

Fourth International Statement on

# CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Imperialism and the Soviet bureaucracy in crisis

Scottish nationalism  
and revisionism

History of the  
Third International

Insurrection or  
democratism

Book  
Reviews



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Fourth International

**186a Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4**

Editors: Tom Kemp, Cliff Slaughter

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# EDITORIAL

1969 will undoubtedly mark a decisive stage in the crisis of international capitalism, a stage which must produce an enormous upsurge in the class struggle throughout Europe and North America.

This stage is marked, essentially, by the new relationship between American and European capital. The boom of the post-war years was sustained above all by the strength of American capital, reflected in the pre-eminent position of the dollar as the leading world currency. From 1945 onwards, America was able to intervene at every critical stage and shore up the weaker capitalist economies of Western Europe. This strength was decisive, producing a general, if uneven, expansion in the world economy on which the stability of each capitalist state rested.

Recent months have witnessed a fundamental evolution in these relationships. No longer is the 'strength' of American capital and the dollar sufficient to overcome the mounting and acute problems of the European economy. Furthermore, in order to 'improve' its balance of payments position and 'strengthen' the dollar, American imperialism now requires to launch an unprecedentedly severe economic and financial war against Europe, a war which it is in the course of actively preparing.

The fundamental weaknesses of the dollar which make this onslaught necessary can be traced back to the late 1950s. It was at this time that the American balance of payments surplus began to disappear, to be replaced by an increasingly large deficit. The massive responsibilities which rested on the shoulders of American

capital—calling for large military and 'aid' expenditure overseas—had begun to take their toll. The problem was seriously aggravated by the massive export of private capital abroad, especially into Europe. This was necessary in order to avoid pressure upon the rate of profit in the United States.

Despite some attempts under Kennedy to ease the crisis by squeezing the 'underdeveloped' countries in the early 1960s, little was done to tackle the root of the problem.

From 1964 American policy was designed to sustain sterling through massive loans and credits made available to the Wilson government. In doing this the Johnson administration was largely concerned with the crisis which would ensue for the dollar should sterling be forced to devalue. The November 1967 devaluation of the pound thus marked a decisive stage in the evolution of the crisis. Not only was it a major blow at the economic and financial policies of the Labour government, it was also a severe setback to the strategy of American capital.

From November 1967 onwards, the dollar was in the front line of the currency crisis. Johnson's State of the Union message in January of last year recognized this.

Johnson made proposals for tax increases to halt inflation, for strict limitation on foreign tourism and for heavier taxation on capital invested abroad. But these measures proved totally inadequate to halt the wave of speculation against the dollar which followed sterling devaluation. By March, the dollar itself came perilously near to devaluation in the panic

buying of gold—much of it by American financial interests. The 'two-tier' system which was hurriedly produced could solve nothing. It was a temporary measure taken until the divided American ruling class could work out a more decisive strategy.

No sooner had this 'arrangement' been worked out than a new force was to enter the scene—the working class of Western Europe. The May-June events in France enormously aggravated an already serious situation. Despite the betrayals of leadership by Stalinism, the de Gaulle regime was forced to make large wage concessions to the working class. These concessions, through their impact upon the balance of payments, produced a serious crisis for the French franc which came to a head in the closing months of 1968. This crisis now in turn threatens the stability of the entire monetary system of Western Europe.

Although loans were made available to the de Gaulle regime, no solution was forthcoming from the bankers and industrialists. In fact disunity and division amongst the various capitalist interests threatened to dominate. Despite pressure from the Americans, British and French, the German government refused to revalue the Deutsche-mark. It was hoped that this would at least have brought a temporary respite to the enormous speculative movement of capital.

The abortive series of talks at Bonn and Basle in November and December of 1968 indicate deep rifts within the capitalist class of almost every major capitalist country. In Germany, for example, the bankers appeared to favour a mark revaluation, while the industrialists opposed such a move, fearing that it would price them out of key export markets on which the entire German economic miracle has rested.

Similarly in the United States. There are now deep divisions between the economic advisers of Johnson on the one hand and those of the incoming Nixon administration on the other. After giving repeated assurances that the existing dollar price of gold would be defended to the end, Nixon's advisers have pointedly refused to commit themselves to the continuation of such

a policy. But a dollar devaluation, which is now widely feared would lead to a major currency war on a far higher level than in the disastrous 'devaluation cycle' of the 1930s.

Alongside this must go an increasing penetration by the Americans of European capital. The taxation on capital export has led, over the past year, to the establishment of innumerable American banks in London and other European financial centres. American capital is now embarked upon economic war with its weaker European rivals which will mean the elimination, rationalization and centralization of large areas of European capital under American dominance.

This, then, is the immediate implication of this new stage in the crisis: the intensification of the trade war between all the major capitalist powers. Already France and Britain are embarked upon vicious deflationary policies to defend their currencies and a similar policy of deflation, tighter credit, restrictions on imports and a drive for more exports will mark the policies of the Nixon administration. With three major capitalist countries involved simultaneously in deflationary programmes there must be a severe check on the rate of expansion in world trade. This is now recognized by the most optimistic of capitalist commentators.

Superimposed upon this crisis is an impending breakdown in the world monetary system. The plans devised by Keynes and others at Bretton Woods at the end of the war are now on the very edge of disintegration. From March onwards the 'unofficial' price of gold has rarely fallen below 40 dollars an ounce. This itself is equivalent to an effective 15 per cent devaluation of the dollar. In these circumstances the trend towards a formal dollar devaluation is irreversible.

At the centre of the crisis stands the working class. Each capitalist class of Europe now stands alone in battle against its own working class, in a desperate struggle for survival. Only through a decisive confrontation with the working class can this crisis be 'solved'. De Gaulle's massive attacks upon the French working class, together

with his warnings about 'indiscipline' show the way for the ruling class of Western Europe as a whole. In Britain, the ruling class is also preparing for massive political changes. Despite its plans for further attacks on the unions, there is no doubt that a decisive section of this ruling class is preparing to get rid of the Wilson government. Any major confrontation between the unions and the state would almost certainly provoke another sterling devaluation but would also bring about the Labour government's downfall. A General Election would see the return of a Tory government with a substantial majority ready to carry out extreme right-wing policies.

At the same time, the working class faces this unified economic and political crisis after almost 25 years of boom during which it has forced up its wages considerably compared with those of

the 1930s. To solve its crisis the capitalist class must endeavour to break the resistance of the working class. 1969 must be a decisive year for the working class in Western Europe as it enters this new stage of its development, with it many rich political lessons.

For the revolutionary movement it is not enough merely to rest on this undoubted strength of the working class. This power of the working class can only be realized given a successful struggle against the false and treacherous leadership of Stalinism and social-democracy. This was the lesson of France. 1969 must be the year in which the parties of the International Committee of the Fourth International respond in a fresh and urgent way to the new stage in the class struggle which the intense crisis of capitalism has already opened up.

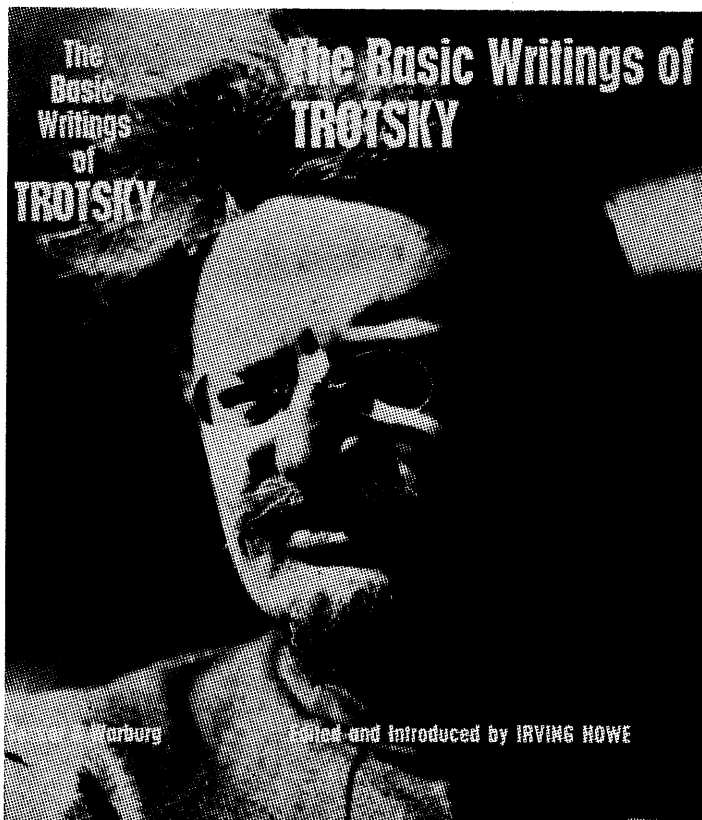
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**IN OFFERING** for sale at 25s. 'The Basic Writings of Trotsky', New Park Publications are providing Marxists with a real bargain. This volume, priced normally at 42s., gives extracts from nearly every one of Trotsky's major works and also includes a number of less well-known pieces. Excellently produced, it covers much of the enormous range of Trotsky's writings, from the 1905 Revolution to the fight against the Moscow Trials. Thus we get a picture of the career of a revolutionary and the destiny of the Russian Revolution itself. Among the passages not readily available elsewhere are 'Thermidor and Anti-Semitism' and an essay on the French novelist Céline. Previously untranslated into English are an extract from '1905', a tribute to Gogol and a passage from Trotsky's unfinished 'Life of Lenin'. Anyone just beginning to read Trotsky's work would do well to buy this book at once.

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# **Imperialism and the Soviet bureaucracy in crisis**

## **Political revolution in Czechoslovakia**

**Statement by the  
International Committee of the  
Fourth International  
21 October 1968**

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# Unconditional support for the Czechoslovak people and working class

## The political revolution in Czechoslovakia

THE NATURE of the Soviet bureaucracy has not changed. The Czech proletariat is experiencing in a very bitter way just how much the slick 'theories' of the middle class and the renegades from the Fourth International about 'the gradual democratization and re-absorption of the Soviet bureaucracy' through a succession of reforms are really worth.

