

on internationals and internationalism

More than a century has passed since the foundation of the First International; over sixty years ago the Second International, which collapsed so ignominiously, was founded; and it is nearly half a century since the Third International constituted itself. I should like to consider here the role of these three Internationals and the relevance and vitality of the basic idea which, in their best periods, inspired them all—the idea of internationalism. My theme therefore is the fortunes (or misfortunes) of the Internationals and the relevance of internationalism. I want to concentrate especially on one crucial problem: the interplay and the conflict between nationalism and internationalism throughout the whole history of the modern labor movement.

The First International was founded here in London on the initiative of British and French socialists. Their great concern was to establish some cooperation and solidarity

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between working men in France and Britain in order that they should be able to defend themselves against the import of cheap Belgian, Italian and German labor. They had to protect themselves too against strike-breaking action organized by international capital. Such was the prosaic origin of the Working Men's Association, that great legendary, almost poetic International, which established the tradition of an internationally organized working-class movement.

The origins of the International were, one might say, almost trade unionist in the narrow meaning of the word. But among the small group of men sitting on the platform at that memorable meeting in St. Martin's Hall here in London, in the last week of September, 1864, was one man whose genius put its stamp on the whole enterprise and raised it to a much higher level than, judging by its origin, it would have ever attained. That man was Karl Marx. He wrote the inaugural address to the International Association of Working Men and also the rules of that new organization.

There was also another curious circumstance: the organization was founded in order to proclaim the idea of internationalism and the need for international solidarity among the workers. But the immediate reason for the gathering of delegates at St. Martin's Hall, the immediate issue which was eloquently debated there, was the support of, and solidarity with, one nation fighting not for socialism, not even for any progressive political reform, but for its very independence. The meeting was called to express the solidarity of Western working classes with the armed rising of the Poles against tsarist Russia. Here lies the apparent paradox of the whole situation: the issue that excites the passions and the enthusiasm of the First International is a national issue, a struggle of a very remote people of Eastern Europe for its national existence. Right at the birth of the new international organization we are confronted with the interplay of internationalism and nationalism in the labor movement.

The First International was not, in reality, the first attempt to create an international organization. One should

not forget that already the *Communist Manifesto*, written jointly by Marx and Engels in 1848, had ended with the memorable call: workers of the world, unite! Various working class circles, associations, and propagandist groups had for decades tried to establish some sort of international link between each other. Not much came out of these strivings. And after the collapse of the 1848 revolution fifteen years had passed during which the labor movement was in the doldrums, or rather in that state of deep depression and demoralization which usually follows upon the wake of defeat. The idea of internationalism had, nevertheless, been deeply rooted already in the socialist consciousness. I shall come back to this later. For the moment let us look a little longer at the background to the formation of the First International.

Since the defeat of the revolution in Europe, capitalism, which meant almost exclusively Western European capitalism, had gone through a period of extraordinary development and progress. In the year when the First International was founded, the British chancellor of the exchequer, Gladstone, spoke about this "intoxicating growth and augmentation of all our wealth and power." Reading that speech one almost has the impression that these are the words of a Tory or a right-wing Labour politician proclaiming in 1962 or 1963, "We never had it so good! What tremendous progress our welfare state has made, how outdated are all the revolutionary ideas about class struggle!" And so on and so on.

Such was the mood in Western Europe around the year 1860. The labor movement had not recovered from its defeat of 1848-49; but then suddenly, in 1864, new stirrings made themselves felt in England, in France, and, to a lesser extent, in other countries of Western Europe. We find some echoes of this new mood in the correspondence of Marx and Engels and their friends, but if one were to judge the circumstances of the foundation of the International by the remarks and allusions contained in these letters, one would come to the conclusion that the whole enterprise looked like an

interesting but relatively modest incident in the political life of certain European émigrés in London in contact with some representatives of various continental labor groupings.

