split into three companies, which unlike Hitler, are all alive and well today. They include: BASF, Hoechst Chemicals, Bayer Co., which are the first, second and fourth biggest companies in West Germany today.

was and still is today Krupp. For his greater profit the SS provided him with slave labor. The "senior doctor" for Krupp described in an affidavit at Nuremberg how these workers were treated:

1. 600 Jewish women who worked for Krupp:

Upon my first visit I found these females suffering from open festering wounds and other diseases. I was the first doctor they had seen for at least a fortnight... There were no medical supplies... They had no shoes and went about in their bare feet. The sole clothing of each consisted of a sack with holes for their arms and head. Their hair was shorn. The camp was surrounded by barbed wire and closely guarded by S.S. guards.

2. The Russian and Polish slave laborers for Krupp:

The clothing of the Eastern workers was likewise completely inadequate. They worked and slept in the same clothing in which they had arrived from the East. Virtually all of them had no overcoats and were compelled to use their blankets as coats in cold and rainy weather. In view of the shortage of shoes many workers were forced to go to work in their bare feet, even in winter...

3. The French prisoners of war working for Krupp:

Its inhabitants were kept for nearly half a year in dog kennels, urinals and in old baking houses. The dog kennels were three feet high, nine feet long, six feet wide. Five men slept in each of them. The prisoners had to crawl into these kennels on all fours

(Quoted by Shirer from Nuremberg trial records.)

- Italian big capital backed Mussolini from the first, financing his newspaper as far back as 1915, providing the money and arms for his fascist squadristi. Big business was rewarded after fascism took power by a big reduction in business taxes and of course the smashing of trade unions which ended strikes and lowered wage costs for big business.

- The Hungarian fascist movement was mainly financed by the big twelve Jewish families in Hungary that controlled 90 percent of Hungarian industry. They benefited and grew rich for twenty five years under Hungarian fascism. Then in 1944 they sold their companies to Hungarian capitalists, and emigrated to Palestine after helping the Nazis and the Hungarian police round up 550,000 working class and lower middle class

Jews for the ovens of Auschwitz. (See below, section VI.)

- In the U.S. the open admirers of Hitler among the wealthy included among others JFK's father, multi-millionaire Joseph Kennedy, then Ambassador to Britain, Charles Lindbergh, the "lone eagle"; and Hearst the newspaper king who proclaimed in 1934 "Hitler is certainly an extraordinary man; we estimate him too lightly in America."

- In France the daily millionaire press was 100 percent pro-Munich, pro-Mussolini, pro-Franco. Its constant theme was that you can't beat fascism—a self-fulfilling prophecy.

- In Britain the British Union of Fascists was fully backed by Lord Rothmere, owner of the Daily Mail and financed by many other lords and ladies; the leader himself, Mosely, was a landed aristocrat.

- The two biggest banks in Germany in this period were (and are today still) the Deutsche Bank and the Dresdner Bank. The directors of these two banks sat on the boards of most of the big German industries: Haniel combine, Hoesch combine, Mannesman combine, Volkswagen, Steel Trust, I.G. Farben, Quandt combine, Reemtsma, the key insurance company Dye Stuf Trust, Salzdethforth, Krupp, Junkers, Flick, Wintershall, Bosch, No. German Lloyd and the Goring combine (Dresdener bank actually controlled this billion dollar outfit nominally headed by Hitler's number two man.) All these combines grew immensely under fascism and it is clear how they directed and influenced Nazi policy. First they took over the Jewish department stores in Germany, then expanded into Eastern Europe, taking over Eastern European Banks (such as Banca Commerciale Romana) that were formerly controlled by French capital, and much else; The key bank directors became top officials in Hitler's Reich completely controlling the Central Bank and the finance ministries .9

Later this article will show in more detail how in each and every case it was the ruling capitalists who put fascism in power and who materially benefited from the fascist state system.

Fascism, then, is a continuation of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The ruling class remains the same. The Krupps, the Thyssens, the directors of I.G. Farben were the masters of the German economy under the Kaiser, under the Weimar Republic, under Hitler and are again today in the

Federal Republic of West Germany. The twelve Jewish families were the masters of Hungarian industry under the Hapsburg monarchy, under the various forms of Hungarian fascism and Nazism and again today are leading figures in the State of Israel. The Mitsuis, Mitsobishis and Sumitomos were the masters of the Japanese economy under the liberal regime of the 1920's, under the fascist regime of 1930-1945 and today in contemporary Japan. On the boards of the big corporations, the big banks and insurance companies even in the government finance ministries or central banks, the fascist "revolution" produces hardly a ripple of change. A new face like Goring may get some of the action, but this is minor; the same billionaires control the industry and the economy.

There is really no fundamental change in the political sphere as well, although this is not so obvious. Certainly the preceding liberal and conservative political leaders are given the boot and in some cases (Spain, Japan, Rumania) are even killed, and a new "Führer," "Duce," "Caudillo," "Lider," "Gauleiter," or "Generalissimo" takes total power.

That is at least the appearance. But it is a very misleading appearance. Without denying the strong effect—more of style and form than of real content—that an aggressive political leader like Hitler, Roosevelt, Mussolini or Churchill can have on government, the real decisions that affect the class content of government are rarely made by the top man but by the second and third layer in the government bureaucracy. It is here that the thousand and one daily decisions are made by 1000 or 10,000 officials that affect the real interests of the capitalist class. Here in these second and third levels the price, interest, money and wage policies are worked out; the content of education and propaganda decided on; the training and conduct of the military and the various police and intelligence agencies directed. Here are the diplomats, those who regulate trade and agriculture, those who run government services to industry (like the post office and the railroads). These thousands of daily decisions are beyond the physical possibility of any Führer to effect. The personnel of the bureaucracy carry out the class content- of state power. A look at the change or lack of it in the bureaucracies of the fascist states shows that by and large the same bureaucrats who served the capitalists under liberal regimes also served them under the fascist regime:

- The Nazi ministry of justice was unchanged from the Republic to the Third Reich; not one department or assistant department head was changed.⁹

- There were no personnel changes in the foreign office. Only two new staff members entered the office of the president when Hitler took over. Likewise the Ministry of Interior, the Academy of Science, the Ministry of Finance, the Federal Statistical Service and even the Ministry of Labor had only the normal changes due to retirement or promotion in the transition from liberal Republic to Nazi dictatorship.⁹

- A detailed study* of the bureaucracy down to the heads of provincial and local financial

organizations, to the members of federal and provincial financial tribunals, to the civil and criminal courts, to the various administrative staffs show completely normal stability in the transition to Nazism 1931-1936 in Germany.

- In Belgium during the Nazi occupation the secretaries-general of all the ministries were the same as under the preceding liberal regime. In Denmark even the ministers were unchanged.

- In France the overwhelming majority of officials under the Vichy fascist regime had occupies the very same post under the Third Republic.

- In Norway the Supreme Court remained after the Nazi invasion and appointed a new administrative council of the same old bureaucrats to serve the Nazi regime as they had the liberal regime.

Thus the outer trappings change but inside it is the same old capitalists and their bureaucratic flunkies who ran the show. However, there are some important differences between the ordinary capitalist government and the fascist capitalist government.

III. THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF FASCISM

Fascism is characterized by a vast intensification of the nationalism, racism and anti-communism of the preceding capitalist regimes. Thus the nationalism that is previously disguised under such slogans as "white man's burden," "make the world safe for democracy" becomes much more blatant in "Deutschland über alles," and the "new Roman Empire." And the regime organizes around the most extreme nationalist and racist slogans. Thus the Germans need more living space ("Lebensraum") so organize a march to the East ("Drang nach Osten") and enslave the "sub-human" Slavic peoples ("untermenschen"). While many liberal capitalists believe in these things, the fascists not only blurt them out but proudly make it a matter of top-priority state policy. The nation is militarized, uniformly propagandized for nationalist war to a qualitatively greater extent than the preceding capitalist regimes were capable of.

In order to break up their opposition the fascists take over and vastly intensify the liberals' racist trick of divide and conquer. Not only the well-known Nazi genocide toward the Jews need be cited. The Italian fascists pursued a genocidal policy toward Slovenes and Croats in the eastern areas. The Spanish fascists cruelly suppressed the Catalan and Basque minorities, slaughtering many and banning the use of their age-old languages. The Japanese fascists pushed a viciously discriminatory policy toward Korean workers in Japan and in Korea. The U.S. fascists attacked black people, lynching hundreds in the period of 1920-1940 alone. The British fascists were (and are) anti-Irish; the Polish fascists organized programs against the Jewish and Ukrainian minorities. The Finnish fascists harshly suppressed the Laplanders in the north. Hungarian fascists slaughtered tens of thousands of Yugoslavs, handed over a half million Jews to

* Done by Franz Neumann⁹

Nazi death camps, suppressed Rumanians, Czechs and even Germans. The Chinese fascist KMT suppressed millions of non-Han Chinese minorities in the west and north.

Thus the fascists vastly intensify nationalism among their own people and in particular within the working class (racism), as well as nationalism with respect to other nations. Certainly it can't be denied that the liberal regimes that pave the way for fascism practice the same policies. But fascism institutes a shockingly greater intensification of the liberals' racism and nationalism. Thus the disgusting patronizing tokenism of the Kennedy liberals is replaced by the fascist slogan "Ship them back to Africa." The white-collar anti-Semitism of the liberal Weimer Republic is replaced by the gas chambers of the Nazi "Final Solution to the Jewish Question." And the legal discrimination the Basques endured under the liberal Spanish Republic is replaced by the physical suppression—tortures, prison and firing squads—of fascist Spain. Thus the creeping expansionism of the liberal Giollitti is replaced by Mussolini's boast that the Mediterranean Sea is an Italian lake. The hesitant anti-China policy of liberal Japan in the 1920s is replaced by the out and out annexation of the richest third of China by fascist Japan. And the stern but inadequate anti-India measures of the liberal British imperialists are challenged by the British Union of Fascists who demand firing squads and concentration camps on a vastly larger scale.

It is the same business in regard to anti-communism. Under liberal regimes, communists are hardly given a place in the sun, and in fact are in a thousand and one ways suppressed and put in a disadvantageous position. Communists today are arrested, beaten in jail, excluded from various formations, prevented from access to the press, from leafletting factories, kicked off campuses, fired from jobs, etc. Our predecessors in their day, the Communist Party (CP), the Socialist Party and the IWW also suffered the harassments, jailings, beatings and in some cases murders at the hands of the liberal bourgeoisie, in the latter's vain attempt to stem the growth of communist ideas. It was during the regime of liberal Woodrow Wilson that hundreds of IWW members were rounded up and jailed indefinitely. It was under liberal FDR that communist-led steel workers were massacred at Republic Steel. It was liberal Harry S. Truman who rounded up the entire leadership of the Communist Party. It

was liberal Eisenhower who signed the death sentence for Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, JFK who used the McCarran Act to complete the destruction of the remnants of the CP. Under LBJ, another "liberal," Progressive Labor Party members were dragged before HUAC three times.