The Soviet bureaucracy and the satellite bureaucracies of the Democratic Republic of Germany, Poland, Hungary and Bulgaria sent their armies to occupy Czechoslovakia in order to crush the Czech working class.

With the dislocation of the Czech bureaucratic apparatus, which was dependent on Moscow, the way was opened for the political revolution. The working class was already formulating its demands. It was able to establish its own methods of organization and political expression. Such are the beginnings— from now on the classical beginnings—of the political revolution, which the workers in those countries where the capitalists have been expropriated of the principal means of production must carry out in order to seize political power, drive out the parasitic bureaucracy and run the planned economy in their own interests.

The Hungarian revolution of workers' councils was coming to life again on Czech soil.

What determined the armed intervention of the Soviet bureaucracy was neither a threat of the restoration of capitalism nor so-called 'Soviet imperialism'. It was a question of a brutally repressive political action in self-defence. The development of the political revolution cannot be confined to Czechoslovakia, its impetus drives it towards Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

In struggling for political power, the Czech proletariat disturbed the precarious balance of class forces in Europe and internationally. The crisis of the bureaucratic regime in Czechoslovakia is an expression of the linked crisis of imperialism and the Soviet

bureaucracy. It means that the working class is taking up the struggle for political power throughout Europe, and that it tends to merge into a single process the social revolution in the capitalist countries and the political revolution against the parasitic bureaucracies, and thus lays the foundations for the United Socialist States of Europe.

The general strike in France and the beginnings of the political revolution in Czechoslovakia re-introduce into the struggle for socialism its real content—universality.

The armed intervention of the Soviet bureaucracy against the Czech proletariat is the iron fist of the counter-revolution, which attempts to smash the drive of the working class towards socialism. Neither the Soviet bureaucracy nor imperialism can tolerate the fire of proletarian revolution being kindled right in the centre of Europe, no more than they could permit the French general strike to be victorious.

In intervening militarily in Czechoslovakia, the Soviet bureaucracy acts as the agent of international counter-revolution. It intervened there for the same reason that it supports de Gaulle, one of the main factors in the 'maintenance of order' in Europe.

## The 'norms' of the counter-revolutionary Soviet bureaucracy

THE MOSCOW diktat imposed on the leaders of the Czech state and Communist Party specified that :

'An agreement has been reached on the measures to be taken with a view to normalizing the situation as quickly as possible in the Socialist Republic of Czechoslovakia. The Czech leaders have informed the Soviet party of the measures they are now taking for this purpose.'

What 'normalizing the situation' in the language of the Soviet bureaucracy really means is tragically illustrated by its entire history: it means reconstructing, at any cost and by any methods, the

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At the Bratislava talks (above) the Kremlin bureaucracy demanded the 'normalization' of the situation in Czechoslovakia, the real meaning of which was seen some weeks later when Soviet tanks rolled into Prague.



bureaucratic machine, which weighs down like a millstone on the proletariat, restoring its rigidity and its monolithism, putting back into shape this apparatus which is completely subordinate to the Kremlin.

The Soviet bureaucracy is a parasitic layer of society. It came into existence as a result of the delay in the world proletarian revolution. The absence of revolutionary parties comparable with Lenin's Bolshevik Party and the betrayal of the social-democratic parties, especially in the economically developed countries, saved capitalism in Europe and internationally, and isolated the Russian proletariat, already relatively weak and worn out by four years of imperialist war plus three years of civil war. This resulted in a contradictory situation.

Capitalism was expropriated in the Soviet Union, and yet the working class had not the strength to hold on to political power. A parasitic layer took shape, which monopolized political power and ran, in its own interests, by deforming them, the social and economic forms which came out of the October Revolution. The bureaucracy's management of the revolutionary conquests of October constitutes a contradiction, a constant source of economic and social convulsions, which necessarily find a reflection in its own ranks. The bureaucracy, social and historical monster, is forever 'normalizing the situation'.

When it first came into existence and became conscious of its own specific interests, the bureaucracy secured its rule by 'normalizing the situation', by destroying Lenin's party under the aegis of Stalin. It reduced to silence and excluded from the Bolshevik Party all opposition to its rule. Its power and privileges are incompatible with the existence of any form of political expression that could be used by the working class.

The exclusion, imprisonment and banishment of the generation of revolutionaries who carried through the October Revolution, of those leaders who worked closely with Lenin, was not enough. Their liquidation and political disgrace were indispensable to the rule of the counter-revolutionary bureaucracy. This is the reason for the deportations, falsified trials and downright assassinations of the 1930s, the decade during which Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin and so many others were murdered, judicially or otherwise, and which led up to the assassination of Leon Trotsky in August 1940.

But the fundamental contradiction—that between bureaucratic rule and the conquests of October—continues to operate and is expressed within the bureaucracy. The purges extended to whole layers of the bureaucracy. Even top leaders, including Stalin's 'companions', were struck down. 'Normalization of the situation' required that this be carried out: any crack in the apparatus—and cracks are constantly appearing—would allow the proletariat to find its own political expression.

The extension of the social and economic relations of October to the East European states, following on the disintegration of German imperialism

and the thrust forward of the masses at the end of the Second World War, added to the instability of the Soviet bureaucracy and deepened its internal contradictions. From 1947-1953, the bloody purges on the Communist Parties of Eastern Europe, parties which, nonetheless, had taken power as agents of the Kremlin, were the means by which the 'situation was normalized', according to the requirements of the parasitic Soviet bureaucracy.

In Russia itself Stalin had continually to 'normalize the situation'. The liquidation of the Leningrad group', amongst others, was but a prelude to a gigantic new series of blood purges of extraordinary brutality, which Stalin was preparing on the eve of his death, as shown by the arrest of the 'white-coated assassins' and the preparation of their 'trials'.

The crisis which erupted within the Soviet bureaucracy on Stalin's death clearly demonstrated what has now become a law of the class struggle: whenever a breach is made in the international apparatus of Stalinism, the proletariat surges forward and sets in motion the process of the political revolution.

The revolutionary movements which took place in June 1953 in East Germany, in Poland in October 1956, and the Hungarian revolution of workers' councils in November 1956, were swallowed up in cracks in the apparatus. 'Normalization of the situation' in East Germany and Hungary was secured by the tanks of the bureaucracy. Bloody repression and massive purges were indispensable, if the bureaucratic apparatus, dismantled by the action of the working class, was to be re-built. In Poland the apparatus was momentarily shaken, but it managed to regain control and 'normalize the situation' and consolidate itself, under the leadership of the 'liberal' Gomulka, because of the crushing of the Hungarian revolution by the Soviet bureaucracy.

## The Moscow Diktat

MOSCOW'S diktat is unequivocal :

'It has been declared by the Czech Party that the entire work of the organs of the Party and the state will be directed, by every means, towards the application of effective measures to ensure socialist rule, the leading role of the working class and the Communist Party, the development and strengthening of friendly relations with the Soviet people and the whole socialist community.'

Nothing remains of the impudent lies of 'Pravda', or Malik's statements to the United Nations claiming that the Warsaw Pact troops were occupying Czechoslovakia at the request of the Czech government, to fight against the restoration of capitalism and imperialist penetration.

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Soviet people' are so many cynical euphemisms for: restoration of bureaucratic rule, re-construction of the monolithic apparatus, unconditional submission to the Kremlin—conditions without which the situation cannot be 'normalized'. The rule of the Soviet bureaucracy is incompatible with the existence of political liberties which would allow the proletariat to organize itself and express itself politically.

Freedom of the press, the elements of political life providing the masses with the opportunity to organize politically, had been imposed on the Czech bureaucracy, which was breaking up.

'The basic Leninist principles of party organization, i.e. principles of democratic centralism, and unity of the party on the ideological and organizational front were denied in practice. The party was on the point of legalizing factional groups from "autonomous" organizations with practically no connection with one another,' wrote 'Pravda'.

The Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was due to open on September 9. Proposed statutes recognized in practice the right of factions within the party. The apparatus was breaking up, the single-party system could not be maintained. The working class was in a position to organize and express itself politically.

It was winning the rights of workers' democracy within the trade unions, the right to strike, demanded by numerous manifestos and declarations, echoes of which are to be found in the '2,000-word' manifesto, a paragraph of which reads as follows:

'Under dreary-looking headlines a hard battle is being reflected in the press—the battle of democracy versus soft jobs. The workers . . . can intervene in this battle by electing the right people to management and workers' councils. And . . . they can help themselves best by electing as their trade union representatives natural leaders, able and honourable men without regard to party affiliation.

'Let us demand the departure of people who abused their power, damaged public property, acted dishonourably or brutally. Ways must be found of bringing them to resign. To mention a few: public criticism, resolutions, demonstrations, collections to buy presents for them on their retirement, strikes and picketing at their front doors.

'Let us form committees for the defence of free speech. At our meetings let us have our own staffs for ensuring order . . .'

But if this quotation of the '2,000-words' manifesto reflects the pressure of the will of the masses to regain their socialist conquests and from that point of view expresses their needs and therefore represents a call for the mobilization of the masses, the International Committee of the Fourth International also sees in that the expression of the internal contradictions of the political revolution on its way.

Inadequate and ambiguous as it is in its content and in the slogans it puts forward, contradictory in some of its aspects to the needs of the political revolution, the '2,000-words' manifesto would only repre-

sent a stage that the masses and the vanguard should overcome through the struggle for the construction of the revolutionary party on the basis of the programme of the Fourth International.

The political revolution had begun, in the course of which the proletariat would confront the remains of the parasitic bureaucracy, and the remains of the expropriated and now re-emerging bourgeoisie, in a situation where the balance of forces would be weighted heavily in its favour because of the collective ownership of the principal means of production in Czechoslovakia, the severity of the linked crisis of imperialism and the Soviet bureaucracy, at its sharpest in Europe, right after the general strike in France. It was necessary to crush the Czech proletariat, the vanguard for the time being of the international proletariat.