Marx joined the movement with some reluctance; he did not want to get involved with the various small sects and circles of agitators active in London in those days. He still remembered his exasperation at the bickerings of his fellow émigrés, and Engels's words, valid when they were written in 1851, held good more than a decade later: "How do people like us, who flee official positions like the plague, fit into a party?" Marx preferred at that time to concentrate on his work, on *Das Kapital*, which he rightly considered as being much more important. But in September, 1864, when a group of French workers came to London to appeal to their British comrades for a common defense against their bourgeoisie, he was greatly impressed both by their élan and by their determination; he became drawn into the movement and gave to it a tremendous intellectual impulse. Marx's internationalism had a greater depth than the internationalism of the other participants.

Socialist internationalism sprang from two sources: one was the practical experience of the workers who felt that they had to cooperate with each other across frontiers and boundaries in order to defend their interests, their wages, and their working conditions. The day-to-day experience of a man standing at the factory bench next to a foreigner who, often through necessity, undersold his labor, brought an understanding of common interests, an instinctive kind of internationalism. On a different plane, however, the history of political ideas in Europe provides another source of socialist internationalism, one that links up, as it were, with the bourgeois cosmopolitanism of the French revolution and of the various bourgeois political movements that followed in its wake.

There is a historical affinity between bourgeois cosmopolitanism and what we call proletarian internationalism; paradoxically that affinity does not rule out, but in fact pre-

supposes, also a conflict between the two. *Egalité, Fraternité, Liberté*, which were supposed to exist between individual Frenchmen, were projected, so to speak, onto the European scene and appeared there as the equality and fraternity of the nations. But in bourgeois society this equality between individuals turned out to be only formal and legal, not social and economic. The French bourgeois and the French worker were equal "before the law"—they were granted the same formal rights. Of this equality Anatole France once said: "In its majesty the law of the French Republic allows neither the millionaire Rothschild nor the Paris *clochard* [beggar] to sleep under the bridges of the Seine."

Cosmopolitan bourgeois equality between nations was similarly formal. The free trader, the importer and exporter, the seller and the buyer of any country had equal rights on the international market. That concept had some meaning for the bourgeoisie of highly developed industrial countries. But what sort of genuine equality was there between "the workshop of the world" and the primitive and colonial countries, between the strong and the weak—between the Rothschilds and the *clochards* of the world—where the trade works always to the profit of the strong and to the detriment of the weak?

Nevertheless, the call for equality and fraternity prompted people to look deeper and to advance from the demand for formal legal equality to the demand for economic and social equality. The proclamation of bourgeois cosmopolitanism of the early nineteenth century also led many thinkers—in the first instance, Marx and Engels—to stress all the implications of the idea and to carry it to its logical conclusion: from the cosmopolitanism of the free traders of bourgeois nations they moved on to the socialist internationalism of the proletariat.

Behind the cosmopolitanism of the bourgeoisie there always loomed the reality of competition between the traders of various nations. In the ranks of the proletariat there went on an incessant competition and scramble for jobs. The

bourgeois trader was fighting for markets and underselling his commodities; the workers were jostling each other for a place at the factory bench and were underselling their labor. Marx and Engels were well aware of this very real and unedifying element in the existence of the working classes in a society where competition permeated every aspect of social life. This strife would end only with the abolition of private property in the means of production—that is, with the abolition of capitalism. The aim of the modern labor movement was to curb the competitiveness of the workers, to bring under control that individualism which made them an easy prey for capitalist exploitation. The aim of the labor movement was to instill in the workers the sense of solidarity which would benefit them all as a class. That was the origin of the trade unions, the origin of modern socialism, and also the origin of the International. “Workers of the world, unite!” was nothing else but a call to eliminate harmful competition between workers within each country and to eliminate it also on an international scale. From this point of view nationalism was, in the first instance, the workers’ self-destructive competitiveness; internationalism was their solidarity transcending national boundaries.

In that sense, socialist internationalism developed from the cosmopolitanism of the trader; but it also surpassed that cosmopolitanism, overcame its limitations, and, finally, became its negation; socialist internationalism stood in opposition to the bourgeois cosmopolitanism.