This anti-communism, which is a fact of life under all bourgeois regimes, becomes a gross crusade under fascism. Nothing less than the physical extermination of all communists, their friends and even their past associates satisfies the blood lust of the fascist beasts. Thus the communists were the first to suffer the Nazi concentration camps. Whenever Russian prisoners were taken during the war, communist party members were immediately separated and shot first. The Italian Communist Party was the first party proscribed by Mussolini's fascist regime. It was no accident that the pact uniting the fascist powers Germany, Italy and Japan, was called the "anti-Comintern Pact" and explicitly directed against the Communist International. Moreover, as we shall see below and in succeeding articles, the first act of all fascist regimes, from Estonia to China, was to outlaw the communist party and all communists.

So a qualitative intensification of racism, nationalism and anti-communism is the characteristic of fascism. Very few fascists openly call themselves fascists. Often they identify themselves as "socialist" or "patriots"; they stand for an "anti-monopoly movement," a movement for "moral renaissance" to "restore our ancient rights," "clean government," to "restore morality in government"; they are invariably for the worker, for the farmer, for the "little guy." Sometimes fascism is not obvious. When this is the case, apply the litmus tests of nationalism and anti-communism. If the movement or regime is intensely nationalist or racist, and intensely anti-communist—assume the disease to be fascism.

For example, take the hypothetical group, the "February Union" (FU). An organization widely believed to be "of the Left," "part of the anti-imperialist movement." It is found that the FU spends most of its time and energy attacking communists in the PLP rather than the class enemy. And in fact, its occasional half-hearted sallies against the bosses are carried out with so much less gusto than its anti-communist splitting activity, that this group appears to be organized more for the purpose of building anti-communism in the working class than for any real fight against

the bosses. And far from promoting inter-racial unity or internationalism, the FU spends all its tune promoting "Third World Caucuses" presenting "white demands" in an anti-racist struggle, organizing black unions, Puerto Rican caucuses, Chicano study groups, fawning over every bourgeois nationalist regime from Panama and Peru to Algeria and Ethiopia; even out-and-out fascist groups, like the Peronists in Argentina or the NeWin clique in Burma, are supported if they are nationalist enough.

Try the litmus test of anti-communism and nationalism on this group, and draw your own conclusions.

But before we go too far astray, let us examine the fascists of 1917-1934 and see what lessons we can learn here.

IV. THE BLACK SHIRTS

We say to the workers: "You will have to go through fifteen, twenty, fifty years of civil wars and international wars, not only in order to change existing conditions, but also in order to change yourselves and fit yourselves for the exercise of political power."—Marx

The working class movement in Italy in 1919 was one of the strongest, at least in appearances. The Italian Socialist Party, with some 200,000 members, was the biggest Socialist Party to oppose the imperialist World War I (although from a pacifist, not a Leninist position). In 1919 the Party joined the Communist International and supported Soviet Russia. In the elections of November 1919, the Party, running on a program of the dictatorship of the proletariat, got one-third of the votes and 156 seats in Parliament, and a few months later in the municipal elections the Party won control in 2000 municipalities. The Party-led trade unions had a membership of 2,000,000, which in September, 1920, led a massive strike of 500,000 workers, who took over more than 1000 factories in northern Italy and won significant wage gains. They led a strike of 200,000 agricultural laborers in Pavia, a sailors' mutiny in Trieste and land seizures by peasants near Rome.

Nevertheless, the working class movement in Italy was one of the weakest. The key positions of power in the Socialist Party were held by right-wingers (revisionists), who opposed the dictatorship of the proletariat and revolution. While the vast majority of the Party were revolutionaries in sentiment, there were no revolutionary leaders to seize the situation. As the Communist International wrote in October 1920, "In Italy there exist all the necessary conditions for a victorious revolution, except one—a good working class organization." In January 1921 some 60,000 communists broke from the revisionists and the verbal revolutionaries, like Serrati, who swung between unity with the revisionists and unity with the communists. The communists, however, having made this necessary

break, set up no revolutionary combat organization; the leadership of the communists was more-over sectarian and factionalist, largely devoid of bold leaders with vision and guts. Thus without revolutionary leadership the working class movement in Italy was only superficially strong.

Mussolini was expelled from the Socialist Party in 1915 for supporting the imperialist war; he had been editor of the Socialist Party paper *Avanti*. Financed by a Milan industrialist¹⁴ he immediately set up his own paper *Popolo d'Italia* and formed some bodyguards called *fasci*. After the war, in March 1919 about 100 *fasci*, anarchists, Masons and other thugs and assorted riff raff were brought together by Mussolini to form the new Fascist Party. A month later they arrogantly burned down *Avanti*. Incredibly the 100,000 strong Socialists called a general strike, collected money, but did nothing in revenge to the handful of fascists. Mussolini emboldened by this socialist pacifism called the socialists "philistines and cowards." No attempt at revenge was so much as planned.¹⁴

For the next eighteen months the fascists were a small but growing group, eclipsed even in right-wing nationalist circles by the deranged poet D'Annunzio who with the connivance of the Army was organizing imperialist expeditions against the Yugoslavs. After D'Annunzio's comic-opera expulsion from Fiume, many of his disillusioned legionnaires joined the fascists, and after the September, 1920 sit-in strikes, the frightened capitalists turned toward Mussolini as their savior from the "Bolsheviks."

The fascist program seemed "radical" and claimed to be "anti-capitalist." It called for a progressive tax on capital; 85 percent profits tax, nationalization of the munitions industry, confiscation of all church property, deposing the king, workers participation in factory management, a high minimum wage, women's rights, etc. But the capitalists were not fooled; the violently nationalist "Greater Italy" demands gave the game away. One Rome newspaper told its bourgeois readers that fascists wanted to lead the revolutionary forces into the nationalist camp so as to prevent a victory of Bolshevism (communism).

From the beginning big business bankrolled the Fascist Party to the hilt. The roving fascist squads were on the big business payroll, the fascist newspapers and headquarters were all paid for by the big industrialists and bankers.¹⁴ -Later when it came time for Mussolini to seize power, big business would see that all went smoothly.

Minister of War Bonomi gave even more concrete help to the fascists. On October 20, 1920, a month after the sit-in strikes, a secret decree was circulated to all demobilized army officers offering them four-fifths of their former pay if they joined the fascist squads in order to control and lead them. Some 50,000 eventually took the Army up on this offer.¹⁴ From their comrades' on the active list, these fascist officers obtained arms, trucks and transportation, and if the fascists

faced too much workers' resistance, the army lent a more active hand. For example, in Siena in the spring of 1921, workers killed eight fascists in just retribution for their scab activities. The fascists attacked the People's House in Siena to gain revenge, but the workers resisted and would have won the day except that 200 troops with machine guns and artillery forced the People's House to surrender to the fascists.¹⁴ -

The police likewise cooperated with the fascist squads. In Portomaggiore, for example, in the same period police accompanied the fascist squads to disarm workers and then to hand over the workers' guns to the fascists. The cops often joined in singing fascist songs.

The big capitalists provided money, the army provided officers and guns, local landlords provided trucks and gas, police provided protection and information. But it was the petty bourgeoisie who made up the bulk of the fascist squads. Small landowners, who felt hemmed in by the agricultural unions; former military officers, who hated the socialist anti-war policy; numbers of students, taken in by an anti-worker education; civil servants and petty officials, small shopkeepers, professionals, small businessmen and some criminal elements provided the manpower for the fascist squads and the Fascist Party that grew to 320,000 by November 1921. An analysis of the class origin of the membership made then by the Fascist Party secretary showed the biggest group to be small farmers and small shopkeepers; the second biggest group was composed of managers, supervisors and professionals; the third biggest group were students.¹⁴

Following the sit-in strikes, the Socialists and communists allowed the workers movement to flounder. The fascists were quick to take advantage of the situation. On November 21, 1920 at the swearing in ceremony of the newly elected communist officials in Bologna, fascist goon squads struck killing nine workers and driving the communists out of town. From this fascist success a campaign in rural Ferrara and the Po Valley countryside was begun by fascist squads, killing, looting and burning. The socialist-controlled town governments were forcibly dissolved at gunpoint and agricultural unions were broken up. The vicious campaign reached a crescendo of anti-working class violence in the months of March, April and May 1921, and spread to most of the Central Italian countryside. In those months, hundreds of socialists, communists and militants were killed and thousands beaten or driven from their homes by the fascist punitive squads. Some 17 socialist newspapers, 59 "people's houses," 119 local labor temples, 107 co-ops, 51 socialist and communist headquarters, 10 workers' libraries, 100 workers' cultural clubs, 53 workers' social clubs were burned to the ground.¹⁴ In the provinces of Tuscany, Emilia-Romagna, Umbria, in the Po Valley and parts of Lombardy and Venetia, the once dominant socialist movement and all trade unions were virtually wiped out. Little villages suffered the most in these

first fascist offensives. The small village of Roccastrada, near Siena, was descended on by a gang of fascists when the socialist mayor refused "an invitation" to resign. Homes were burned, and when one of the fascist dogs was shot by a worker, more fascists came, burning down more houses and "executing" several workers at random. The government, of course, did nothing to defend the "legally-elected" socialist officials from the fascist outrages. But the police and army, "unbeknownst" to the liberal government, provided arms and protection to the fascists.

These scenes were repeated in hundreds of villages in central Italy, the fascists concentrating their forces with great mobility whenever resistance was felt. The town of Grosseto held out, killing at least one fascist, but reinforcements came from as far away as Florence and Perugia until the town fell to the fascists.

The socialists and communists did not match the mobility and boldness of the fascists. In fact they displayed mostly pacifism under attack and indifference to attacks on neighboring villages. In the province of Rovigo in Venetia, for example, all sixty three villages were Socialist at the beginning of 1921. Each village succumbed to the fascist raids, one after another in a few months, without any attempt being made by the Socialists to unite their struggles. The Socialist deputies from Rovigo instead introduced a "revolutionary" resolution in Parliament. The Avanti was burned down again by the emboldened fascists and again all the Socialists did was call a short general strike. The communists used the same meaningless tactic when their headquarters in Turin was burned down by the fascists. Then, the Socialists in August signed a "peace pact" with Mussolini, which the fascists celebrated by sacking five Socialist club houses in Ravenna. (Mussolini claimed he couldn't control his followers; the Socialist pacifists agreed to overlook the incidents.)