## The Czech working class, the heart of the resistance

BUT THE FIRST effect the entry of Soviet troops had was to complete the disintegration of the apparatus. Illustrating the real relationship of forces between the different layers of society in Czechoslovakia, the Soviet bureaucracy could not find a single bureaucrat to openly take its side.

Above all, the resistance was organized from the factories. The working class was the backbone, the class force behind which the resistance of the entire Czech people took shape.

The 14th Congress of the Czech CP, an emergency Congress, was held in a factory, under the protection of the working class. At this point the Czech Communist Party disintegrated as a Party directly linked to Moscow by breaking its links with Moscow. It tended towards becoming a centrist party.

The 14th Congress of the Czech CP was thus forced to respond to the pressure and resistance of the working class. The Kremlin bureaucracy, to achieve its aims, must now re-build a new Stalinist party depending directly on the Kremlin. It must massively purge the Czech CP of its members and cadres who at a decisive moment, giving in to the pressure of the masses, here led to a break of the Czech CP with the Kremlin bureaucracy.

The Czechoslovak CP, which was breaking from the Kremlin at the 14th Congress, did not become a revolutionary party, but disintegration of the Czech CP and bureaucracy was leading in the 14th Congress to the formation of trends which were tending towards expressing the programme of political revolution, an integral part of the world socialist revolution.

Dubcek, who for a time vacillated under the pressure of the masses and then refused to break with the Kremlin bureaucracy, has led to the capitulation of his tendency to the Kremlin.

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'Let us demand the departure of people who abused their power, damaged public property, acted dishonourably or brutally. Ways must be found of bringing them to resign. To mention a few: public criticism, resolutions, demonstrations, collections to buy presents for them on their retirement, strikes and picketing at their front doors.

'Let us form committees for the defence of free speech. At our meetings let us have our own staffs for ensuring order . . .'

But if this quotation of the '2,000-words' manifesto reflects the pressure of the will of the masses to regain their socialist conquests and from that point of view expresses their needs and therefore represents a call for the mobilization of the masses, the International Committee of the Fourth International also sees in that the expression of the internal contradictions of the political revolution on its way.

Inadequate and ambiguous as it is in its content and in the slogans it puts forward, contradictory in some of its aspects to the needs of the political revolution, the '2,000-words' manifesto would only repre-

sent a stage that the masses and the vanguard should overcome through the struggle for the construction of the revolutionary party on the basis of the programme of the Fourth International.

The political revolution had begun, in the course of which the proletariat would confront the remains of the parasitic bureaucracy, and the remains of the expropriated and now re-emerging bourgeoisie, in a situation where the balance of forces would be weighted heavily in its favour because of the collective ownership of the principal means of production in Czechoslovakia, the severity of the linked crisis of imperialism and the Soviet bureaucracy, at its sharpest in Europe, right after the general strike in France. It was necessary to crush the Czech proletariat, the vanguard for the time being of the international proletariat.

## The Czech working class, the heart of the resistance

BUT THE FIRST effect the entry of Soviet troops had was to complete the disintegration of the apparatus. Illustrating the real relationship of forces between the different layers of society in Czechoslovakia, the Soviet bureaucracy could not find a single bureaucrat to openly take its side.

Above all, the resistance was organized from the factories. The working class was the backbone, the class force behind which the resistance of the entire Czech people took shape.

The 14th Congress of the Czech CP, an emergency Congress, was held in a factory, under the protection of the working class. At this point the Czech Communist Party disintegrated as a Party directly linked to Moscow by breaking its links with Moscow. It tended towards becoming a centrist party.

The 14th Congress of the Czech CP was thus forced to respond to the pressure and resistance of the working class. The Kremlin bureaucracy, to achieve its aims, must now re-build a new Stalinist party depending directly on the Kremlin. It must massively purge the Czech CP of its members and cadres who at a decisive moment, giving in to the pressure of the masses, here led to a break of the Czech CP with the Kremlin bureaucracy.

The Czechoslovak CP, which was breaking from the Kremlin at the 14th Congress, did not become a revolutionary party, but disintegration of the Czech CP and bureaucracy was leading in the 14th Congress to the formation of trends which were tending towards expressing the programme of political revolution, an integral part of the world socialist revolution.

Dubcek, who for a time vacillated under the pressure of the masses and then refused to break with the Kremlin bureaucracy, has led to the capitulation of his tendency to the Kremlin.

The Czech working class could only take its place at the head of the peasantry and the socialist intelligentsia along the path of independent revolutionary leadership and the political revolution. In the subsequent days, Dubcek and the section of the bureaucracy in which the workers reposed their confidence because they gave way to the pressure of the masses, became the instrument of the next stage of the domination of the Kremlin. This was an inevitable consequence of their political position. Only the independent power of the working class in workers' councils, led by a revolutionary party, could have transformed the situation.

The main advantage for the bureaucracy lies in the uneven development of the processes of political revolution in Eastern Europe, and of social revolution, the absence of revolutionary parties and an International, as expressions of the unity of the struggle of the European and the world working class, able to inspire class solidarity in the international proletariat and unite its struggle against imperialism and the Soviet bureaucracy.

The concentration of Soviet forces, supported by imperialism, the fear of a bloody holocaust, added to the vicious methods of physical pressure already employed by Stalin to force a number of party members to capitulate, allowed the bureaucracy to impose the Moscow diktat on Dubcek and his group.

The statements made by the Czech leaders who counter-signed the Moscow diktat prove that the Moscow bureaucrats employed highwaymen's methods. On his return from Moscow, Dubcek was so worn out, mentally and physically, that he had to interrupt his speech on the radio to recover.

Arrested by the Kremlin, Dubcek spent hours in solitary confinement. He left the prison only to be taken straight into the room where the Stalinist bureaucrats were sitting. He may even have been beaten and tortured. Anyway, Simkovsky's speech on August 30 make it quite clear:

'We knew that the world sympathized with us, but that the great powers would prefer to accept a compromise.'

In other words, imperialism was giving the green light to the Soviet bureaucracy to impose its diktat.

'We could have rejected any compromise (the diktat) and let things develop with all that that entails for the sovereignty of the state, political rights, the economy, including the possibility of lives being lost (i.e. a bloodbath). Please believe me that our personal fate in these circumstances became a secondary consideration, although we did not cease to worry about it.'

In other words: 'we were put through it and our lives depended on accepting the "compromise", and

although this was a secondary consideration, it did play a part in our acceptance of the diktat'.

## 'By every means at its disposal'?—a bloodbath!

THERE CAN be no doubt about the meaning of re-establishing a 'normal situation', 'by every means at its disposal'. The leaders of the Czech state and party are held as hostages by the Kremlin. They have to cover up for re-building the apparatus which takes its orders from the Kremlin. Their moral authority will be used to repair the shackles to hold down the Czech working class.

The reconstruction of the bureaucratic apparatus dependent on Moscow demands the use of hitherto unparalleled repressive measures. The whole of the state machine must be purged and re-cast. Even if the external trappings of the Czech CP are preserved, there has to be a new party built.

Those party members, factory workers and trade unionists who organized the resistance, have to be purged and smashed. The intellectuals must likewise be purged and broken. There is not a single aspect of social, economic and political life that has not to be purged and put back in the shackles.

Of course, the remains of the Czech apparatus will be assembled and used for this purpose by the Kremlin. The scope of the purges and the repression yet to be undertaken is revealed by 'Pravda', which on August 31 called for 'The liquidation of 40,000 nerve centres of counter-revolution', whilst 'Neues Deutschland' of the same day declared 'The Czech counter-revolutionaries are preparing for a lengthy underground struggle'.

Indeed, no matter what cover is employed, it is the Kremlin machine that will have to take in hand the state apparatus and the party apparatus and exercise a real protectorate by a system of white terror. The Minister for Internal Affairs has already been sacked, and according to 'L'Humanité' of September 2:

'The second Minister for Internal Affairs in Czechoslovakia, Jan Lamba, committed suicide on Friday . . . He had previously refused to hand over to the Russians the dossiers and documents belonging to his Ministry.'

A whole people, of which the decisive social force is the working class, has to be atomized by the Soviet



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bureaucracy. It can only achieve this by utilizing, in cold blood, the same methods and means that it used, in an emergency situation, against the Hungarian Revolution of workers' councils. The sycophants and the traitors are satisfied with the 'Moscow compromise'. Whatever may have been the reasons impelling the leaders of the Czech state and CP to ratify the Moscow diktat, it cannot be ratified by the international proletariat, working-class militants, or by unions and parties claiming to be socialist.

The fight has not finished, it is just beginning. More than ever the IC of the FI calls for:

#### UNCONDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE CZECHOSLOVAK PEOPLE AND WORKING CLASS.

We must fight for:

- IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL OF THE OCCUPYING TROOPS;
- THE RIGHT OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK PEOPLE TO DECIDE ITS OWN FUTURE;
- FOR WORKERS' COUNCILS. FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

## Bankruptcy of the 'theory' of Socialism in one country

(II)

### The occupation of Czechoslovakia: part of a whole political approach

THE FI takes up its political position in relation to the international class struggle. It has no interests other than those of the world working class and the proletarian revolution. Despite the criminal Stalin-Hitler Pact, the FI refused to condemn the occupation of part of Poland by the Red Army.

At the outbreak of a war, in which German imperialism would inevitably attack Soviet Russia, although it was entirely Stalin's responsibility that this threat was hanging over the Soviet Union, the occupation of part of Poland was indispensable to the defence of the conquests of October. From exactly the same standpoint the IC of the FI calls for unconditional support for the Czech people and Czech proletariat against the Soviet bureaucracy.

The occupation of Czechoslovakia is an integral part of the politics of the Soviet bureaucracy, politics which are determined by the fear that the crisis of imperialism and its own crisis may bring about the social revolution and the political revolution, particularly in Europe. These politics can only assist pro-capitalist forces in the Soviet Union and the Eastern European states, as well as strengthening international imperialism.