I have said that Marxist internationalism had its roots in bourgeois cosmopolitanism, and these roots went quite deep. Already in the *Communist Manifesto*, in 1848, Marx described with unmistakable enthusiasm the progressive aspect of capitalism. By creating a world market, by breaking down or transcending regional, feudal, or national boundaries of separate economic units, by enlarging the horizon of the bourgeoisie, capitalism also enlarged the horizon of other classes of society. International trade, which expanded so startlingly with the development of nineteenth-century

capitalism, here demonstrated its progressive features. From this Marx concluded that socialism would go much further beyond the national economies than capitalism ever could go; it would create an international economy and a society planning and rationalizing its own needs, its own production and consumption, on an international scale. Already at the end of the eighteenth century Adam Smith listed from how many various countries came the goods that an Englishman (or a Scotsman) found on his breakfast table; already then an international division of labor was required to lay one table for one hearty meal. How much greater, how much vaster, how much more grandiose would be the division of labor attending the development of socialism, a division of labor which would indeed encompass the globe and mankind. What Marx in fact proclaimed was the end of the nation-state. He did not envisage it in terms of a political reality of his century, but he had that broad vision of an emerging new international society that would, of necessity, break down the constricting barriers and national frontiers.

And here again we see this apparent paradox: the First International, in whose inaugural address Marx proclaimed the future advent of that international society, was nevertheless convened in order to express sympathy with the struggle of the Poles to recreate their own independent nation-state. On the one hand the International proclaimed the anachronism—the decay and death—of the national state, on the other it demanded the creation and independence of a new state. And it was not only the fate of Poland which presented itself in these terms; Germany was fighting for its national unification, for the fusion of the dozens and dozens of its principalities, for the overcoming of the division between Hapsburg-ruled and Hohenzollern-ruled Germany; Italy was fighting for its national independence and unity; not to speak of the other small nations in eastern and southeastern Europe. In a vast part of the continent a struggle was indeed going on for the achievement of independent statehood and nationhood. This apparent paradox finds its explanation in

the fact that Marx, Engels and the socialists of their generation took it for granted that an international socialist community could not be created otherwise than by the free will of the peoples constituting it; it was through their independence, through their freedom from oppression, through the fulfillment of their national aspirations that the road to an international society lay. Only those free to create their own state can freely—not forcibly—give up their nation-state.

Over half a century later, Lenin, with his extraordinary talent for didactic popularization, compared this attitude to the woman's right to divorce. Every woman, he said, should have the freedom to divorce her husband; socialists and even progressive liberals must help her to achieve that freedom. But this did not mean that we were out to persuade all women that they should divorce their husbands. In the same way, Lenin said, we are not going to urge every nation to create its own state, but we must recognize that every nation has a right to do so. Our task, as Marxists, is to work towards the international socialist community; but we must also support the struggle for national independence waged by any oppressed nation, and by those colonial and semi-colonial countries exploited by foreign capital. But to glory in the nation-state, to seek to perpetuate it, to make a fetish of it, is simply reactionary, archaic and anachronistic; to think within the narrow framework of a nation-state is to remain tied to the past and not to move towards the future.

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Marx saw how nascent industrial capitalism was beginning to create the material conditions for a supranational organization of society. "In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we now have the many-sided intercourse of nations and their mutual interdependence," Marx and Engels wrote in 1848. And it is only now, over 120 years later, that our politicians, realizing at last the "mutual interdependence of nations," try in their own awkward way to create that much-vaunted European

International. In terms of what is called "practical politics" it did not achieve great things. It was split by the controversy between the Marxists and the anarchists. The police of Paris accused the First International of having provoked and organized the Commune of Paris. But the First International, though its adherents took part in the Commune of Paris, was quite innocent of the charge laid against it. And yet the defeat of the Commune led to the final disintegration of the International. By our standards, and by the standards of its time, this was a very small movement; it did not possess such modest media of publicity which even small parties possessed then, and yet it was the first great proclamation of what became a vital principle, the principle of internationalism.

The International died young, but it left behind the powerful call which resounds in the ears of the working classes of Europe and the world to this day, the call: Workers of the world, unite! It bequeathed a testament which molded also the thinking of the left and of revolutionary intellectuals of the world. The principle it proclaimed was far greater and far more vital than the International itself, and this was its only real achievement.