The Socialists and Communists instead concentrated on the elections of May 1921. (The Socialists won 123 seats, the Communists 16 seats, the fascists only 35 out of 500.) This paper "victory" was hailed by Avanti (now printing in its third office in eighteen months, thanks to fascist arsonists): "The Italian proletariat has buried the fascist reaction under a sea of red posters,"¹⁴ the editors exclaimed. For all their verbal support of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the Soviet system, the Socialists and Communists both had not even an elementary understanding of the central role of violence in class struggle. And they adamantly refused to learn.

More and more, the liberals began to pave the way for the fascist "revolution." The liberals formed an electoral bloc with the fascists which gave the latter their first voice in Parliament. The liberal Giolitti "hoped to tame" the fascists this way. (However, the new "untamed" fascist deputies in Parliament drove out a communist deputy at the point of a revolver.) The Facta

cabinet of February 1922, included for the first time fascist intermediaries who prepared the ground for the fascist takeover from the liberals and who gave more police protection to the fascist raids.

The short-lived "peace pact" was soon over when the fascists murdered a railroad worker, and a second fascist offensive began in the spring of 1922. From their base in central Italy, the fascist squads roamed north and south, and by summer were moving in on the big Socialist towns. In July 1922 Cremona near Milan fell, the province of Appulia far to the south fell, the key towns in the Marches and Latium fell. In August the last trade union towns, "Red" Ancona, "labor town" Leghorn, Pavia and Parma were occupied by the fascists. On August 5th Genoa had to face the fascists. Here Communist-led workers fiercely resisted, and it took two days of street fighting against 5000 fascists with armored cars before the fascists and police "restored order," and then annulled all labor contracts. By this time workers could openly organize only in the three main cities of Rome, Milan and Turin.

Meanwhile, plans were well advanced for the fascist take-over of the central government. The transition was anti-climatic. On October 24th there was a big fascist rally in Naples; a march on Rome was theatrically proclaimed, which was organized to begin October 29. The 14,000 fascists who were to march on Rome would have been easily dispersed by the police if the ruling class had so wished, but in any event the march proved unnecessary as Mussolini was already negotiating with the key powers in the ruling class, and on October 31, was invested as Prime Minister by the king and parliament, a peaceful transition.

Early in 1922, the ruling class had already begun to make preparations for the shift to fascism. The new Pope Pius XI fired the populist

head of the Italian Catholic political party and appointed a pro-fascist. Nitti, political spokesman for the giant Banca Italiana Sconté, made a pro-fascist speech in Melfi in March. The new Facta government looked the other way as local police gave even greater service to the fascists. The Duke of Aosta moved within the royal household to silence Mussolini's critics; the same process occurred within the Vatican.

By October 1922 liberal Giollitti representing the other major Italian banking group, Banca Commerciale, likewise was also negotiating for a fascist takeover. The middle class Freemasons contributed 3-1/2 million to Mussolini; d'Annunzio and the right wing Federation of Maritime Workers came to an agreement with Mussolini.

Finally, as the crucial hours approached, on October 28-31, all the forces of the ruling class made it plain to the king and parliamentary leaders their desire for Mussolini's appointment as Prime Minister. The Pope made a pro-fascist appeal on October 28. Telegrams were received by political leaders from the heads of the General Confederation of Industry, the Confederation of Agriculture, the Bankers Association, the editor of the most influential newspaper, *Corriere della sera*, the electric billionaire, Conti, and others demanding Mussolini as Prime Minister.¹⁴ He was duly appointed on October 31, and received powers to rule by decree on November 22.

The Communist Party was forced underground almost immediately. The Socialists continued as a legal opposition for a few more years, although *Avanti* was burned down two more times before it and all other opposition newspapers were suppressed in 1926. Soon even mild anti-fascist or pro-working class parties and groups were banned and the working class was deprived of any political spokesmen. A serious Communist Party underground did not develop until 1927.

In 1926 the trade unions were dissolved, but even before that the practice of the fascist system was shown to be violently anti-working class. All strikes were illegal; all workers had to belong to fascist trade unions whose leaders down to the shop steward level were appointed by the government, and were invariably toadies of the boss. All workers needed job passports to get work, which left them at the mercy of employers who could put comments on the passports like "militant," "red," "troublemaker."¹³

Of course, real wages declined and the consumption of meat, fruit and vegetables per capita declined, according to even the fascists' own obviously watered-down statistics. This was due to the forced lowering of the workers' standard of living. Women workers were especially hard hit by the fascist doctrine that "A woman's place is in the home." The proportion of women in the labor market decreased during the fascist years.¹³

For big business, however, the fascist years were very good years. The phony "corporate state" that the fascists introduced was nothing but a corporation state. The labor courts which replaced collective bargaining and strikes were similar to the binding arbitration with which U.S. workers are familiar. Between 1922 and 1928, the "corporate state" reduced business taxes to an absurd low, poured more taxes on workers, rescinded the squatters' rights of poor farmers, laid off 65,000 government workers including 46,000 on the state-owned railroads. Businesses were organized into 279 cartels to eliminate the small businessman and put the banks and monopolies in 100 percent control of the economy.¹³ Workers' real wages were lowered even more after Mussolini won his "Battle of the Lira" in 1926. A state investment company was formed to funnel more workers' taxes into the banks and monopolies. When the depression came Fascist Italy put the burden entirely on the working class with hardly a sham of relief for the 2,000,000 unemployed.

The fascist press and educational system was geared around two objects. First glorification of the fascist corporation state as the natural order of things so that workers would accept their lot. Secondly, intense nationalism around the dreams of Mussolini to create a "Second Roman Empire." Eventually in the mid-thirties an aggressive imperialist war was launched against Ethiopia accompanied by vicious anti-African racist propaganda. After a brief war replete with terror bombings, Ethiopia was enslaved by the

fascists.

In 1939 the fascist government invaded Albania, ousted the King and annexed that country to fascist Italy. In 1940 the Italian fascists joined the Nazi invasion of France, and later launched an annexationist invasion of Greece which, however, succeeded only with German military help. Finally, in 1941 the Italian fascists joined the Nazis in the invasion of the Soviet Union. A year later their best armies were destroyed, leaving Italy open to the 1943 Anglo-American invasion and the ruin of the fascists. Some 200,000 Italian soldiers never returned from Mussolini's adventurous wars.

But unlike the German Nazis, the Italian fascists were wiped out mainly by the internal working class; Italian workers never bought Mussolini's fascist line, and fought the fascist regime one way or the other throughout the twenty three years of fascist slavery.

The Communist Party formed the first anti-fascist underground center in Milan in January 1927; at that time the workers' paper *L'Unita* was first secretly published. Later, editions were published in other cities as well, and an underground organization was set up to distribute the paper which eventually became a daily with a circulation of tens of thousands of copies. By 1930 the CP was organizing illegal strikes, secret May Day demonstrations, and similar activities. But it was very difficult at first. The CP leadership was rounded up in 1928 and 100 imprisoned; a new leadership emerged only to be wiped out after the strikes in 1930. Between June 1930 and February 1933 five successive heads of the Communist underground were arrested, before an experienced leadership emerged that could avoid arrest for a prolonged period. The CP underground in the thirties was still modest, but its influence among workers was fairly extensive. As the war approached, anti-Nazi outbursts were organized throughout the country and in 1940 there were anti-war demonstrations and strikes.³

With the entry of the Soviet Union into the war in 1941 the Communist led anti-fascist movement began to expand and widen its fight against fascism, eventually wiping out Mussolini and his fascists. All the main Italian cities were liberated by the Communist-led underground and partisans, who eventually numbered 300,000, and not by the Anglo-American armies. On April

27, 1945 the CP captured Mussolini himself near Como and he was executed with eighteen other top fascists the next day. Thousands of other fascist functionaries were judged guilty by the partisans and given swift working class justice for their twenty-five years of crimes against the working class. Thus, a measure of retribution in the end was achieved. (We will discuss more fully the anti-fascist struggle after 1941 in a following article.)

V. THE BROWN SHIRTS

The most reactionary variety of fascism is the German type of fascism. It has the effrontery to call itself National-Socialism, though having nothing in common with Socialism. Hitler fascism is not only bourgeois nationalism, it is bestial chauvinism. It is a government system of political banditry, a system of provocation and torture practiced upon the working class. German fascism is acting as the spearhead of international counter-revolution, as the chief incendiary of imperialist war, as the initiator of crusade against the Soviet Union, the great fatherland of the toilers of the whole world. — Dimitrov (written in 1934.)

In 1928, when the Nazi Party was still relatively small, with only 100,000 members and polling around 2-1/2 percent of the votes in the national election, the Communist Party of Germany (CPG) had 360,000 members, 33 newspapers, 20 printing houses, 13 parliamentary deputies, 57 deputies in state diets and some 2000 municipal and village deputies.⁹ It was the

Workers' revenge: Mussolini and mistress. largest and most influential communist party outside of the Soviet Union. Yet within six years this Party, the pride of the Communist International, was virtually obliterated by the Nazi machine

How could this come to pass? To point to the strength and boldness of the Nazis, even to point to the treachery of the revisionist Social Democrats is not an answer. It just begs the question. The CPG had two fatal weaknesses: (1) It was not based among industrial workers. For example in 1930 at the big large scale industrial plants employing 6,000,000 workers, only 10 percent of the shop stewards were in the CP-led unions; the rest were in Social Democratic (SDP) led unions. Thus 90 percent of the main industrial workers did not have communist leadership. (2) The CPG ideologically took a "live and let live" and "wait

and see" approach toward Nazism. Not until the last months did the CPG attempt a national or even regional mobilization of its forces to smash the Nazis. Up to that time, generally speaking, if the Nazis didn't bother the CPG, the CPG did not bother the Nazis. Thus the Nazi Party could grow unhindered, and the CPG never learned how to fight fascism.

All this could be traced to the tragic outcome of the Revolution of 1918-1919 when the German workers led by communists overthrew the Kaiser's government and set up workers' and soldiers' councils in imitation of the Soviets in Russia. In order to stem the tide of red revolution a counter-revolutionary deal was struck between the Social Democratic Party and the Army. General Groner, chief of the general staff subsequently stated:

On November 19, 1918 I had a telephone conversation with Ebert (head of the SDP) and we concluded an alliance to fight Bolshevism and Sovietism and restore law and order...

Every day between 11:00 p.m. and 1:00 a.m. the staff of the High Command talked to Ebert on a special secret telephone. From November 10 our immediate object was to wrest power in Berlin out of the hands of the Councils of Workers and Soldiers Deputies.⁴

Contrary to Lenin's earnest advice the communist leaders, Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, refused to recognize Ebert and the SDP as counter-revolutionaries and continued to deal forthrightly with Ebert's bogus government. Ebert repaid the communist leaders' soft-heartedness by having them murdered and drowning the revolution in blood.