Caught in the iron grip of the conflict between the fundamental class forces, the proletariat and the capitalist class, the Soviet bureaucracy attempts to prolong its privileged existence by retreating step by step before imperialism in Eastern Europe and the

Soviet Union, whilst at the same time unconditionally and 'gratuitously' supporting the bourgeoisie and imperialism against the working class throughout the world.

For a long time now, the Soviet bureaucracy has manoeuvred between the two main classes on the international arena and played on inter-imperialist rivalries. The 'theory' of 'socialism in one country', the way the bureaucracy runs the planned economy, the line of 'peaceful co-existence', all express the attempts by the Soviet bureaucracy to confine in a strait-jacket the social antagonisms within the Soviet Union, and then in the Eastern European countries, and to manoeuvre between these forces on the international arena.

These politics had reached their peak at the very moment that they were becoming impossible and dragging the Soviet Union towards the abyss. Simultaneous with the arrest of the 'white-coated assassins', heralding a new wave of purges, Stalin published *Economic Problems of Socialism*. In this work, he explained that following on the transformation of the economic and social structure of the countries of Eastern Europe and the Chinese Revolution, two independent world markets had come into existence. He also stated that the law of value no longer operated within the Soviet economy.

He predicted that the distortions in the Soviet economy would be resolved by 'communist public works' and proposed to do away with the backward state of agriculture by setting up 'agro-cities'. Bureaucratic ravings have reached their peak, but what seems—and, indeed is—pure madness, corresponds to a frantic effort to hold in check the immense social and economic distortions in the Soviet Union and the Eastern European countries it controls.

The Soviet bureaucracy is a parasitic excrescence which arose from the unstable equilibrium between the classes resulting from the First World War, the

bureaucracy. It can only achieve this by utilizing, in cold blood, the same methods and means that it used, in an emergency situation, against the Hungarian Revolution of workers' councils. The sycophants and the traitors are satisfied with the 'Moscow compromise'. Whatever may have been the reasons impelling the leaders of the Czech state and CP to ratify the Moscow diktat, it cannot be ratified by the international proletariat, working-class militants, or by unions and parties claiming to be socialist.

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The Soviet bureaucracy is a parasitic excrescence which arose from the unstable equilibrium between the classes resulting from the First World War, the

Russian Revolution and the isolation of the Revolution. It made this equilibrium into the 'norm'.

Stalin conceived the planned economy as a means of escaping from the world market and the international division of labour. He thought he could arbitrarily decide economic processes according to the wishes of an all-powerful bureaucracy. He thought he could neutralize the pressure of imperialism by playing a game of balancing between the various imperialist powers and using the international working class as a diplomatic instrument, through the control exercised by the international Stalinist apparatus.

As early as the first five-year plan, economic confusion and social antagonisms increased to an enormous extent in the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union was only saved from disaster by the social and political crisis and the explosive rivalries between the great imperialist powers stimulated by the economic crisis of 1929. There was a very heavy price to be paid, however.

The purges and the exterminations of the 1930s strengthened the social antagonisms which were becoming sharper in the Soviet Union and finding a reflection inside the bureaucracy.

The politics of manoeuvring between the big imperialist powers, the sterilization of the revolutionary struggles of the Chinese, German, French and Spanish proletariats to suit the diplomatic requirements of the Kremlin, the bureaucracy's fear of successful revolutionary struggles by the working class, particularly in the advanced countries, all these factors made it easy for imperialism to prepare the Second World War.

It was only the heroic resistance of the Russian working class and the effectiveness of the social and economic relations established by the October Revolution which made it possible for all the resources to be channelled into the war effort, and the divisions within imperialism, that saved the Soviet Union from being destroyed by German imperialism.

Paradoxically, at the end of the war, the bureaucracy reached the summit of its political power. To it accrued all the prestige of the victory of the Soviet Union over German imperialism. Whereas the Russian working class, exhausted by the war (20,000,000 dead), had not the strength to challenge the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union, Stalinism's international apparatus exercised a decisive influence over the European and world working class.

Finally, world imperialism urgently required its political assistance in holding back the mounting revolutionary tide in Europe and internationally. The occupation of the major part of Europe by German imperialism, and its collapse, in Asia the collapse of English, French and Dutch imperialisms confronted with Japanese imperialism, and of the latter in front of American imperialism, brought about a powerful revolutionary crisis.

Co-operation between the economic might of US imperialism and the political strength of the bureaucracy proved to be the only means of stemming the revolutionary flood-tide of the European and world

working class. The West European Communist Parties, controlled by the Kremlin, collaborated in restoring the bourgeois state. Through occupation and the canalization of the masses under its direct control in Eastern Europe, and through the division of the European working class, going right through the heart of Germany, the bureaucracy was able to exploit in its own interests the crisis of the capitalist class in those countries. All of this adds up to the politics of 'peaceful co-existence'.

## Bankruptcy of Stalinism

HOWEVER, US imperialism came out of the war considerably strengthened. German, Japanese and Italian imperialisms collapsed, British and French imperialisms were greatly weakened. The hegemony of US imperialism enabled it to discipline the weaker imperialist powers and force them to work out a relatively unified policy.

The economic, political and military pressure of world imperialism on the Soviet Union was about to be rapidly increased. The bureaucracy replied with the elimination by its own military-bureaucratic action of bourgeois elements in the Eastern European governments under its control. It completed the job of expropriating capitalism of the principal means of production. It subordinated the economy of Eastern Europe to the immediate needs of the bureaucratically-run Soviet economy. It put on real political shackles.

Dreading the prospect of proletarian revolution, particularly in the advanced countries, the Soviet bureaucracy embarked on a hopeless race with imperialism in the economic and military spheres, pillaging the economic resources of the Eastern European countries, accepting and reinforcing the separation from the world market and the international division of labour.

The policy of frantic industrialization was increasingly unsuited to the harmonious and balanced development of the productive forces of the Soviet Union and the Eastern European states. It was determined by the economic and political pressure of imperialism. Under these conditions social and national antagonisms were bound to increase to bursting point. At a time when the growth in the productive forces itself demanded increasing participation by the masses in working out and controlling socialist planning, planning necessarily became more bureaucratic and unreal, and as a result there was a huge increase in waste, irresponsibility, losses, malpractices, distortions, robbery, bungling and downright falsification. Even their successes were achieved at an enormous cost and were a further source of economic distortion.

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Science and art are not independent of society. They feed on the actual fabric of society and demand freedom of creation and expression. They are, as a result, channels for social criticism, even if indirect criticism, particularly in a transitional society, where a parasitic, counter-revolutionary bureaucracy has arisen on a base of socialist production relations.

The Soviet bureaucracy impedes the development of the productive forces, demanded by the new social relations, through bureaucratic management and by enclosing them in national boundaries. But science and art are nourished by the growth of the productive forces which they in turn fertilize. Their full flowering is continually blocked by obstacles placed there by the parasitic bureaucracy, which they must necessarily challenge.

Stalin's madness expressed the predicament of the Soviet bureaucracy, engaged in a hopeless race with imperialism and obliged to shackle the working class ever more tightly and brutally to silence all forms of expression, all potential powers of criticism, to weigh down more heavily on the countries under its rule. Stalin's death coincided with the necessity for a brutal re-assessment of its policies by the bureaucracy, if it was to avoid destroying itself in a wave of apocalyptic purges, which were themselves necessary to crush the social antagonisms, following on from a completely crazy economic policy, which had lost all contact with reality, as shown by the 'communist public works' which proposed to transform nature in order to resolve the economic crisis the origins of which were social.

## The New Course

WAS Stalin's death one of the consequences of the impasse reached by the bureaucracy, or was it the contingency which set in motion processes which had already matured? Whichever is true, it was the start of a profound revision of policy by the bureaucracy. Its previous course would, sooner or later, have brought it to catastrophe.

The content and the direction of the new policy can be defined simply as a search for a *modus vivendi* with imperialism, an attempt at integration into the world market and the international division of labour, revision of socialist planning to allow free play to the forces of the market, a change in the economic relations of the Soviet Union and the East European states so as to leave them correlatively a wider margin for direct participation in the world market and the international division of labour.

This policy was equivalent to a bankruptcy note for 'socialism in one country' and the bureaucratic conception of planning. It asserted itself with a series of jolts, the curve of its development was broken and irregular. Indeed, it was not a question of techniques, but of social relations expressing themselves in the economic sphere. It developed within the framework of the international class struggle, as both a manifestation and component part of this struggle.

The revision of the Soviet bureaucracy's policy gave rise to unremitting internal struggles and discord. The Stalinist apparatus nationally and internationally was cracking and giving way.

Stalin's death was the signal for enormous struggles within the bureaucracy, struggles which were constantly being renewed and which were all the more violent for taking place in the shadows, deep in the inner circles.

Malenkov, Beria, Bulganin, Molotov, Khrushchev, were successively eliminated. These confrontations corresponded to conflicts taking place at all levels of the bureaucracy and intensified the conflicts. These conflicts immediately assumed dramatic violence and scope in the East European countries. It was no accident. All the conditions were there, in profusion, to make the crisis of the bureaucracy at its most explosive in those countries.

## The caricature-bureaucracies

THE parasitic bureaucracies of Eastern Europe are artificially produced and imposed from outside by the Kremlin. Their national roots are weak. Even the Communist Parties have constantly to be purged, right up to the highest levels: big purges like those of the 1930s were inflicted on the parties in 1948: the Rajk, Slansky, Kostov trials, etc.

At the same time, each national bureaucracy has its own specific interests and each reproduces in the form of a caricature the traits of the Soviet bureaucracy. Thus, each bureaucracy, over and above the Soviet bureaucracy's plunderings, goes in for 'socialism in one country' in its own separate country, and goes in for fantastic industrialization plans tending towards self-sufficient economies. The separation of these economies from the rest of Europe and the world has had catastrophic effects.