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After the dissolution of the First International came two decades during which the labor movement was growing in nearly all European countries. For the first time there was a great modern working class party in Germany. In France, in Italy, and in Spain the labor parties were gaining in strength. And yet, in spite of this fact—or perhaps as a result of it?—no international organization existed. The initiative to set up the Second International came from the French and Belgians in 1889. In the mythology of socialism, Frederick Engels figures as the originator of that International. He was warmly applauded and acclaimed as Marx's surviving friend and continuator of his work. It must have been very tempting to present the venerable prophet of socialism as the godfather of the new organization. Yet, when we read the private

correspondence between Engels and Laura and Paul Lafargue we find that Engels viewed without great enthusiasm the prospects of the international socialist congress which was being rather feverishly prepared in Paris. In a letter to Laura (Marx's daughter), written less than three weeks before the event, he mentions in passing "that congress of yours" and opposes any plan (which was evidently mooted) of keeping "the administrative sittings in private." The Germans, he says, would certainly prefer public meetings throughout "unless there is in some quarters a hankering after a restoration of the International in some form or another." This the Germans, and the Austrians, "would and ought" to oppose with all their strength. They cannot afford, Engels further maintains, "to play at international organizations which are at present as impossible as they are useless." *

And yet the International grew and expanded; and for a quarter of a century, from 1889 until the outbreak of the First World War, it was an impressive and in a way an immensely influential organization. Writing in 1919, Lenin commented that if the First International covered the period of growth of socialism in depth, the Second International brought the expansion of socialism in breadth. Outwardly, the Second International looked like the inheritor of the First, propagating the same idea and program of the revolution; in this the roots of both were deep in the tradition of 1848. It flourished all the symbols and watchwords of proletarian unity, sang all the songs about the brotherhood of the toilers, and spoke in the name of workers of every country and of the world. This, however, proved to be only a thin veneer covering deeply ingrained nationalism.

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In 1914, in the first days of the war, the International crumbled. All the official parties affiliated with it, with the exception of the Russian and Polish parties, became, as Rosa

* *Correspondence: Frederick Engels and Paul and Laura Lafargue* (Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow), vol. 2, p. 292.

Luxemburg called them, social-patriotic, social-chauvinistic; socialist in words only and jingoistic in fact. The leaders of European socialism threw to the winds the whole of their solemn, antimilitaristic international phraseology, and called upon the working classes to fight for "their" emperors, "their" government and "their" general staffs.*

What destroyed the Second International (although it still survives, but only as a necrotic bone), apart from the upsurge of nationalism, was the supremacy of one party, the German Social-Democratic Party, over the whole organization.† The German Social-Democratic Party was the master of the International, and in this lay the inherent contradiction of the situation which, like a charge of dynamite, exploded the whole edifice when, on 4 August 1914, the first shot was fired on the battlefield. Four years after the setting up of the Second International, Engels warned Lafargue, "The emancipation of the proletariat can be only an international event; you render it impossible if you try to make it simply a French event." Up to that "date of tragic significance" it looked as if the powerful German Social-Democratic Party took it upon itself to make of the emancipation of the proletariat "simply a German event."

The triumph of nationalism within the Second International was not fortuitous; it reflected the development and expansion of capitalism, which brought a spurious prosperity and relative improvement in the standard of living of the workers of the advanced countries. Parliamentary socialism, trade unionism, peaceful bargaining, the belief (so familiar to us) that "we have learned to manage our economic affairs,"

* "At one blow, the war scattered the revolutionary ideals in which the International had found its strength," writes Julius Braunthal, the secretary of the Second International, calling 4 August 1914 "a date of tragic significance" in the history of socialism. (*History of the International*, vol. 2)

† In September or October 1914, Trotsky wrote in Zurich: "It [the German Social Democratic Party] was for us not one of the parties of the International, but *the* party."

tyed the labor movement more and more closely to the nation-state, as it ties it today to our so-called welfare state. But suddenly, with the outbreak of the war, this labor movement was subjected to a most severe test; and it failed. Lenin could not believe that the disciples of Marx and Engels, the German socialists with their impressive following and "perfect" organization, had betrayed all their internationalism, their pledges and oaths, and had come out on the side of the Kaiser's empire, calling upon their workers to wage a holy war against Russia. No, Lenin could not believe that. He was on the verge of a nervous breakdown. He was in such despair at the collapse of all his hopes that for a time he thought of abandoning all politics and emigrating to the United States, as some of the defeated revolutionaries emigrated from Europe after 1848. But with Lenin, idle despair never lasted for long. He fought with his pen, unmasking the opportunism and the cowardice of the leaders of the German party; he mercilessly flayed Kautsky, the renegade, and thundered: What was the Second International if not "a union for the international justification of national chauvinism?" Would the Kaiser have ordered the Social-Democrats to be imprisoned or even shot if they had voted against the war credits? So what would be wrong with that? What were the leaders of the workers for? It is precisely in times of great strain, when the fortunes of peoples are in balance, that their duty is to lead forward even at the risk of their lives.