Since the ordinary soldiers were unreliable General Groner, Ebert and Field Marshal Hindenburg organized groups of ex-officers, NCO's students, adventurers and other riff-raff into brigades called the Freikorps. It was one of these brigades that murdered Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. A mobilization of all the Freikorps slaughtered many hundreds of workers in Munich and suppressed the Bavarian Soviet Republic. One of the Freikorps adopted the swastika as its emblem at the time they launched a short-lived putsch in 1920. These brigades invariably were anti-communist and anti-Jewish.

A series of defeated communist-led worker revolutions rocked Germany between 1918 and 1921, these left their mark on the CPG. Henceforth the CPG conceded the leadership of the industrial working class to the SDP. With the end of this revolutionary period in 1922 the leadership of the CPG became shy and conservative, intent on staying within the law, neither seriously challenging the SDP leadership of industrial workers, nor the growing Nazi Party.

The SDP traitors got their rewards from the bourgeoisie. They were allowed to head the first post-war governments. But the High Command was more interested in using the Freikorps experience to build a permanent counter-revolutionary force to crush all working class organizations. After 1920 the remnants of the Freikorps became the backbone of numerous fascist parties and para-military organizations. (Some 44 percent of the Nazi members prior to 1927 had been in the Freikorps.)

One virulently anti-Semitic group in Munich the German Workers Party, headed by a small-time locksmith, Anton Drexler, soon attracted the patronage of Captain Rohm, a leader of the Freikorps units that smashed the communist-led revolution in Bavaria in the spring of 1919. Rohm built the goon squad of the fledgling party and gave it protection through his key position in the counterrevolutionary local government.

In September 1919 a hitherto obscure propagandist for the Army's Political Department, Adolph Hitler, was ordered to join this Party.¹² His particular talents of extreme red-baiting and Jew-baiting soon won him de facto leadership in the Party which a year later changed its name to the German National Socialist Workers Party (NAZIS) and adopted the Freikorps' swastika as its emblem.

Loud, arrogant, aggressive and opportunistic, Hitler implanted these characteristics to the Nazis and soon became the favorite fascist of the capitalists and army leaders in Bavaria. Various upper class fops joined and bankrolled the young party. Among them was Herman Göring, a wealthy war "hero," and Rudolph Hess.

On November 9, 1923 Hitler, Röhm, Göring and Field Marshall Ludendorf, the number two World War I military leader headed a coalition of fascist groups that attempted to seize power from the fumbling local right-wing government in Bavaria. Though the attempt failed and sixteen Nazis were killed, it gained Hitler and the Nazis instant notoriety and changed the Nazis from a local fascist party into a national party. Hitler and his cronies were dealt with leniently by the courts. He served only nine months, leisurely confined in pleasant quarters, during which time he dictated *Mein Kampf* to Hess.

Some time before Hitler and Hess wrote *Mein Kampf*, the major tenets of Nazism were already clear—the typical fascist mixture of petty-bourgeois demagoguery and extreme nationalism. Thus the 26 point Nazi program demanded the abolition of income unearned by work (point 11), the nationalization of the big trusts (point 12), sharing of profits of big business (point 13),

abolition of land rent and speculation (point 17), "communalization" of department stores (point 16), expropriation of the landed aristocracy without compensation (point 17).

But the bourgeoisie was not fooled. The fascist and nationalist demands once again gave all the assurance they needed. The first point demanded the union of all Germans in Greater Germany, essentially a call to annex Austria and parts of Czechoslovakia, France, Belgium, Yugoslavia, Poland, USSR, Switzerland, Lithuania and Italy. Other points demanded the return of Germany's colonies in Africa and the Pacific, depriving Jews of their citizenship and expelling those who had entered Germany after 1914, and a strong national authority to carry out the program.

The capitalists must have loved the Nazi program, for they financed the Nazis from start to finish. Long before the putsch of 1923, three leading Munich capitalist families began financing the Nazis; the two publishing families, Bruckman and Lehmann, as well as Bechstein, the piano manufacturer, poured money into the Nazi Party, and even supported Hitler personally.¹² But bigger fish than the local Munich bourgeoisie soon recognized the Nazi potential. As early as 1923 Fritz Thyssen, head of the Steel Trust, a man worth some \$500,000,000 made his first donation to the Nazis. Although initially only \$25,000¹² Thyssen kept up his investment in the Nazis; at the time he was financing some rival fascist groups as well.

Six years later with the Nazis a major national force Thyssen and Vogler, the captains of the German steel industry, became a major source of funds for the Nazis. By then the depression had hit Germany full square and the ruling class, which had before maintained a benevolent, but somewhat aloof attitude toward the Nazis, now was desperate to construct the Nazis into an all-powerful bulwark against revolution and the rapidly growing CPG. Emil Kierdorf in 1929, the anti-union coal baron, organized a huge slush fund from west German mining companies for Hitler. Schacht in 1930 resigned as president of the Reichsbank, the German central bank, and devoted full time to raising money from his banker and industrial friends for the Nazis. The leaders of the potash industry, of I.G. Farben the chemical monopoly, of the biggest banks (Dresdner Bank, Deutsche Bank, Kommerz and PrivatBank), the head of the Hamburg-Amerika shipping company, the biggest insurance company, Allianz, the Conti rubber tycoons, von Schroeder and Wolf,

the two most powerful businessmen in Cologne, the Agrarian League of Brandenburg estate owners and noblemen, all joined Thyssen, Schacht and Kierdorf in 1930-1931 in providing tens of millions for the Nazi party.¹² Thanks to these captains of industry, by 1930 the Nazis could hire 100,000 degenerates into the storm-troopers—a force larger than the Army—plus maintain hundreds of full-time party officials to operate dozens of newspapers and finance huge parades and election campaigns.

The originator of the Nazi Party, however, was the High Command of the German Army. It was as an Army secret agent that Hitler was ordered to join the Party; it was also under Army guidance and instruction that Hitler wrote up the Nazi program. Under Army instructions Rohm brought in goons and weapons to the Nazis. Though Hitler officially resigned from the Army in March 1920 he continued to receive living expenses from secret army funds for several more years.

In December 1920, Munich area commander Major General Ritter von Epp decided that the fledgling Nazis needed a newspaper. Using secret army funds he purchased the racist sheet *Volkischer Beobachter* which became the Nazi paper, soon a daily.

After the attempted putsch of 1923, and with the receding of the "communist threat" in those years, the High Command cooled to the Nazis and stopped providing funds. But many young officers especially from noble families joined the Nazis and after 1929 Nazi influence in the Army grew to the point where three Nazi lieutenants were court-martialed in late 1930 for distributing Nazi propaganda to the troops. At the trial Hitler, called as a witness, opportunistically abandoned the lieutenants and made a speech which played up to the High Command. Thus the stage was set to resume the alliance, now on a more equal basis, between the Nazi party and the High Command

that led to power three and one-half years later

Yet it was not only the Army and the big bourgeoisie; the German Nazis had a larger popular following than any other fascist party in any country before or since. As early as 1929 there were 178,000 members of the Nazi party; by 1931 there were 800,000 Nazi members; in 1932 there were 400,000 storm-troopers and more significantly in April of that year Hitler received 13,418,547 votes for president. In the election of July 1932, the Nazi party received, some 37 percent of the votes and consequently 230 out of 608 seats in parliament.

From what classes did this large Nazi support come? The original German Workers Party had few workers. One of Hitler's early speeches in November 1919 attracted a big crowd. "Unfortunately" only twenty to thirty workers, Hitler noted, but "very many students, officers, tradesmen and soldiers." The original membership list of 193 had students, officers, doctors, engineers, independent shopkeepers and craftsmen, four factory owners, but few if any factory workers.¹²

In its later years the Nazis retained this class composition. White collar workers, civil servants, farmers and independent businessmen made up the bulk of the party in a 1931 study of the 500,000 members. In 1935 when there were 205 million Nazis, 20 percent were white collar workers, 20 percent self-employed, 12.5 percent civil servants and 10 percent were farmers. Well over a third of the 700,000 cadre and leaders at all levels were teachers or civil servants.⁶

Teachers in Germany, in particular, were rapidly won over to fascism. As early as 1936 over 32 percent of the teachers were Nazi party members and some 160,000 teachers were Nazi leaders at some level.⁶

But long before the Nazis had a serious following in other classes, the German universities were Nazi strongholds. Racism and patriotism were long rife and unchecked on the campuses. In 1927, five years before Nazi power, 77 percent of the students voted to exclude Jews from student government. At the 1931 congress of German and Austrian students, the Nazis obtained a clear majority. That same year 60 percent of the under-graduates supported the Nazi Student Organization, and anti-semitic riots were organized by the Nazi students. The professors were only slightly behind the students in their mass conversion to Nazism; in 1933 some 300 of the most prestigious scholars urged the voters to choose Hitler. World renowned academics like the psychiatrist Jung, the philosophers Spengler and Heidegger, the physicist Jordan, the historian von Srbif became great Nazi propagandists. Only 10 percent of the academic dons had to be dismissed by Hitler later as unreliable. (By contrast the post-war German regime had to dismiss a third as being too embarrassingly open Nazis.)⁶

The Nazi following came from students, teachers and intellectuals; from small shopkeepers, farmers and businessmen; from engineers, doctors and lawyers; from civil servants, policemen and white collar workers; from officers, ex-officers and career soldiers; from the big capitalists, the landed gentry and the old nobility; and from some criminal elements, desperate unemployed and scab workers. But the last groups were always a small minority of the Nazi movement.

For seven years after the abortive putsch of 1923 the Nazis engaged in mainly legal base-building type activities. There were occasional street brawls with the CPG but in the main Nazis sold their newspapers and built a base among students, teachers and other petty-bourgeois elements. There were no violent Italian-style semi-military mop-up campaigns in working class districts. For awhile the CPG and SDP were too strong for the Nazis to take head on; in the elections of 1928 the Nazis polled only 2-1/2 percent of the votes.

But after the depression of 1929 with six million unemployed, hundreds of thousands of shopkeepers ruined and armies of students without prospects, the Nazis began to win over large numbers of the petty-bourgeoisie and made some inroads even among some unemployed workers. In the elections of September 1930, the Nazis polled nearly 605 million votes and won 107 seats in Parliament.

Now the violence against the workers and the CPG steadily increased. The storm troopers now financed by the top ruling class figures battled the communists and held provocative marches through working class districts. In the summer

of 1932 the street battles reached a climax. In the state of Prussia alone in the first 20 days of June there were 461 pitched street battles, that left 82 dead and 400 wounded. In July, 38 Nazis and 30 Communists were among the 86 killed in the streets. A Nazi march with a police escort on July 17 through a working class suburb of Hamburg, a previous Communist stronghold, left 19 dead and 285 wounded. The Communists were fighting back, but the combination of police-and Nazi storm troopers had the advantage.