The economy of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) is clearly only a fraction of the German economy, which is itself extremely dependent on the world economy and the international division of labour. The Czech economy occupies a position of first importance on the world market and within the international division of labour. Poland, which is economically backward and essentially agricultural,

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Science and art are not independent of society. They feed on the actual fabric of society and demand freedom of creation and expression. They are, as a result, channels for social criticism, even if indirect criticism, particularly in a transitional society, where a parasitic, counter-revolutionary bureaucracy has arisen on a base of socialist production relations.

The Soviet bureaucracy impedes the development of the productive forces, demanded by the new social relations, through bureaucratic management and by enclosing them in national boundaries. But science and art are nourished by the growth of the productive forces which they in turn fertilize. Their full flowering is continually blocked by obstacles placed there by the parasitic bureaucracy, which they must necessarily challenge.

Stalin's madness expressed the predicament of the Soviet bureaucracy, engaged in a hopeless race with imperialism and obliged to shackle the working class ever more tightly and brutally to silence all forms of expression, all potential powers of criticism, to weigh down more heavily on the countries under its rule. Stalin's death coincided with the necessity for a brutal re-assessment of its policies by the bureaucracy, if it was to avoid destroying itself in a wave of apocalyptic purges, which were themselves necessary to crush the social antagonisms, following on from a completely crazy economic policy, which had lost all contact with reality, as shown by the 'communist public works' which proposed to transform nature in order to resolve the economic crisis the origins of which were social.

## The New Course

WAS Stalin's death one of the consequences of the impasse reached by the bureaucracy, or was it the contingency which set in motion processes which had already matured? Whichever is true, it was the start of a profound revision of policy by the bureaucracy. Its previous course would, sooner or later, have brought it to catastrophe.

The content and the direction of the new policy can be defined simply as a search for a *modus vivendi* with imperialism, an attempt at integration into the world market and the international division of labour, revision of socialist planning to allow free play to the forces of the market, a change in the economic relations of the Soviet Union and the East European states so as to leave them correlatively a wider margin for direct participation in the world market and the international division of labour.

This policy was equivalent to a bankruptcy note for 'socialism in one country' and the bureaucratic conception of planning. It asserted itself with a series of jolts, the curve of its development was broken and irregular. Indeed, it was not a question of techniques, but of social relations expressing themselves in the economic sphere. It developed within the framework of the international class struggle, as both a manifestation and component part of this struggle.

The revision of the Soviet bureaucracy's policy gave rise to unremitting internal struggles and discord. The Stalinist apparatus nationally and internationally was cracking and giving way.

Stalin's death was the signal for enormous struggles within the bureaucracy, struggles which were constantly being renewed and which were all the more violent for taking place in the shadows, deep in the inner circles.

Malenkov, Beria, Bulganin, Molotov, Khrushchev, were successively eliminated. These confrontations corresponded to conflicts taking place at all levels of the bureaucracy and intensified the conflicts. These conflicts immediately assumed dramatic violence and scope in the East European countries. It was no accident. All the conditions were there, in profusion, to make the crisis of the bureaucracy at its most explosive in those countries.

## The caricature-bureaucracies

THE parasitic bureaucracies of Eastern Europe are artificially produced and imposed from outside by the Kremlin. Their national roots are weak. Even the Communist Parties have constantly to be purged, right up to the highest levels: big purges like those of the 1930s were inflicted on the parties in 1948: the Rajk, Slansky, Kostov trials, etc.

At the same time, each national bureaucracy has its own specific interests and each reproduces in the form of a caricature the traits of the Soviet bureaucracy. Thus, each bureaucracy, over and above the Soviet bureaucracy's plunderings, goes in for 'socialism in one country' in its own separate country, and goes in for fantastic industrialization plans tending towards self-sufficient economies. The separation of these economies from the rest of Europe and the world has had catastrophic effects.

The economy of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) is clearly only a fraction of the German economy, which is itself extremely dependent on the world economy and the international division of labour. The Czech economy occupies a position of first importance on the world market and within the international division of labour. Poland, which is economically backward and essentially agricultural,

depends on its ability to export its agricultural products and Silesian coal on the world market, so as to import industrial products and raw products which are indispensable for its own industrial development. The same can be said of Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria.

Forced collectivization is no less harmful than industrialization as conceived by the satellite bureaucracies. On the other hand, the working class in these countries has a long tradition of struggle and the fight for national independence is traditionally closely linked with the class struggle. The intelligentsia has always played an important part in the class struggle and the fight for national independence.

Finally the expropriation of the bourgeoisie and industrialization, even as conceived by the bureaucrats, have reinforced the fighting potential of the working class. The working class is de facto the dominant social class in any revolutionary movement, even if it is not the first to openly take up the struggle.

## The first stage in the political revolution and its defeat

IN JUNE 1953 the international apparatus of the Soviet bureaucracy was shaken up and this gave the working class of East Germany the chance to rise up and struggle for its demands, and opened up the historical period of the political revolution, which made a further development in October 1956 in Poland, and assumed its full scope and significance in Hungary with the Hungarian Revolution of workers' councils in November 1956. The Soviet bureaucracy dampened the first flames of the political revolution in a river of blood.

It did not, for all that, resolve the economic and social contradictions which are at the root of the struggle required for the political revolution. Quite the opposite. It made them worse.

The crushing of the Hungarian Revolution was the first important victory for imperialism in the international class struggle since the end of the Second World War.

In 1946-1947 the political power of the Soviet bureaucracy was challenged. Against Stalin's orders the Chinese CP led the Chinese Revolution.

In 1948 the CP of Yugoslavia, which led the revolutionary war in Yugoslavia, rose up against the Kremlin's edicts.

In 1953 the political weakening of the Soviet bureaucracy gathered momentum. The Soviet working

class grew in numbers and in cohesion, and strikes broke out in the Soviet Union. Criticisms of Stalin went ahead up to and including the famous secret report of Khrushchev to the 20th Congress of the Soviet party. Writers and artists wanted the right to create freely. Scientists abandoned the 'decisions' of the CC on scientific questions.

The French working class, over the heads of the bureaucratic apparatus, including the CGT apparatus, and over the head of the French CP, carried out a general strike in August 1953.

The crushing of the Hungarian Revolution intensified the change in the relations between the international working class and the international apparatus of Stalinism, between the bourgeoisie, imperialism and the Soviet bureaucracy.

The Soviet bureaucracy, in crisis and searching for a new political axis to safeguard its privileged caste interests against the world proletariat and the working class in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, was forced to rely on imperialism and the pro-capitalist forces and strengthen them.

## Planning reforms

THE EXCUSE given by the Soviet bureaucracy for intervening in Czechoslovakia was 'economic reform' and the economic ties which Czechoslovakia was attempting to develop with the world market. But 'economic reform' in Czechoslovakia only expresses what is already going on in Russia itself.

As soon as the running of the planned economy by Stalinist methods becomes impossible, the bureaucracy is forced to orientate itself towards regulating the economy through laws expressed in the internal and the world market. In fact it was distinguished Soviet economists, such as Liberman and Trapenikov amongst others, who developed the 'theories' of straightforward adaptation to the laws of the market, profitability, etc.

If the pressure of imperialism is very strong in Eastern Europe, the entire responsibility for this must be laid at the door of the Soviet bureaucracy. It stands in the way of the only means of safeguarding the planned economy, i.e. the Balkan Socialist Federation, a transition stage towards the United Socialist States of Europe. It cannot do otherwise, because the Socialist Federation of the Balkans poses in an entirely different way the mutual relations of the Eastern European states, their relations with the Soviet Union and with the rest of the world.

By regulating the national relations of the Eastern European peoples, the Socialist United States of the Balkans would put an end to the tutelage of one people over another, and would not accommodate to the



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By regulating the national relations of the Eastern European peoples, the Socialist United States of the Balkans would put an end to the tutelage of one people over another, and would not accommodate to the

bureaucratic tutelage of the Kremlin. This would make possible the development of economic planning which would, in turn, provide a much firmer foundation for participation in the world market and the international division of labour, a much more balanced way, although, of course, this would not itself be enough to achieve socialism or eliminate the pressure of imperialism.

But the Soviet United States of Eastern Europe would open the way for the proletarian revolution in Europe; it would be a first correct response to the problem of unification of Europe within the Socialist United States of Europe.

The relations established by the Soviet bureaucracy increase national tensions. These relations are based on the power of the bureaucracies, which, in turn, depend for their existence on the framework of national states and subservience to the Kremlin. They lead to an economic impasse. Thus, Czechoslovakia accumulated 20 years of technological backwardness as regards steel production, whereas, before the war, it had had one of the most advanced economies in the world.

Over the last ten years, the rhythm of economic development has been continually slowing down in all the East European countries. There was even the beginning of a recession in Czechoslovakia in 1966 and 1967 when national income fell. In these conditions it is inevitable that imperialism should exert increasing pressure.

During the last few years all the East European countries have attempted to adapt their economies to the demands of international competition and the world market. They have all acquired patents, sought loans, and signed agreements for building factories, dealing with the capitalist countries and private firms, thereby effectively opening the door to capitalist penetration. This process has reached an equally advanced stage in Poland and Hungary as it has in Czechoslovakia and Rumania.

It is a direct consequence of the tutelage of the Kremlin, which leans on the satellite bureaucracies. Czechoslovakia, whilst still in the grip of Novotny, Kadar's Hungary and before that Rumania, following in the footsteps of the Kremlin, were preparing to open diplomatic and political relations with the Federal German Republic in order to facilitate and develop their economic ties with that country.

The Soviet bureaucracy, supported by the bureaucracies of Eastern Europe and Poland, forced them, at a conference held at Karlovy Vary, to revoke this step. But besides the fact that it thus recognized West Germany, the Kremlin did not stop imperialist penetration of Eastern Europe, as is proved by Poland and Hungary. The only result has been to intensify the social crisis and the economic impasse which have assumed the form of an explosion in Czechoslovakia.