A few months after the outbreak of the war, both Lenin and Trotsky were already contemplating the setting up of a new International. The old one had died an ignominious death. The "chauvinist falsifiers of Marxism" were beyond redemption; they had dragged the whole organization too deeply into the quagmire of national patriotism. The only constructive task ahead was to "gather the forces for the Third International."

But long before the "forces for the Third International" were gathered, the thunder of the Russian Revolution shook the world. Right through the war the socialists of allied coun-

tries went through the ritual of conferences and solemn declarations; and so did the socialists of the Central Powers. While those meeting in London spoke of "pursuing the war to the bitter end," those assembled in Vienna spoke of their determination to defend their Fatherland with all their might. Only in September 1915, at Zimmerwald, was a timid attempt made to reassert anew, independently of the old International, proletarian solidarity among the embattled nations.

And when the great storm of 1917 came, no International was in existence; what was relevant was internationalism. And once again, this time from the other end of Europe, from backward Russia, resounded the call: "Workers of the world, unite!"

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In 1919 Lenin, Trotsky, Bukharin, Zinoviev and other Bolsheviks set themselves the task of rescuing the European labor movement from its social patriotic morass and of raising again the level of revolutionary internationalist consciousness. On Lenin's initiative they founded the Third International. Rosa Luxemburg was, till her martyr's death, opposed to that venture. According to her evaluation, the European labor movement was not yet ripe enough to absorb the idea and to act upon it. In these circumstances the new International was bound again to become dominated by one party, the party of the victorious socialist revolution. The preponderance of the German party in the Second International had been an element of weakness: the breakdown of the most powerful component resulted in the collapse of the whole structure. Nevertheless, Lenin and his comrades were convinced that the proclamation of the principle of internationalism once again was vital for the reawakening of the labor movement. But there was also another reason for which they were so anxious to form the Third International. They wanted to introduce another feature into the conception of the International; they saw it not only as a means to unite

the workers of all countries, but also as a political general staff in the coming European revolution. They imagined that the Russian upheaval was only the prelude, which would soon, very soon, be followed by the next act in the struggle against capitalism at large, and that there was a need for a political headquarters from which all the fighting activities of the various revolutionary working masses would be planned and directed in a harmonious way, all watchwords and slogans coordinated, and a certain international discipline established, which would prevail over the centrifugal national interests, local or regional ambitions and aspirations. For some time it seemed that these hopes might indeed materialize. There was in the period following the Russian Revolution a tremendous upsurge of internationalist feelings. From our vantage point it may be difficult to visualize this, but if we recall that a man as moderate and right-wing as the late Ernest Bevin—the same Bevin who ended his life as one of the most energetic warriors of the cold war—was in 1920 leading the British dockers to strike against the dispatch of arms and munitions destined to be turned against the Bolsheviks, we can appreciate the full impact the first workers' state made on their western comrades.

The Third International helped perhaps to unite the various groups of revolutionary socialists, but it disappeared without achieving much more. What were the roots of its failure?

The basic factor was the one foreseen and feared by Rosa Luxemburg: the supremacy of one single party. The victorious Russian party began automatically to dominate the whole International and in the course of years to stifle the independent rhythm and development of the communist movement outside and also within the USSR.