During these years the CPG was also growing— gaining 5,000,000 votes in the elections of March 1932; in November 1932 they gained one-sixth of the seats in parliament. But as long as a large portion of the workers were under SDP leadership, victory against the Nazis was not possible. The treacherous SDP leaders pursued a policy of “better Hitler than Stalin” and step-by-step helped pave the way for Nazi power. The SD party had long governed the state of Prussia, the largest and most industrial state in Germany. They controlled the Prussian police that cooperated with the Nazis in their street battles with the CPG.

At this point the central government began a sharp lurch to the Right in preparation for the fascist dictatorship. In 1930 the last SDP coalition government was dumped and the conservative Brüning took over, ruling by emergency decree. He promulgated the infamous Hunger Decrees that made the workers pay for the bosses' depression. All sorts of restrictions were now put on communist self-defense forces. The SDP supported Brüning in all this.

In the presidential elections of 1932 Hitler ran against the reactionary general Hindenburg. The SDP supported Hindenburg as a “lesser evil”; only the CPG put up an anti-fascist candidate. A year after his election, with SDP help, Hindenburg was to appoint Hitler as chancellor. Soon the SDP was to call for a coalition government with the Nazis. In April 1932, their leader Severing declared: “The SDP no less than the Catholic Party is inclined to see Herr Hitler's Nazis share the government responsibility.” Their paper urged the government to “. . . allow the Nazis to come to power before they have a majority.”⁴

In May 1932 Brüning was dismissed and two openly pro-fascist governments followed. Two cronies of Hindenburg, Baron von Papen and General von Schleicher became succeeding chancellors and paved the way for a Nazi government nine months later. The von Papen government dissolved the SDP state government in Prussia. The SDP passively accepted this and rejected CPG offers to unite in the face of the imminent fascist takeover. Under Papen and Schleicher Nazi provocations and violence reached a climax. Thereafter the barons, generals, and other nationalists began negotiations for the Nazis to enter the government directly.

In these days the Nazis commanded the streets of the downtown and petty-bourgeois sections of all major cities and constantly threatened the Communists in their working class strongholds.

Since the governments of von Papen and von

Schleicher had zero popular support, and strikes and street fighting were increasing, there were those in the Nazi organization like Rohm who began to believe their own petty-bourgeois propaganda, and called for an immediate Nazi violent seizure of power. But Hitler and most of the Nazi leaders, under the spell of Thyssen, Kierdorf and Schacht, were willing to bide their time and wait for power to come by constitutional means. By this tactic the ruling class was able to ensure the support of the SDP and the liberals for a Nazi government.

On August 1932 Goring was elected president of the Reichstag (the Parliament) with the votes of the liberals, a position he used on September 14 to bring down von Papen's government and force new elections for November. The CPG made defeating the Nazis in these elections their main strategy for preventing a Nazi government. They were slightly successful in the elections winning 11 new seats in Parliament while the

Nazis lost

34 seats and 2,000,000 votes. Thaelmann, leader of the CPG blinded by this meaningless “triumph” declared: “We must insist soberly and seriously that the 14th of September was so to speak Hitler's best day; that no better will follow, but worse (for the Nazis).” This stupid statement shows how blinded the CPG had become by elections and legality: At a time of winning at the polls, they were being beaten in the streets by Nazis.

The main result of the November elections was to help the ruling class see that they had to make haste in forming a Nazi government before Nazi popular support faded. The leading generals of the High Command and leading leaders of industry and finance now made clear to Hindenburg their desire for an immediate Hitler government. Negotiations between Hitler, the conservative parties, the High Command and Hindenburg continued through December and

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January leading to a coalition right-wing government headed by Hitler on January 30, 1933.

The new government had four types in it: (1) big west German businessmen—the big industrialist Hugenberg had the key ministries of Economy and Agriculture; (2) old east German aristocrats—von Neurath was Foreign Minister; (3) generals of the High Command; General von Blomberg was Minister of Defense; (4) Nazis—Hitler was Chancellor and Goring was in charge of the Prussian police. As we noted above, there was virtually no change in the bureaucracy. The transition was peaceful and constitutional; Hindenburg remained president until his death a few years later. The liberal and conservative parties supported the new Hitler government. The SDP played the role of “loyal opposition.” The SDP newspaper declared of Hitler’s government: “They have only to act as a legal government, and it will follow naturally that we shall be a legal opposition; if they choose to use their majority for measures that remain within the framework of the Constitution, we shall confine ourselves to the rule of fair critics.”⁴ Even the CPG took no overt action against the Hitler government, but at least showed some recognition of the new situation by belatedly sending a few of its cadre underground.

The Nazis, however, were not so muddleheaded or indecisive. They moved quickly to crush the working class. The CPG was their first victim in order to leave the workers leaderless for the onslaught that was to follow. The first act was to call for new elections again, this time for March 5th. The strategy was laid down at a meeting on February 20 with Hitler, Goring, Thyssen, Vogler, Krupp—the head of the munitions industry—the heads of I.G. Farben and about twenty other of the very top bankers and industrialists. Hitler promised his bosses to “eliminate” the Marxists. “Private enterprise cannot be maintained in the age of democracy... All the worldly goods we possess we owe to the struggle of the chosen,” he declared. Goring pledged the election “will surely be the last one for ten years, probably even for the next hundred

years.” Then Krupp jumped up to express his “gratitude.”¹²

All communist meetings were banned and the CPS newspapers were suppressed. Even the “loyal opposition” SDP had its meetings frequently broken up by storm troopers and its newspapers suspended. The liberal head of the Catholic Trade Unions was likewise beaten up by brownshirts. On February 24, the CPG headquarters was raided by Goring’s police, but the CPG leaders had already abandoned it.

On February 28, the Reichstag building was burned down by Nazis. This was blamed by the government on the CPG and 4000 Communist officials were arrested, beaten and tortured. While truckloads of storm troopers roared through the streets, breaking into homes, arresting and beating up the opposition, while Hitler, Goring and Goebbels used every resource of the state and big business to electioneer, the bogus election took place. Despite the terror and many rigged ballots the Nazis, by their own count, got only 44 percent of the votes, while nearly 5,000,000 workers voted for the CPGV.

In order to pass a measure giving Hitler dictatorial powers, by the necessary two-thirds vote, the eighty one newly elected CPG deputies and some SDPers were arrested when the new Reichstag convened on March 23; all the liberals and conservatives voted for the measure. The CPG was now formally banned. Six weeks later the SDP had its turn; the SDP party buildings and all newspapers were confiscated by the Nazis. The SDP deputies tried again to appease Hitler by voting for his foreign policy on May 19 and forming a new central committee, uncritical of the Nazis. But to no avail. On June 22 the SDP was banned. Just for good measure all other parties were dissolved by July 5, leaving the Nazis as the sole legal political formation.

Next it was the turn of the trade unions. On May 2, the trade union headquarters were occupied, unions dissolved and all union leaders arrested. Even the toady SDP union misleaders Peipart and Grassmann who the day before had sworn loyalty to the Hitler regime were arrested.

"The Leiparts and the Grassmanns may profess their devotion to Hitler; but they are better in prison," declared Dr. Ley, now the Nazi "labor leader."¹² In place of the unions, the Nazis introduced the "Führer principle" into the factory. Each plant had a "leader," who was, coincidentally, the owner or manager; everyone else was a "follower." The Nazi Labor Front, which all workers were forced to join, appointed a council of "plant followers" who could politely complain to the boss, but that's all. Strikes or any other industrial actions were punished by prison or even death. Even law suits by workers against management were banned. The motto of the Labor Front was "The leader (boss) is always right."⁶

Not surprisingly, a wage freeze was immediately put into effect. Since various compulsory deductions for the Labor Front, the Nazi Winter Relief, etc., were tacked on, workers' wages actually decreased. Meanwhile food and clothing prices sharply increased. According to even the Nazis' own obviously doctored statistics, real wages of most workers declined by 15 percent after the Nazi destruction of the CPG and the trade unions. The work week was increased by 10 percent to 49 hours in 1939, lead and zinc miners had their workday increased by 25 percent. During the war the work week was generally increased to 60 hours.

Consequently, the health of the working class—with lower real wages and longer hours—deteriorated. Accidents and illnesses connected with work increased by 150 percent between 1933 and 1939; industrial deaths increased by 250 percent in that period.

With the communists banned and the trade unions wiped out, the class conscious section of the working class was largely subdued by the end of 1933. There still remained the millions of petty-bourgeois and backward working-class forces that supported the Nazis because they believed the Nazi "anti-monopoly" slogans and demagoguery. By early 1934 these forces were demanding a "second revolution" this time against the High Command, the aristocrats and the West German billionaires that so obviously dominated the "new" Hitler government. These forces found a leader in Rohm, the head of the storm troopers, and Gregor Strasser, the number two Nazi political leader. These forces threatened disturbances in early 1934 because expropriated Jewish department stores were being turned over to the billionaire bankers instead of to "the little guy," as Hitler had once promised. Consequently, Hitler was ordered by his patrons to take action against his old Nazi "comrades" or lose the support of the High Command. On the night of June 30, 1934, more than 1000 top Nazis associated with the "second revolution" group, including Rohm, Strasser and von Schleicher were duly murdered by the S.S., Hitler's elite bodyguard. The next day von Blomberg, on behalf of the High Command, and Hindenburg, on behalf of the industrialists, each personally congratulated Hitler on these murders.¹²

Thus now without even a sham opposition or "loyal critics" the capitalists could build their "new Germany." The cooperatives were an easy first target. Hit by a law severely limiting price rebates, one-third of the co-ops closed down and co-op membership declined by 50 percent. A second move was to hand over to the monopolists all expropriated Jewish companies. Some state-owned enterprises were likewise handed over to big business. But the petty-bourgeois backbone of the Nazi movement bore the brunt, second only to the working class, of the insatiable greed of the billionaires. The one-man shop or mom-and-pop store had no place in the "new Germany" and were slated to be gradually eliminated. With great satisfaction the Economics Ministry in 1939 announced that 104,000 one-man workshops had been closed down since the Nazi takeover, and the trend would now accelerate. In 1940 alone 480,000 formerly small businessmen lost their businesses and became laborers.^{9,6}

Thus competition was eliminated and industry became almost fully monopolized. According to a Frankfurt financial journal, in 1933, 40 percent of Germany's industrial production was monopolistic but this figure increased to 70 percent in 1937. Over one-third of heavy industry was now in the hands of Thyssen, Kierdorf and Vogler. Thyssen must have thought the 25,000 marks he gave Hitler fourteen years previous to be the best investment he had ever made. At the top the monopolies combined into ever more mammoth outfits. I.G. Farben controlled the entire chemical industry; in five years it grew 50 percent while its profits rose 150 percent. The Reemsta tobacco combine grew until it dominated 95 percent of the nation's cigarettes. In 1939 eleven cellulose wool companies were merged into four combines. The same concentration took place in cement, where the four regional companies were merged into one big trust in 1940. This is true for electrical (Siemens), auto (Volkswagen), potash and oil (Wintershall), etc. Between 1934 and 1938 while workers' wages fell, business and management income rose over 50 percent.^{6,9}

With virtually all of German industry in their hands, the handful of monopolists now looked to expand all over Europe behind the Nazi army. "Today Germany, tomorrow the world," proclaimed the Nazi-industrialist chorus. On May 18, 1940, Krupp, a partner in Henkel, the detergent manufacturer, and two other industrialists listened to news broadcasts of the Wehrmacht's advance into Holland and Belgium while jabbing at a map shouting, "This one (a factory) is yours; that one there is yours; we shall have that man arrested, he had two factories..." Soon Krupp had the Dutch shipyards, Belgian metal works, a big portion of the French machine tools industry, Greek nickel mines, Yugoslav chromium deposits and iron and steel plants in the Ukraine. Wolff, Mannesman and Ballestrom had earlier taken over the major portion of Austrian industry.^{6,9} Thus as far as the war in Western Europe is concerned, the monopolies of Gery

and their need for expansion was the main cause.