## The Czech proletariat, as the link between the proletariats of East and West Europe

OVER a long period, the Kremlin endeavoured to maintain a rigidly firm bureaucratic apparatus in Czechoslovakia as unshakable as in East Germany. Czechoslovakia and East Germany, of course, are natural bridges between the political revolution in the East European countries and the social revolution in the West. The bureaucratic machine in Czechoslovakia finished up by cracking. The Kremlin had to give up supporting Novotny and what he represented. They could no longer succeed in mastering the crisis in the Czech apparatus by their usual methods, because it was the most advanced expression of its own crisis, and the crisis sweeping all the East European bureaucracies.

Movements of students and intellectuals came to the surface in Poland and Russia before they appeared in Czechoslovakia. Their importance lies in the fact that, particularly in the countries where capitalism has been expropriated, they reveal an intense social crisis reaching down right into the depths of society. The internecine conflicts and tensions as between the 'national' bureaucracies of Eastern Europe are another manifestation of the crisis.

Reproducing caricaturally the deformations which bureaucratic rule imposes on the planned economy and the workers' state in the Soviet Union, the East European states and their economies are unviable and monstrous. The Czech working class in taking political power carried through what the stranglehold of the bureaucracy of Eastern Europe had previously prevented from happening: it made possible the organization of the United Socialist States of the Balkans, a first step in the direction of the United Socialist States of Europe.

After the fall of Novotny, the disintegration of the bureaucratic apparatus gave free scope to the play of class forces, the working class decisively took the lead. Through its own armed intervention, the Soviet bureaucracy intends to force a new strait-jacket on the social antagonisms in Czechoslovakia and re-build the apparatus. It can only increase the social, economic and political crisis, and thereby the pressure of imperialism. It can only tip the balance of class forces in favour of the pro-capitalist forces. Its intervention plays right into the hands of imperialism and the pro-capitalist forces in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, as indeed the crushing of the Hungarian Revolution has already done.

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## Kremlin policy serves imperialism

### Immediate aid to imperialism

WORLD imperialism was not taken in. Johnson, de Gaulle and Wilson stated once again that 'co-existence must continue' and they could do nothing for Czechoslovakia.

Moscow's representative at the UN took pains to explain that the military intervention in Czechoslovakia was an integral part of the policy of 'peaceful co-existence'. As if that were not enough, Moscow sent ambassadors to Washington, London, Paris, Bonn and even to Athens, to explain first the reasons for the military intervention, and secondly the content and significance of the Moscow diktat, to all the capitalist governments.

World imperialism took immediate advantage of the counter-revolutionary action of the Kremlin. It attempted to throw the international working class into confusion.

US imperialism, in search of a quick solution to the Vietnam question, had already used Soviet policy to force the government of North Vietnam and the NLF to accept a political agreement guaranteeing its own presence. The US was afraid that the working class in Japan, the United States and Europe might embark on far-reaching revolutionary struggles, challenging imperialism at its foundations, whilst it was engaged in a counter-revolutionary war against the Vietnamese people. Now, of course, it can carry on its counter-revolutionary war that much more confidently and its political demands will be that much steeper, because it will feel it has a freer hand in the class struggle in the advanced capitalist countries.

French capitalism, of course, is not averse to exploiting 'communist aggression in Czechoslovakia', to develop the offensive against its own working class. Germany can only benefit from the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia. The division of the working class and the hatred of the German working class for Stalinism are essential elements, without which German capitalism would have been unable to hold back the development of the class struggle in West

Germany. There can be no doubt that the German bourgeoisie is now in a position to bring in tougher measures against the German working class.

### The Soviet bureaucracy, an active support for imperialism

WITH the military intervention in Czechoslovakia, the Soviet bureaucracy takes to a new level the politics which make it the ally of world imperialism in crisis. Whilst on the one hand it attempts to crush the Czechoslovak proletariat, at the same time it strives jointly with imperialism to isolate the Chinese Revolution from the international proletariat and to open up China to capitalist penetration.

The Soviet Union broke off economic and technical co-operation with China. It led a campaign against the leaders of the Chinese CP, accusing them of being prepared to set off a world thermo-nuclear war 'to satisfy their great power nationalistic and expansionist designs'. It supported the Indian capitalist class in a war against China. The massive military intervention of US imperialism in Vietnam took place under the umbrella of this campaign against the Chinese Revolution and the leaders of the Chinese CP.

In the name of 'peace', the Soviet bureaucracy conscientiously patrols imperialism's rear. At Tashkent, with the congratulations of world imperialism, it arranged a compromise between the Indian and Pakistani bourgeoisies. A continuation of the war between India and Pakistan could have brought disaster to the bourgeoisies of those countries, with their precarious economic and social equilibrium, and thereby opened up a revolutionary situation throughout Asia, in the rear of imperialism. In no matter what part of the world, Africa, Asia, South America, the Soviet bureaucracy supports the national bourgeoisie, in accordance with Suslov's theories.

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is shown by Indonesia, Ghana and Algeria, and shoring up military and other cliques in South America, which depend directly on imperialism.

It openly repudiates all revolutionary action in the advanced capitalist countries. The 'theories' about the peaceful road to socialism by parliamentary means, and about each country finding its own path to socialism, come to the surface exactly when the relations between the classes in the advanced capitalist countries are strained to breaking point and when precisely the unity of the international class struggle is the most immediate question.

These 'theories' and the politics behind them are brought forward all the more confidently because the bourgeois parliamentary system has become a mere shadow or completely disappeared. The struggle for political power is inseparable from action in defence of the economic and social conquests of the working class, of the rights and concessions it has extracted in the course of more than a century of class struggle.

The basic fight for elementary democratic liberties, political rights, trade union rights and independence of the unions from the state, freedom of the press, freedom to organize, demands the united front of all the forces of the working class, which inevitably poses the question of political power.

The poisoned fruits of these 'theories', raked up from the dustbins of the social democracy, renovated by the Kremlin 'theoreticians' and enthusiastically adopted by the CPs in the capitalist countries, are the paralysis of the Greek proletariat, which was handed over with its hands tied behind its back to the military dictatorship, the prolonging of the French dictatorship and the defeat of the French general strike.

## The crisis of imperialism and the Soviet bureaucracy

THE SOVIET bureaucracy carries out this political line precisely because, contrary to what the 'theoreticians' of 'neo-capitalism' have to say, capitalism has not surmounted the contradictions which exploded in the course of two world wars and the world economic crisis of 1929.

The power of American capitalism, the new relationship of forces within world imperialism, the emphasis on the role of the bourgeois state in creating artificial markets by parasitic expenditure and the arms economy, have brought about a new, gigantic accumulation of capital, during the 20 years following the Second World War.

Far from overcoming its chronic historical crisis, world imperialism has reached a stage where this crisis is once more becoming virulent. The whole of bourgeois society is threatened with disintegration.

The dollar and sterling crises are monetary expressions of the parasitic nature of the capitalist economy and the tendencies towards the explosion of a new economic crisis which would dislocate the world market.

The politics of the Soviet bureaucracy are dominated by its desperate fear of proletarian revolution and by the need to integrate the economy of the Soviet Union and the East European states into the world market and the international division of labour. But imperialism in crisis is confronted with precise demands.

The new capital accumulation demands super-exploitation of the working class in all the countries where the capitalist mode of production has prevailed, so that the rate of profit may be maintained. It has become indispensable to carry out a complete revision of the structure of the most advanced capitalist countries; to scrap backward sections of the economy, to liquidate the enormous amount of fictitious capital accumulated, particularly in the post-war period, because of the parasitic nature of the system, to challenge the conquests of the working class in the advanced countries, to export capital and commodities on a massive scale, and to switch from an arms economy to a war economy.

As a result of the internal contradictions in the capitalist mode of production, social relations are strained to breaking-point. Direct, violent confrontations between the classes are rapidly increasing, and these, everywhere, force the working class either to pose the question of political power or be ground down under the iron heel of capitalism, as in Spain, Indonesia and Greece, or find the gains they have made continually whittled away by the capitalist class, as is the case now in Italy, Belgium, Germany, England, France, and is on the agenda in the United States, developments which herald just as surely the iron dictatorship of capital.

Fearing, as it does, the socialist revolution and the control it has exercised over decisive sections of the international working class being challenged, the Soviet bureaucracy co-operates in 'disinterested' fashion with world imperialism, with American imperialism as well as its less powerful Japanese and European rivals, against the working class.

## Europe, nerve-centre of the class struggle

THE EUROPEAN bourgeoisies have been particularly undermined, and the European front is decisive in the class struggle. All the old imperialist powers of Europe are decaying. Prisoners of their own past, when they dominated and divided

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The new capital accumulation demands super-exploitation of the working class in all the countries where the capitalist mode of production has prevailed, so that the rate of profit may be maintained. It has become indispensable to carry out a complete revision of the structure of the most advanced capitalist countries; to scrap backward sections of the economy, to liquidate the enormous amount of fictitious capital accumulated, particularly in the post-war period, because of the parasitic nature of the system, to challenge the conquests of the working class in the advanced countries, to export capital and commodities on a massive scale, and to switch from an arms economy to a war economy.

As a result of the internal contradictions in the capitalist mode of production, social relations are strained to breaking-point. Direct, violent confrontations between the classes are rapidly increasing, and these, everywhere, force the working class either to pose the question of political power or be ground down under the iron heel of capitalism, as in Spain, Indonesia and Greece, or find the gains they have made continually whittled away by the capitalist class, as is the case now in Italy, Belgium, Germany, England, France, and is on the agenda in the United States, developments which herald just as surely the iron dictatorship of capital.

Fearing, as it does, the socialist revolution and the control it has exercised over decisive sections of the international working class being challenged, the Soviet bureaucracy co-operates in 'disinterested' fashion with world imperialism, with American imperialism as well as its less powerful Japanese and European rivals, against the working class.