A new nationalism—postcapitalist, postrevolutionary nationalism—showed itself in an ideology which stressed and emphasized the self-sufficiency of the Russian Revolution. Enclosed within the *cordon sanitaire*, isolated by the action of all the counterrevolutionary forces of the world, the first

workers' state was forced into autarky; to make it easier to endure, the bitter necessity was then presented as a virtue. This found its utmost expression in Stalin's doctrine of socialism in one country and became the dogma of consolation for the unfulfilled hopes and expectations of revolution in the West. The new doctrine clothed itself in pseudo-Marxist, pseudo-dialectical pretexts and formulas, yet it was nothing else but the *cri de coeur* of a new and weak society. Stalin's promise of socialism in one country bred, in its turn, national egoism and it led Russia to treat foreign communism as expendable or as a bargaining counter in diplomatic dealings with the western bourgeois states.

The Third International, founded to the accompaniment of all the thunder and lightning of the Russian Revolution, was disbanded and buried by Stalin in the process of diplomatic bargaining with Churchill and Roosevelt in 1943. Such is the inescapable logic of the situation that, whenever in an International nationalism wins, it crushes and buries the International or tramples it underfoot. Such was the fate of the First and of the Second Internationals, and such was the fate of the Third.

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In 1933, after Hitler came to power, Trotsky considered the Third International just as bankrupt as the Second was. The German workers were not, as the Comintern's specious argument ran, "on the eve of great battles"—they had already suffered a terrible defeat. Stalinism, Trotsky said, had had its "fourth of August." This analogy led Trotsky to the obvious conclusion that now, as in 1914, it was time to prepare for the building of a new international organization, because the old one lay in ruins. He was, however, full of hesitations. It was not easy for him to turn his back on the "general staff of the world revolution," of which he was one of the main architects; he himself pointed out that while in 1914 the Second International consciously betrayed all its high ideals, the Comintern, in 1933, had facilitated fascist

victory through sheer stupidity, complacency, and blindness.

The plan to set up the new International was ripening slowly in Trotsky's mind. Four years of propaganda and groundwork were to pass before he was ready to convene a foundation congress. (It took exactly the same length of time from the moment when in 1915 he and Lenin first contemplated the idea of the Third International until the organization was actually launched.) But the Fourth International proved to be a stillbirth, and this was largely because no international revolutionary movement was there to breathe life into it. Through no fault of his own, Trotsky's International was cut off from the only area in which a victorious revolution had taken place and in which that revolution, though monopolized and distorted by an oppressive, mendacious bureaucracy, was still in being. In a sense Trotsky himself had foreseen the main circumstance which would condemn his organization to ineffectiveness when he pointed out that no matter how irresponsible Stalin's policy in Germany and elsewhere was, the revolutionary workers of all countries still looked to Moscow for inspiration and guidance.

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And now we have to consider one of the most striking paradoxes in the history of the Internationals. Just as the Russian Revolution took place at the time when no International existed, so in our lifetime the Chinese Revolution occurred, again at a time when after the Third International had been buried, the Fourth International had turned out to be a stillbirth, and there was no living revolutionary international organization. Our century saw two great social upheavals, embracing over eight hundred million people; both occurred in the period when there was no "general staff" to guide, advise and coordinate. They came into being within a national framework; and within it the revolution grew, transcended the limitations of a national ideology, and again became the object of a new struggle between the conflicting elements of nationalism and internationalism.

We must leave outside our survey the new waves of nationalism in the western labor movement; they are in a sense only a continuation of the same nationalism that came to the top in 1914. Qualitatively there is not much difference between the nationalism of social-democratic parties today and their social-patriotism of 1914. The internationalism of the communist camp in the Stalinist and post-Stalinist, Khrushchevite and post-Khrushchevite period has been more or less spurious and has reflected only a certain *Konjunktur*; it was dictated by the state of diplomatic relations between Russia and the West.

In China, in Russia, and in Eastern Europe there is a rising tide of nationalism. Yet, side by side, we can sense a new upsurge of internationalism. The tug of war between nationalism and internationalism, the perennial conflict between national egoism and international solidarity, becomes more and more visible.