But the war against the Soviet Union was a different thing. It was the logical consequence of the original mission of the Nazis—to build a bulwark against communism. The fantastic increase in wealth and power of the German monopolies was for them a happy fringe benefit of Nazism, but the Nazis main mission was to destroy communism. World War II must be seen in this context.

The benefits of Nazism went 95 percent to the handful of industrial and financial kings. But for some of the petty-bourgeois and smaller capitalists there were also fascist fringe benefits. Even while being squeezed out by the monopolies, the small businessman had all his labor problems “solved” and was thankful to the Nazis for that. The teacher was now fuehrer in the classroom and often a local “leiter” as well, and generally a stalwart fascist. For many hundreds of thousands of unemployed students and ruined small holders new jobs in the Nazi war machine, the propaganda apparatus, the Gestapo, and the S.S. opened up plenty of opportunity for advancement and corruption. The elimination of Jews from the professions and retail trade made life easier for “Aryan” professionals and traders. The officers, cops and civil servants advanced quickly as the army, police and bureaucracy each ballooned. Thus these classes did not lose much of the genuine enthusiasm for Nazism they felt in the beginning.

To line up the petty bourgeoisie solidly behind him and to begin to win over even some workers to fascism, Hitler employed chauvinism, racism, nationalism and patriotism to a degree unknown in history. And he was, at least to a degree, successful.

The egoism of the male worker was appealed to by anointing him “fuehrer” of the household by the regime. Women workers were by - and large sent back to the kitchen. The old outworn chauvinist line, “keep them barefoot and pregnant,” was made a matter of state policy. Prizes were given to the most “productive” (i.e., the most fertile) women while childless couples were subjected to intense pressure from the police and plant “leader.”

Once the communists were in concentration camps or underground, the Jews became the object of humiliations and brutalities unprecedented in their scope in this century. Deprived of property, of jobs, expelled from schools, Jews were made the object of a series of a thousand laws and restrictions, culminating in the vicious “Crystal Night” anti-Jewish pogrom in November, 1938—a preview of the extermination camps to come three years later. The diversion of the petty bourgeoisie and backward workers with anti-Semitism helped bind these classes closer to the regime that was enslaving them. -

Two years after assuming power, the fascist regime was already making territorial demands on neighboring capitalist states and building an arsenal more extensive than any ever before seen.

To march the nation to war in cadence, the fascists resorted to a display of nationalism, patriotism, pomp, ceremony and militarism also more extensive than any yet seen before. There were endless parades with endless flags, uniforms, marches, warlike speeches. There were incantations to the war gods, torch lit ceremonies, incessant movies glorifying war and the “nation.” The professors stepped in to show how Germans were superior to others, yet somehow picked on by others; always victorious yet somehow “stabbed in the back” by Communists and Jews, -etc.

The workers only partially bought this line, but the petty bourgeoisie was almost unanimously ecstatic and marched to the slaughter singing the glories of fascism.

Of the 20 million German men who marched off singing “Deutschland Uber Alles,” 8 million never returned, except in a box; another seven and 7.25 million were wounded. During the war 500,000 civilians and soldiers were executed for not following some fascist order or other. (This is not counting the more than 2 million executed German Jews.) In addition, there were some 2.5 million German civilians who died in the rubble of 7 million buildings and 2000 bridges and 3000 miles of railway track that was destroyed in the war. The cost to Germany alone of the fascist adventure is estimated at \$270 billion.

Hitler committed suicide when surrounded by the Red Army. Goring took the same cowardly path. Hess is still in prison after 30 years. Krupp served a few months, then was released, while his son took over the Krupp enterprises, which today are bigger and richer than ever. The other patrons of Hitler—Thyssen, Vogler, Kierdorf, Wulff, etc.— went on as before the war. The same families rule in West Germany today as in Hitler’s time. Only the East German landowning aristocrats were expropriated by the post-war anti-fascist government in East Germany.

As for the CPG, it trod the opposite path of the Italian Communist Party. Its tragic “wait and see” policy continued after Hitler’s accession to power. Blinded by years of parliamentarism, the CPG was ideologically and organizationally unprepared for the underground life it was thrust into in 1933. This had been true for Italian Communists, as well, ten years previously. But unlike the Italians, the German Communists cautiously stayed on the defensive, constantly hoping that external factors would make their job easier. In 1934 the CPG waited and hoped for something to come out of the “second revolution.” In 1936 they waited and hoped that Hitler would fail to solve the unemployment crisis. In 1938 they waited and hoped that the British bosses would call Hitler’s bluff over the Czechoslovakia crisis. In 1940 they waited and hoped for the French Army to beat the Wehrmacht. After June 1941 they waited for the victory of the Soviet Army.

In the last case they were not disappointed, but by the time that happened the CPG was too weak to be of any help. At the beginning they were strong, with over 100,000 Communists in the

underground, but the cautious “wait and hope” policy isolated the CPG from the working class, turned off serious anti-fascist fighters, while the Gestapo and attrition whittled down the underground. With each dashed hope and missed opportunity, the CPG became weaker, more isolated, more demoralized and ready to be even more cautious the next time.

In March 1939 the Comintern made the following assessment of some of the weaknesses of the CPG.

But unfortunately the Party remained far too long under the hypnotic influence of its former mass strength, counting on the rapid and easy collapse of the fascist regime. Later when it readjusted itself and adopted the course of prolonged and painstaking work in gathering together the proletarian forces and consolidating their organization, certain German Communists went to the other extreme. They failed to realize how rapidly the discontent of the masses with the fascist regime was rising and were caught unawares by the growth of the anti-fascist sentiments to be observed in recent months in Germany.⁸

To be sure, there were small scale demonstrations, small scale strikes, even some sabotage, and despite the Gestapo and the S.S., the CPG was maintained as an organization. But unlike Communists in the other fascist countries, the CPG grew progressively weaker and -in the end played only a very minor role in the anti-fascist struggle.

This may be a harsh judgment on a party which suffered so much, but we must learn from the serious mistakes of the CPG just as we can learn from the positive achievements of other communists.

VI. THE GREEN SHIRTS

Bolshevism is knocking at our gates. We can't afford to let it in. We have got to organize ourselves against it, and put our shoulders together and hold fast. We must keep America whole and safe and unspoiled. We must keep the worker away from red literature and red ruses; we must see that his mind remains healthy. — Al Capone.

In Hungary one of the more virulent forms of fascism developed early as a result of the failure of the revolution in 1918 and 1919. The 1918 defeat of the Hapsburg monarchy and the small handful of barons that had ruled Hungary for centuries brought the working class, for the first time, into the streets for revolution. Inspired by the magnificent example of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, the Hungarian working class, particularly in Budapest, the capital, turned to Communists to lead the revolution. In March 1919, a united front of working class forces, including the untrustworthy social democrats but under the leadership of the Communist Party, seized power and declared a Hungarian Soviet Republic. For five months the heroic Hungarian workers fought at great odds against the old ruling class, the new capitalists, the petty bourgeoisie, and expeditionary armies from Czechoslovakia, Rumania and France intent on crushing the communists.

The working class held power in Budapest and many other districts of Hungary. But the powerful forces arrayed against them, the betrayal of the social democrats and the vacillations of Béla Kun and other communist leaders were the chief factors that led to the defeat of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In August 1919 the Rumanian capitalist army, the French Army and a Hungarian “National Army” under right wing Admiral Horthy crushed the Hungarian Soviet Republic in a -vast blood bath.

At Szeged in the south, Horthy formed the Szeged committee which hired “officer detachments” to wipe out Communists. In November the Rumanians and French withdrew turning the nation, over to Horthy's army, which organized special courts to hang or imprison communists and other militant workers, and also incited pogroms to kill communists and working-class Jews on sight. In the white terror of 1919-1921 at least 1600 Communists, militants and Jews were executed and 100,000 put in concentration camps.⁷

The Szeged committee or the Hungarian Social Association with 10,000 secret clubs throughout Hungary served as the fascist organization at this point. But as the white terror subsided, the fascists lost their influence in the government, and a coalition of conservative noblemen from the countryside, and Jewish bankers and industrialists from Budapest ruled the country under Count Bethien and Admiral Horthy. A deal was struck on December 22, 1921 with the social democrats, who were allowed to organize in the city of Budapest only. In return

the SDP promised to” “cooperate with the Hungarian Foreign Ministry” and to “adopt the Magyar (Hungarian “race”) standpoint” and to “carry on active propaganda on behalf of Hungary.” However, all trade unions were outlawed and the Communist Party was outlawed.⁴

The SDP-Jewish capitalist-feudal landlord agreement left the fascist officer detachments and secret societies out in the cold temporarily. These forces reorganized in 1923 under one Gyula Gombos, who had been active during the white terror as “Supreme Leader” of a small fascist party. He was viciously anti-Jewish and anti-communist. Gombos founded a Party of Racial Defense and established contact with Mussolini in Italy. An early attempted coup failed, but Horthy intervened to prevent Gombos from being imprisoned.

The program of Gombos was the typical fascist mixture of vague “land reform” and vaguer yet “justice for the poor” with extreme racism directed against Jews and with fervent nationalist appeals to “regain ancient Hungarian rights” by dismembering Rumania, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia.