## **Europe, nerve-centre of the class struggle**

THE EUROPEAN bourgeoisies have been particularly undermined, and the European front is decisive in the class struggle. All the old imperialist powers of Europe are decaying. Prisoners of their own past, when they dominated and divided





**Russian intervention (above) plays into the hands of imperialism and the pro-capitalist forces of Eastern Europe, and the Soviet Union, as did the crushing of the Hungarian revolution in 1956 (below).**



up the world, they can neither break away from their past role nor assume its responsibilities. They need the support of US imperialism, and yet their interests are perpetually in violent conflict with America's.

Their only way out lies in opening up new markets for their goods, new fields for capital investment, but they are over-run by American capital. They can continue to exist only as long as US imperialism is committed to armaments and proves capable of switching to a war economy and moving towards war with China, Russia and Eastern Europe.

But they could not carry a war economy on their own account. A war would be fatal to them. They are stifled by the restrictions of the nation state and yet unable to reach beyond them. They must, at all costs, find outlets in Eastern Europe, destroy socialist planning and re-introduce capitalism—this is particularly the case for German imperialism. Each country needs to carry out these policies for its own benefit; they can in fact only do this collectively by leaning on American imperialism.

Economic and social paroxysms are, in any case, unavoidable: the massive elimination of sectors of the economy inherited from a past era, which are no longer competitive, will open up breaches in the ranks of the bourgeoisie and generate violent struggles. The capitalist state must impose the discipline required to safeguard the interests of the capitalist system as a whole, it must impose it on the bourgeoisie and, therefore, and even more important, on the other layers of society.

But the working class in the capitalist countries constitutes a very powerful force. It has made gains, in the course of decades of struggle, which must now be destroyed, just as the masses of the petty bourgeoisie and small peasantry have to be driven back from the position they occupied up to now. Education and culture are threatened by the decadence of the European imperialist powers. Tens of thousands of students must be expelled from universities, from grammar schools and high schools and their teachers with them. The only ones left will be the best, most advanced students required for technological advance and to run monopoly capitalism. The rest will become white-collared unemployed or police, a disqualified working class, reduced to unskilled labouring or unemployment.

In other words, there will inevitably be enormous class confrontations in Europe, as foreshadowed by the French general strike and the struggles of students and workers. On the outcome of these struggles depends the future of Europe and the world.

These struggles cannot be dissociated from the struggles of the working class of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Any revolutionary victory by the working class in one of the advanced countries in Europe would have an immediate effect upon the whole European working class. A victorious French general strike would inevitably have meant a revo-

lutionary mobilization of the Spanish, Italian, Belgian, English and German working classes; it would have given a direct impetus to the political revolution in Eastern Europe. The proletariats in the various European countries are linked not only by tradition and historical ties, but also by the fact that no European proletariat can take the power without raising the problem of the United Socialist States of Europe. The re-organization of the economy on socialist foundations is inconceivable in any European country unless it is extended to the whole of Europe.

## Panic stations by the bureaucracy

THE DEEPER its own crisis becomes, the more clearly the 'theory' of socialism in one country is shown to be bankrupt, the more impossible bureaucratic management of the planned economy becomes, the more the Soviet bureaucracy is afraid that the crisis of imperialism will give rise to the socialist revolution, which, in Europe, means the social and the political revolutions being directly linked.

In the immediate post-war period, the European bourgeoisie, relying on the might of US imperialism, found it sufficient to contain the working class. It could tolerate the Soviet bureaucracy extending the conquests of the October Revolution, in a degenerated form, to the Eastern European countries. It was able to accommodate itself to the division of Europe into two antagonistic social systems.

Now, however, maintaining the status quo, even for a very short space of time, would mean the disruption of capitalism in Europe and throughout the world, and an unprecedented revolutionary crisis.

For reasons of its own immediate security, the bureaucracy puts its whole weight behind the power of the bourgeoisie, through the intermediary of the Communist Parties in France, Italy, Belgium and England. It facilitates the offensive against the conquests of the working class. It denounces every struggle which, like the students', plays a role in the defence against the reactionary plans of capital and runs the risk of becoming a mobilizing factor for the working class. It divides and sectionalizes the struggles of the working class, misleads it, by bartering, as it did in France, the weapon of the general strike for elections, in the name of 'the peaceful parliamentary road to socialism'. It directly supports the power of the bourgeoisie all over Europe because its own existence is incompatible with the realization of the United Socialist States of Europe. This is nowhere more apparent than in Germany.

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class can, in the long term, tolerate the division of the country. West Germany—the second world capitalist power—must, at all costs, find a way into Eastern Europe for its capital and goods and re-integrate East Germany into its orbit. Unless this happens, an unprecedented economic and social crisis awaits it.

The German working class—in both East and West—can have no perspective for socialism which does not include the unification of Germany, through the expropriation of the bourgeoisie in West Germany and the overthrow of the parasitic bureaucracy in the East, with the workers seizing political power. The working class in power in a united Germany spells the end of the capitalist system in Europe, the end of the rump bureaucracies in Eastern Europe and the Kremlin: the United Socialist States of Europe will be organized on the foundations of German economic strength harmonized with the entire European economy.

The Soviet bureaucracy must, no matter what the price, support imperialism against the working class in the advanced capitalist countries. Its intervention in Czechoslovakia is inseparably bound up with this policy. It enables imperialism to put pressure on the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe and put in question the conquests of October and their extension.

The crisis in planning is an expression of the impossibility of managing the economies of the Soviet Union and countries of Eastern Europe any longer by bureaucratic methods. The bureaucracy cannot resort to the only solution which would permit the defence and strengthening of the gains of October:

the working out and execution of the plan by the working class, their own integration into the world economy through the overthrow of the bourgeoisie in the main capitalist countries and the re-construction of these economies on socialist foundations.

For, contrary to what renegades from the Fourth International like Mandel are so busy explaining, there can be no 'participation in management' in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe or anywhere else, without political power being held and exercised.

'Planning reforms' mean that the Soviet and satellite bureaucracies are gradually adapting their countries' economies to the exigencies of the laws of the market, internal and external. These 'reforms' are a product of the parasitic nature of the bureaucracies and their obsessive fear of the international working class, causing them to dread the revolutionary consequences of their own crisis, linked as it is with the crisis of imperialism, and forcing them to adapt themselves ever more closely to the requirements of imperialism.

World imperialism is perfectly well aware that the best card in its hand as regards the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe is the international agent of counter-revolution, the Soviet bureaucracy.

Imperialism knows that through the policy they pursue in order to defend their privileges, the Soviet and satellite bureaucracies sap the conquests of October and their extension in Eastern Europe. It appraises the military intervention in Czechoslovakia in terms of and as an element of the counter-revolutionary politics of Stalinism.

## (IV)

# The Fourth International and the mortal crisis of the Soviet bureaucracy

## Acceleration of the crisis in the bureaucracy

THE SOVIET bureaucracy was generally hesitant about making a military intervention in Czechoslovakia. As long as 'liberalization' appeared to be a tendency to re-adapt the Czechoslovak economy to the requirements of integration into the world market and the international division of labour, the bureaucracy let it go on.

When it was no longer possible to prop up Novotny and the line of complete submission he represented, the bureaucracy hoped that the new Czech leaders would still be able, as had happened in Rumania, to main the rigidity of the apparatus. In the same way, at Cierna and Bratislava, the Kremlin gambled on the ability of the Czech leaders to carry out the injunctions in the Letter of the five Warsaw Pact signatories. It was only as a last desperate measure that the decision was taken to intervene militarily, because the apparatus was disintegrating.

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with the crisis in the international apparatus of Stalinism, which manifests itself even inside the leading group in the Kremlin. The new course adopted after Stalin's death was the only course open to the Kremlin, although it must lead to the disintegration of the international apparatus.

The search for a fresh *modus vivendi* with imperialism led to the break with the Chinese bureaucracy and precipitated a crisis in the Chinese apparatus. In order to resist the joint pressure of imperialism and the Kremlin, the wing of the bureaucracy represented by Mao Tse-tung had to call for a carefully controlled, distorted mobilization of the masses against the capitulationist, pro-capitalist Moscow wing. The 'cultural revolution' brought on to the scene the first demonstrations heralding the political revolution in China.

The fight taken up by Mao against an agreement with imperialism to the detriment of China mirrors the preoccupations of important layers of the Soviet bureaucracy. They realise that capitulation to imperialism in China, and capitalist penetration, would very soon place in jeopardy the social and economic foundations of the USSR, the basis of their own privilege. They correctly evaluate the 'planning reforms' which, in the short term, harm the interests of important layers of the bureaucracy and, in the long term, mean the disintegration of the planned economy, the destruction of the state monopoly of foreign trade, and the penetration of foreign capital, as is happening now in Yugoslavia.

The challenge to the hegemony of Moscow afforded by Mao and the wing of the Chinese bureaucracy he represents, have helped to modify on an international scale the relations between the masses and the apparatus of Stalinism, between CP members and the bureaucracy.

The new content of the policy of 'peaceful co-existence' has set in motion centrifugal forces in the East European states. Rumania is the classic example. But these forces also operate in the German Democratic Republic, Hungary and Poland, as well as Czechoslovakia, each bureaucracy seeking to make its own direct link-up with imperialism.

The 'theories' of the peaceful parliamentary road to socialism, with each country finding the 'national road' which suits it best, have re-inforced the tendency within the Communist Parties in the advanced capitalist countries to adapt directly to the national bourgeoisie, as the French and Italian CPs increasingly do. In the backward countries, Suslov's 'theses' have destroyed numerous CPs, in Asia, Africa and South America, or have been the cause of crises exploited with varying degrees of effectiveness by the Chinese CP.

The military intervention in Czechoslovakia, a desperate last resort, has accelerated the crisis of the Soviet bureaucracy.

It is of enormous significance that the Communist

Parties of Western Europe, all except Luxemburg, came out against the military intervention by the five Warsaw Pact signatories in Czechoslovakia. The attempts by the Kremlin to solder up its international apparatus have been destroyed.