The wave of nationalism is, of course, one of the after-effects of Stalinism. Struggling with his last illness, Lenin denounced Stalinism as the *dzierzhymorda*, the great brute and bully reminiscent of the old tsarist times. Full of Great Russian pride and chauvinism, the *dzierzhymorda* came back to kick and insult the small nations; and to this the small nations replied with an intense, at times morbid, yet understandable nationalism. It is often said of the Jews that, having suffered so much persecution, they are oversensitive in their Jewish pride. In this sense all the nations of Eastern Europe are like the Jews; they have suffered, they have been humiliated, and they react with suspicion and mistrust against the Russians. And this reaction is as strong among the communists as among the noncommunists, whatever the outward show of solidarity may be. This explains the events of 1956, the Gomulka upheaval in Poland, and the civil war in Hungary. The *dzierzhymorda*, the Great Russian bully of whom Lenin spoke, still persisted in the much milder Khrushchev when he suddenly withdrew all economic aid from China, bringing the whole Chinese economy to the brink of collapse.

Lenin had a premonition even of this, when, on his deathbed, in the so-called remarks on nationalities, he wrote: "If we behave like the old Russian gendarme, the old Russian bully, we will pay for it in China, we will pay for it in India, we will harm ourselves because we shall become discredited in the eyes of all the nations of awakening Asia." But Lenin's warning went unheeded and still goes unheeded.

But even if the people who ruled from Moscow and Peking were all internationalists without blemish, a socialist revolution on such a huge part of the globe and embracing so great a segment of humanity would still present them with a tremendously difficult problem, vast in dimensions, and often tragic in its implications. In one camp there are the Czechs, the East Germans, the Russians, with their high standard of living; and there are also the Vietnamese and the Chinese who still carry the burden of millennia of poverty and illiteracy. The development and advance of these post-capitalist societies is taking place simultaneously on many different levels of civilization, amid dissimilar social structures, against a background of diverse and conflicting national traditions. In such circumstances, national conflicts and antagonisms are bound to erupt, even if at the head of these national entities stand paragons of all international virtues. There would still remain tensions and animosities, even if they had all agreed on an equalization of material resources—though obviously this would not be the right way to proceed, for socialism cannot be achieved by lowering the standard of living of a highly developed nation. Some sacrifices on the part of the richer nations must, in communism, be made, but even these would not at a stroke remove all sources of potential conflicts.

When Marx and his adherents proclaimed internationalism as the duty and ethics of socialists, they perceived, so to speak, first of all what should be the climate of the labor movement and, secondly, the ultimate outcome of the development towards a new society. Socialists must be internationalists even if their working classes are not;

socialists must also understand the nationalism of the masses, but only in the way in which a doctor understands the weakness or the illness of his patient. Socialists should be aware of that nationalism, but, like nurses, they should wash their hands twenty times over whenever they approach an area of the labor movement infected by it.

It was Marx's idea that *in socialism* there would be no national conflicts: *in socialism* is here the operative term. If one were to assume that Russia is already a socialist country, that China has already established socialism, then, of course, one would be entitled to conclude that an internationalist socialist society was a phantasm. The truth is that neither Russia nor China are socialist: theirs are the postcapitalist societies which still carry within themselves the heritage of capitalism and contain the elements of an even more backward—feudal and prefeudal—civilization. They carried out their revolutions in isolation from the developed modern civilization of the West, meeting only with the hostility of the Western bourgeoisie and even, to some extent, the Western working classes. The outside world condemned these revolutions to stew in the juice of their backwardness. What is the wonder that tensions persist, conflicts recur, and nationalism raises its head? But it would be a mistake to underrate the strength of the internationalist trend which comes to the fore now and again. It shows itself mainly in the desire to do away with Russian chauvinism and with the domination of one nation by another, and with the striving to establish a genuine international division of labor within the communist bloc. At this moment we are witnessing the disintegration of the old forms of the communist movement, the disintegration of Stalinism, and the revolt against the domination of that movement by any single party. This “centrifugal dispersal” is preferable to the puppet-like existence of communist parties and to their integration in a puppet-like manner. The disintegration of a nonexistent shadow International is in itself a progressive and healthy phenomenon, provided that it is followed by a reintegration of

the labor movement on the basis of international socialism.

From this survey of the century of the Internationals we can draw one lesson only: that the idea of internationalism is, after all, more important, more vital, more relevant than the Internationals that succeed each other, flourish, then decay and die away. The Internationals come and go; internationalism remains the vital principle of a new world; and even among the wreckage of the Internationals I still believe that the idea of internationalism will grow and flourish like a plant that grows and blossoms amid ruins.