The government of Hungary in the twenties and early thirties was already semi-fascist in that the working class was deprived of any legal rights. There were no trade unions and communists were hunted down, imprisoned and tortured. Moreover, the government leaders were all outspoken anti-Semites and unabashed racists, and they periodically made nationalist demands on neighboring countries.

The Gombos fascists’ quarrel with the government was ostensibly that the government did not go far enough in its persecution of the workers, in its anti-Semitism, nationalism and militarism. But the quarrel had deeper roots. With over 90 percent of banking and industry in the hands of Jewish capitalists and the countryside divided into feudal estates where serfdom often still existed, the rising Hungarian bourgeoisie had no place to go. The Hungarian capitalists supported the fascists in the expectation that the fascists would open up opportunities for them at the expense of Jewish capitalists, rural feudal lords and neighboring capitalists, as well as sit even harder on the working class.

In the crisis of 1930-1932, with unemployment at 40 percent and with massive evictions of peasants and serfs from the rural estates, the fragile capitalist financial structure was on the verge of collapse. The underground Communist Party organized strikes and demonstrations. Once again the working class demonstrated in the streets. Fearing a new Hungarian Soviet Republic, the Jewish capitalists came to a quick agreement with their Hungarian counterparts. They poured money into the fascist parties, financed a big fascist propaganda campaign, and in 1931 forced out Bethlen, the representative of the rural aristocracy. The fascists on their part downplayed for a time the anti-semitic aspect of their pro-

gram. On October 1, 1932, in the face of the resurgence of working class militancy, the Jewish and Hungarian capitalists achieved unity. Horthy was induced to appoint Gombos as prime minister; the fascist state was achieved.

Unlike his counterparts in Germany and Italy, Gombos achieved power with only a miniscule mass base. Basically his party was the puny bastard of the union of Jewish and Hungarian capital. But with the resources of government and the finances of his new patrons Gombos organized at least all the trappings of a mass fascist movement. He hired 60,000 green-shirted thugs to be his “Advance Guards” organized to beat up and terrorize workers, break up strikes and hunt down Communists. Gombos himself became the “leader” and in 1935 made the pilgrimage to Berlin to learn from Hitler and Goring, promising them that a “new” Hungary would be built modeled along the lines of the “new” Germany. But the “leader” died in bed in October 1936, with his “great work” still undone and leaving no clear cut fascist heir, and as yet no mass base for fascism in Hungary.

Once again the capitalist bosses started squabbling, and a succession of fascist nonentities became prime minister one after the other under Horthy’s regency. The government drew closer to Nazi Germany, eventually signing a military pact in January 1939, with the Nazis and in 1938 promulgating anti-semitic laws in imitation of the German Nazis. However, no move was made to touch the property of the twelve Jewish families that still controlled 90 percent of finance and industry. The Hungarian fascist government joined Germany, Italy and Japan in the Anti-Comintern Pact. In June 1941, Hungary joined the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union. Some 200,000 Hungarian fascists fought at the battle of Stalingrad, where they suffered the same crushing blows as their Nazi allies. Over 140,000 Hungarian soldiers, 280,000 Hungarian civilians and 550,000 Hungarian Jews were killed during World War II. A total of 1,000,000 dead in a nation of only 10,000,000—a very high price to pay for fascism.

The Hungarian fascists under Horthy were loyal allies of Hitler until the bitter end, but Hitler himself was never satisfied with the Hungarian fascist regime after the death of Gombos. He wanted a mass-based fascist party modeled on German lines. In 1937 German Nazi interest and money flowed to one Ferencz Szalasi and his Arrow Cross Party. The Arrow Cross came about as an amalgamation of several rival Nazi and fascist parties that had maintained a precarious existence while Gombos had been head of the government. But until 1937 the Arrow Cross and its precursors were very small. In April of 1937, however, the Arrow Cross had 16,000 members and grew rapidly attaining 300,000 by 1939 as officers, lawyers, professionals, civil servants, small shopkeepers, small peasants—including a number of disgruntled, former SDP workers—flocked to the Arrow Cross. However, according to an Arrow Cross official estimate, 17 percent

of the membership were army officers.⁷

The old conflict between the Horthy fascists representing the Jewish capitalists and rural landlords and the Szalasi-Arrow Cross fascists representing Hungarian capitalists now came to a head when Horthy had Szalasi arrested in 1938. The German Nazis were displeased, but vacillated between the pragmatic advantages of supporting Horthy and their ideological affinity to Szalasi. In March 1939, Nazi Germany dismembered Czechoslovakia, handing over the Ruthenia region to fascist Hungary; Horthy then signed the anti-Comintern Pact. In August, 1940 2.5 million former Rumanians and 50,000 square km, of Rumanian territory in the region of Transylvania were likewise handed to fascist Hungary by the Nazis. In return Horthy released Szalasi from prison.

But the two fascist cliques in Hungary fluctuated in strength throughout the war with Horthy remaining dominant until the German Army entered Hungary on March 18, 1944. And it was not until October 16, 1944 that Szalasi and the Arrow Cross finally took power. This episode lasted only a few months because the Red Army was already on Hungarian soil. As the mighty columns of workers and Communists advanced on Budapest, the Hungarian Communist Party led the workers in that city to overthrow fascists of both varieties and to establish a socialist Hungary. Szalasi was executed by the workers; Horthy managed to escape to Portugal where, protected by fascist Salazar he lived until 1957.

But in the year preceding liberation the Horthy and Szalasi fascists had already done their foulest deed—the genocide of 550,000 Hungarian Jews. By the beginning of 1944, with the Red Army advancing rapidly from the East and the German S.S. getting more desperate in the West, the twelve Jewish families, the real rulers of fascist Hungary up to that time, began to see nothing but catastrophe staring them in the face. Therefore, they cleverly negotiated their way out of this quandary by means of an incredible deal with Adolph Eichmann (head of the Jewish extermination division of the S.S.), Horthy and Szalasi. In return for safe passage to British-held Palestine for the twelve families, a quantity of jewelry and other valuables, and also safe passage for a few thousand other prominent Jews and young Zionists

—“the best biological material”—the Jewish “leaders” turned over the industries and banks to the Hungarian capitalists, and agreed to lead the remaining working class and lower middle class

Jews into the Nazi extermination camps.⁷

The deal was made: One Kastner, head of the Jewish “Rescue Committee” and after the war an Israeli official, was in charge of the round-up and transfer of the 550,000 Jews. Only forty-eight Germans were involved in this episode. Some 20,000 of Horthy’s police were used in the round-up, but with the Red Army lines only 30 miles away, with a strong Communist underground in Budapest, with neighboring Yugoslavia almost entirely in the hands of Communist-led partisans and even neighboring fascist Rumania offering asylum to Jews, resistance and/or escape would have been relatively easy had there been a fighting Jewish leadership.⁷ But the leadership was in the hands of fascists and Zionists in the Jewish Council, and they were intent on keeping their bloody bargain with Eichmann and Horthy. Kastner, who had actually been given a personal tour of the Auschwitz extermination camp by the S.S., personally assured thousands of Jews that they were going to pleasant work places in the West.* Only in Budapest, Communist-influenced Jewish workers saw through Kastner’s rubbish and resisted; almost all of Budapest’s Jews were saved from the extermination camps. But the others, some 550,000, three-quarters of Hungary’s Jews, were murdered in 1944 by the Nazi-Horthy-Zionist combo.⁷

VII. FASCISM IN PORTUGAL AND JAPAN

Conquistador a vulture sits on your silver shield,
And in your rusty scabbard now the sand has taken seed...
And though you came with sword held high,
You didn’t conquer, only die.

—Procol Harum

The Portugal of the early 1920’s was marked by great upheaval. The Portuguese working class was just coming into its own as industrialization

* This whole sordid episode is massively detailed by Ben Hecht in *Perfidy*. Some years after the war a small Israeli newspaper published these incredible facts Kastner, a high Israeli official; brought the publisher up on a libel suit. During the trial the whole sordid story was laid out in open court. Kastner was forced to resign and later assassinated by an outraged Israeli. The anonymity of the twelve families, however, was protected by the Israeli rulers. The information in the book *perfidy* was obtained from the court records of this Israeli trial, and is also fully backed by the cited Hoover Institute Study. 7

and large-scale manufacturing had come late to Portugal. There were many violent strikes of the workers seeking trade-union organization and a measure of improvement in their medieval standard of living. There were also mutinies in the armed forces, many soldiers having been influenced by the revolutionary current coming from the U.S.S.R. At the top there was great corruption and decadence and some forty-three revolving-door governments in the sixteen years of the republic (1910-1926). But for all this there existed no mass based communist party to lead the working class to victory.

In 1926 a junta of right-wing generals and admirals overthrew the republic and proclaimed a military dictatorship. They immediately dissolved the trade unions in order to crush the new-born workers' movement. The press likewise was dissolved; all information came from the military.

Since these generals couldn't walk and chew gum at the same time, the brains behind the new dictatorship became one Salazar, a right-wing economics professor, turned finance minister. He became prime minister in 1932. Fascism became full-blown in Portugal in 1933 when Salazar proclaimed his "new state."

The "new state" of Salazar turned out to be a replica of the "new Italy" and was likewise said to be based on papal encyclicals. All strikes were outlawed. Communists were outlawed. A secret police was formed to hunt down Communists and militants and to enforce the weird medieval obscurantism of the regime.

But unlike his counterparts in Germany and Italy, neither Salazar nor his regime evoked any popular support, even from the peasants or petty bourgeoisie. The regime existed by means of sheer terror: murder, torture and prisons. The ruling big capitalists, the military officers and other instruments of repression were the only base of support the regime ever had. Because the dictatorship existed on so slender a thread and also because the top capitalists in Portugal had had historical ties to British financiers Salazar did not enter World War II on the side of his idols, Hitler and Mussolini. He instead maintained a pro-Axis neutrality, and was thus able to survive Hitler's debacle, becoming after the war a respected member of the U.S.-led anti-Communist alliance, NATO. (The third and final article in this series will discuss recent events in Portugal; also see the article on Spain and Portugal in the December PL magazine.)

Although Portugal was a small and backward country and Japan was a powerful imperialist country, events in Japan and Portugal followed virtually the same path. Like Portugal, Japan industrialized late and—as in Portugal—the first big wave of working class action shook Japan in the 1920s. As in Portugal the ruling liberals were so blatantly corrupt and unstable that they virtually invited a fascist takeover.

The Communist Party of Japan (CPJ) was founded in 1922 and quickly gained influence in the rising working class movement of that time. But numerically the party remained small,

seldom taking advantage of its leadership in strikes and industrial actions to build the party. The CPJ became enamored of the false idea of a "cadre party." Thus when the depression threw 3 million Japanese workers onto the streets, the CPJ was too small to lead the assault on the liberal capitalists. Instead it was the fascist secret societies who were better at basebuilding than the CPJ, and who attacked the corrupt liberal establishment.

Nearly a dozen serious fascist secret societies were formed in Japan after 1922. They shared a similar program of anti-Communism and nationalism. They vied with one another to curry the favor of the ruling class, but often cooperated and often had interchangeable memberships. These societies were more exclusive than the European fascist parties, seldom attracting workers or peasants. Young officers, often from a petty-bourgeois background, were generally in the majority, although ruling class figures were the leaders. Under the threat of the 1931 crisis, most fascist secret societies merged into the Greater Japan Production Party which held mass meetings, parades and other circuses, putting forth a blend of racism, nationalism, militarism and anti-communism.

The most influential tool of the fascists turned out to be the Teikoku Zaigo Gunjin'ai (TZG), an ex-serviceman's association with 3 million members. The TZG was for various reasons far more influential than corresponding veterans' organizations in other countries. The TZG had more mass influence than the CPJ and the social democrats combined. Thus when the Kokuhonsha fascist secret society gained control of the TZG in 1932, it signaled the downfall of liberalism and a serious defeat for the working class movement. That year TZG chieftain General Araki became War Minister; he rapidly increased his power and became the most important man in the government. The Kokuhonsha had 100,000 members by 1936. Its program was, first, crushing of the communist movement; second, expansion at the expense of China and the U.S.S.R.; third, large-scale military rearmament; fourth, anti-Chinese and anti-Korean racism, plus a lot of religious-national shrine-emperor worship hokum. The ruling class clearly loved the program. The Kokuhonsha had been financed since 1926 by the mammoth Mitsui bank and the other Mitsui companies. The national police and military fed cadre and provided protection for the Kokuhonsha along the way. When the Kokuhonsha took over the TZG, the seven Kokuhonsha members involved in the leadership consisted of four generals and three admirals.

Japanese politics in the thirties followed a weird pattern of assassinations, coups, counter-coups, plots and counter-plots. Araki himself fell in 1934 but other fascist military men followed. However, there was never any clear-cut "führer" or "duce." Although after October 1941 Tojo was the most powerful figure, personality cultism had always been centered on the figurehead Emperor Hirohito, and this continued.

The fascist chieftains preferred to act as behind-the-scenes bosses, and the real rulers of Japan were the close-knit Zaibatsu of financiers and industrialists, Mitsui, Sumitomo, Mitsubishi and a few others.

The policy of the fascist rulers centered on anti-communism and racist expansionism. The small CPJ was ruthlessly hounded in Japan and its members subjected to prison and torture. The working class press was, of course, banned, but even the big liberal dailies were "convinced," after losing a number of editors and owners to beatings and assassinations, to fully transform themselves into fascist sheets. Expansionist threats were made against the Soviet Union in the late 1930s. Here the fascists could combine anti-communism with expansionism. But a desultory war with the U.S.S.R. at Khalkin Gol ended poorly for the Japanese fascists, and they wisely turned their attention to more vulnerable victims.

In 1931 the Japanese fascists invaded and occupied the Kirin and Liaoning provinces of northeast China. From there they initiated the bloodiest series of conflicts that were to form part of World War II. Fourteen years later the Japanese fascists lay prostrate, beaten by a combination of forces, the most important of which was the Chinese Red Army led by the Chinese Communist Party. The fascists, however, wisely chose to surrender to the more lenient U.S. imperialists. And except for the execution of Tojo and an extremely small handful of murderers, the fascist cliques did not pay for their crimes. The Zaibatsu lost their overseas empire, but kept all their home wealth and fared well enough economically in the post-war period. The Japanese people, on the other hand, paid dearly for fascism: 1,900,000 Japanese soldiers were killed in the fighting; 659,000 civilians died in the most horrible terror bombings in history. Many cities including Tokyo were destroyed by U.S. firebombs; Hiroshima and Nagasaki were wiped out by U.S. atom bombs.

The CPJ resisted the fascist march to war. Although without a large mass base they fought the initial occupation of northeast China by holding demonstrations, anti-war strikes by workers and anti-war actions by some soldiers and sailors. Again in 1937 when the war intensified, the CPJ fought even harder. The CPJ, though not large, was the only anti-fascist fighting force in Japan during the war, but its previous weakness of not becoming a mass party prevented the CPJ from having a decisive impact on the defeat of fascism. The blows that liberated the Japanese working class from fascism were essentially external.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS

In the period 1919 to 1934 the working class in the five countries dealt with in this article suffered severe and crushing defeats. The costs to

the communist movement and the physical costs to the working class which we enumerated were enormous. After 1934 the international communist movement led the workers of the world to begin a serious all-out effort against fascism. Although strategic mistakes were made and consequently more defeats lay ahead, the issue could never be in doubt and ultimately communists crushed the fascists. (Our next article in this series will deal with this period.)

However, why did we have to suffer such defeats as in Italy, Germany, Hungary, etc.? We have dealt with the strengths of fascism sufficiently. To summarize, they are: (1) the all-out financial and political support of the ruling class; (2) the close help of the military and the police; (3) the ease with which unstable petty-bourgeois tradespeople and intellectuals are won over to fascism; (4) the conscious or unconscious aid of liberals and revisionists; (5) the typical set of bold, aggressive and opportunist men in leadership of the fascist groups not incapable of serious basebuilding among the people. But the strengths of fascism are not primary; the weaknesses of the workers' movement and particularly the communists more explain the rise to power of the fascists. Here we will point to a few lessons communists can draw from the tragic experience of 1919-1934. These are lessons written with the blood of millions.

FIRST LESSON: It is necessary to understand the nature and purposes of fascism. Fascism is the unrestrained rule of the big bourgeoisie, the biggest bankers and industrialists. Fascism is 100 percent in their interests and is entirely their show. Successful fascist movements are often able to win over, large masses of small traders, small farmers, small capitalists, intellectuals, police, military, professionals and even a few backward workers. This may occur but does not change the nature of the beast. The petty bourgeoisie may march to the tune of the fascist piper, but the big bourgeoisie pays the piper and calls the tune.

SECOND LESSON: Fascism is the natural governmental form that corresponds to a decaying and moribund monopoly capital; communists have to understand this fact and not wish for a return to liberal democracy: A multi-party system of checks and balances with local autonomy and a limited freedom for working class parties is a governmental form that corresponds to competitive expanding capitalism. Fascism is a governmental form that corresponds to decadent monopoly capitalism. Only socialism is a viable alternative to fascism.

THIRD LESSON: There can be no place for liberalism in the anti-fascist movement. The liberal leaders willingly or unwillingly pave the way for fascist power; they cannot be part of an anti-fascist force.

Moreover, the communist party can, have no illusions in the institutions of liberal democracy, the courts, the legislature, the media, the universities, the cultural centers. These are already in the process of transforming themselves into fascist institutions.

This transformation is often not obvious but it is occurring inexorably. The flaming liberal senator or

judge of today is the fascist functionary of tomorrow. The anti-fascist forces must put no credence on the liberal facade of the various capitalist institutions, the facade can change overnight. Communists instead must depend on the fighting force of organized workers. Illusions in the liberal democracy or in the importance of electoral "victories" of Germany and Italy blinded communists to the process of fascization that was being completed beneath the surface.

FOURTH LESSON: The revisionists and social democrats who pretend to Marxism, but are really just common liberals are the fascists' most reliable allies within the working class movement. These misleaders of the working class must be swept aside in order to beat back the fascist assault. The history of fascism in Germany, Italy and Hungary shows that the revisionists, at best, worked overtime to foster illusions in liberal institutions among the working class. At worst the revisionists entered into out-and-out counter-revolutionary "peace pacts" or even alliances with the fascists to attack the communists. These traitors have no place in the anti-fascist movement; they are the enemy within and they must be defeated in order to defeat fascism. The ideas of revisionism—i.e. faith in liberal democracy, etc.—may also find their way into the communist party; these ideas are the ideas of defeat and must be fought against inside the party with the same vigor as employed against the fascist enemy.

FIFTH LESSON: The battle against fascism is a violent one. The communist party that fights fascism only through elections, petitions, court cases, academic debate, etc., is headed for sure defeat. Fascist violence and provocation have to be met with working class violence. Even the tactic of a general strike in the face of a fascist assault may prove to be too mild—as the Italian experience shows. Fascist parades should be broken up, their meetings violently dispersed, their headquarters sacked, and their racist agitators beaten up. The fight against fascism is a matter of life and death; to insist on only legal weapons is to invite certain disaster. Any mercy we show to the fascist dogs would not be repaid in kind if the shoe were on the Other foot. Naturally, under these circumstances the Party is primarily an illegal organization. The Party must be organizationally as safe as possible and ideologically as prepared as possible to continue the struggle when bourgeois democracy changes to terroristic fascism.

SIXTH LESSON: A vigorous all-out fight on every aspect of racism that exists under the liberals is the best defense against fascism. The fascists feed and grow fat on racism like a pig feeds and grows fat on garbage. To the extent that communists can remove racist garbage from so-

ciety, to that extent the fascist pigs will be stunted in their growth. Had the German CP made fighting anti-Semitism a crucially prime tenet of their program, things might have been much more difficult for the Nazis. The same could be said for the Hungarian CP; also for the Italian CP with respect to anti-Yugoslav racism; for Portuguese communists with respect to the colonies in Africa; for Japanese communists with respect to anti-Korean racism.

SEVENTH LESSON: A Communist party that is infected with liberalism, revisionism, pacifism and racism won't defeat fascism no matter how big it is—witness the experience of the CPG. On the other hand a small party that is 100 percent correct won't defeat fascism either. A large mass based party with strong ties to the industrial working class is essential in this fight. Only by pitting the majority of the workers against the fascists can we win; a small group no matter how correct, won't succeed.

To defeat fascism there must be a revolutionary communist party. There must be such a party, built according to the theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism; able to apply the science of Marxism-Leninism to the contemporary class struggle; willing to persevere in the truth through serious study and political struggle, criticism and self-criticism.

There must be such a party with a large working class membership closely linked, through daily on-the-job class struggles, to the majority of the working class. There must be such a party organized to operate legally, if possible, but primarily as an illegal organization.

There must be such a party that fights racism with all its strength, day in, day out; that fights pacifism and teaches the working class how to use violence to defeat our enemies; that fights revisionism, liberalism and other defeatist ideas of the enemy; that exposes and never unites with the disguised agents of the bourgeoisie, the revisionists, the liberal mis-leaders, Trotskyites, etc.

Such a party will surely defeat fascism, go on to overthrow the capitalist system altogether, and construct a beautiful socialist future.

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(This is the first of a three-part article.)