Since 1963 the Kremlin has been trying to get a conference of the Communist Parties in Moscow. The pre-conference at Budapest had resigned itself to the non-participation of parties such as the Rumanian, Vietnamese and Cuban parties. At Budapest it was decided that the conference should be held in November in Moscow. The Kremlin attached great importance to this conference. It needed the conference to be able to confront and oppose the Chinese CP, as well as the centrifugal tendencies in the West European Parties, with the declaration that the centre of the world 'communist and workers' movement' was Moscow, that the 'criterion of internationalism' was fidelity to Moscow, which was the only repository of Leninism and alone represented continuity with the October Revolution.

It was necessary to make this declaration in front of the CP machines and their membership, and also vis-à-vis the international working class. It was indispensable if the bureaucracy was to strengthen its hold over decisive sectors of the international proletariat on which its political powers depend. All these efforts have been destroyed. The dislocation of the international apparatus of Stalinism has been precipitated.

The positions taken up by the West European Communist Parties arise, in the main, from the more advanced stage reached in their direct integration into bourgeois society in their respective countries, in the course of the last 20 years. But they have other, even more decisive reasons. After Budapest, after the break with China, it is impossible for the CP apparatuses to justify to their own members and to the working class the military intervention in Czechoslovakia. Their policy of adaptation to the capitalist class and to the exigencies of the decaying capitalist system, jeopardizes all the conquests of the working class.

Amongst the mass of workers, within the unions controlled by the CP, amongst the membership of the CP, stronger and stronger opposition is developing. Approval of the military intervention in Czechoslovakia by the CP apparatuses would have destroyed these parties.

After the betrayal of the general strike in France support by the leadership of the French CP for the Soviet intervention would have meant the complete disintegration of the French CP. But this decision could only have been taken so unanimously by the West European Parties insofar as it mirrors the internal divisions in the Kremlin, as is proved by the statements of Dolores Ibaruri, who has been in Russia for 30 years and is quite simply an agent of the Soviet CP leadership.

## The impasse reached by the Kremlin

IMPERIALISM, although it understands and approves of part of the Kremlin apparatus, including part of the leadership, is worried about the consequences of the military intervention in Czechoslovakia. It is not certain that the intervention will be enough to crush the political revolution.

To date, the forces of the Czechoslovak working class remain intact, ready to show themselves at the first opportunity and take up the struggle. In East Germany, Poland and Hungary, demonstrations in solidarity with the Czechoslovak people and working class have taken place. The occupying troops are unreliable. They have to be constantly switched around to avoid 'contamination'. They cannot be stationed for very long like this in contact with the Czechoslovak people and working class.

In Russia, the courageous demonstration led by Pavel Litvinov and Larissa Daniel is incomparably more significant than its size would lead one to expect. It brings to the light of day a profound opposition to the military intervention which mirrors opposition to the Soviet bureaucracy.

A blow has been struck at the Rumanian apparatus which had previously been unshaken. The Rumanian working class must be watching the resistance of the Czech working class with mingled anxiety and hope and drawing inspiration from it to fight its own bureaucracy.

In spite of Tito's appeals for calm, the Yugoslav working class has shown its solidarity with the Czech working class, notably in the course of a massive demonstration in Belgrade forced on him by 300,000 workers.

If the Kremlin is not able very rapidly to master the situation in Czechoslovakia, the fire which is smouldering will set the whole of Eastern Europe ablaze at a pace which is impossible to predict. The military intervention would then turn back on the satellite and Moscow bureaucracies. The Kremlin masters are not embarrassed with humanitarian feelings, but they are visibly hesitating. In order to master the Czechoslovak people and working class, their resistance must be destroyed by bloody repression. The military occupation has already caused irreparable damage to the international apparatus of Stalinism. Bloody repression carried out by the armies of the Warsaw Pact would destroy it.

The political relations between the international working class and the Soviet bureaucracy and between imperialism and the Soviet bureaucracy would alter

qualitatively. The Soviet bureaucracy would break up into its component parts. One wing would become the immediate, open and direct agent of capitalist restoration and would have to take up the struggle against the Russian working class, which depends for its actual existence on the social and economic relations established by the October Revolution, and against the other layers of the bureaucracy which cling to the gains of October.

The crushing of the Hungarian Revolution of workers' councils by Soviet troops already marked an important stage in the progress towards a closer subordination of Moscow to imperialism and towards a policy leaning more and more heavily on the pro-capitalist social forces in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe—'Social relations in the Soviet Union live in the consciousness of the masses', as Trotsky wrote.

He explained that the attachment of the masses to these social relations was the only thing preventing the renaissance of bourgeois social relations, to which whole layers of the bureaucracy aspired.

The bloody repression of the Czechoslovak working class would open up a period of real civil war in Russia and Eastern Europe. Verification of what might appear to be simply an assertion is afforded by what happened in the Second World War. The heroism of the Russian workers and peasants has no mystique about it. Their existence is conditioned by the factories and collective farms. Capitalist penetration, the destruction of planning and the monopoly of foreign trade, would mean that the productive forces of Soviet Russia and Eastern Europe would be largely destroyed; only those aspects which would complement the capitalist economy would remain.

'Planning reforms' have not qualitatively modified the Soviet economy. They are merely directed towards an adaptation to the world market and the re-introduction of capitalist norms of production.

But they are sufficient to cause hundreds of factories to be closed, and hundreds of thousands, if not millions of workers to lose their security of employment and skilled status, and be threatened with permanent unemployment. They are enough for teaching to be reformed and thousands and thousands of students to be thrown out of the universities and schools and not find jobs. These phenomena can be seen particularly clearly in the East European countries and they explain the combativity of the youth, which is particularly hard-hit.

The economy is not a sort of abstract technical question, as that illustrious tight-rope walker, that supplier upon request of 'theories' to petty-bourgeois tendencies in search of a Marxist coloration, the Marxologist Ernest Mandel, seems to think.

As Marx said: 'Economic categories are the theoretical expression of the social relations in production'. The violent crushing of the Czechoslovak working class would shift the political axis around which the Soviet bureaucracy turns, and would constitute the first act in a civil war which it would have to undertake as the direct and immediate agent of capitalist

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restoration against the proletariat in the Soviet Union and East European countries.

The deploring by the West European Communist Parties of the military intervention in Czechoslovakia has cut deep into the historical and political bond tying the CPs to the Soviet bureaucracy. The solidarity of the CPs and their apparatuses sprang from this bond. The ability of the apparatuses to control the Party membership and decisive sectors of the international working class came as a result of the identification with the October Revolution of the Soviet bureaucracy, which was presented as the continuator of October, the repository of the interests of the international working class and leader of the struggle for socialism. Whatever happens, by deploring and condemning the military intervention, the CP leaders have undermined this mystification.

Inevitably, a process of differentiation within the CPs, with the formation of oppositions, all sorts of oppositions naturally, and the break-up of the parties, is irreversibly set in motion. A bloody repression would only accelerate this process and make it impossible to shore up the breach. The WFTU\* has also been shaken up. L. Saillant refused to participate in the Congress of the East German Trade Unions, as long as the occupation of Czechoslovakia continued.

The military intervention in Czechoslovakia visibly sparked off a crisis in the Kremlin. The game is nowhere near played and the Soviet bureaucracy, in the grip of a political crisis, the scope of which is determined by all the implications of the intervention, hesitates.

## The implacable logic of the class struggle

THE FATE of the Czech proletariat depends on the world proletariat, and at the same time conditions it. That is how we must view the stand taken by Castro and his petty-bourgeois clique, by the North Vietnamese government and the Vietnamese Workers' Party.

The petty bourgeois in power in Cuba understand and approve, as does imperialism, the repression of the political revolution by the Kremlin. Balancing between imperialism and the working class, they thus demonstrate which side they will come down on in the end, because they are conscious that the Soviet bureaucracy will deliver them, bound and gagged, to imperialism at the first opportunity, according to its own political requirements.

The North Vietnamese government and the Vietnamese Workers' Party are caught in the trap of their own political line. They based the struggle against American imperialism on the national unity of the entire people. The programme of the National Liberation Front freely extends the 'national union' to

layers of the bourgeoisie in South Vietnam who are looking for a compromise with American imperialism which would guarantee their class interests. Because of this, the heroic resistance of the workers and peasants of Vietnam is placed outside the struggle of the world proletariat for the international socialist revolution. To isolate the struggle of the Vietnamese peasants and workers from the struggles of the world proletariat on the class front, which is its own, is to limit oneself to replying in a military way to American imperialist aggression.

Support for the National Liberation Front in its war against United States imperialism is above all a *political* question of mobilizing the international working class against the imperialist enemy, and the military aspects are subordinate to this revolutionary task. Unconditional support by the international working class for the struggle of North Vietnam and the NLF; at the same time, a constant struggle against Stalinism, of which the politics of the Ho Chi Minh government and the programme of the National Liberation Front constitute a deadly dangerous expression for the struggle of the Vietnamese masses. This is the only way to effectively support the heroic struggle of the Vietnamese workers and peasants.

The position of the Vietnamese government and the Workers' Party shows just how much this policy makes them dependent on Moscow, for whom they stand bail. The Soviet bureaucracy does not provide arms 'for nothing'. Just as in Spain during the Civil War, the provision of arms and specialists is a method it uses to assert its control and political tutelage over the North Vietnamese government and the Vietnamese Workers' Party. US imperialist policy with regard to Vietnam combines military intervention with the use of political methods.

It is based on the certainty that the Soviet bureaucracy will sooner or later be able to force the Vietnamese workers and peasants to capitulate. The crushing of the Czech working class by the Kremlin would mean the defeat of the toilers in Vietnam. The statements of the North Vietnamese government and the Vietnamese Workers' Party isolate even further the workers and peasants of Vietnam from the international working class and strengthen American imperialism. They thus tend to weaken the only force upon which the Vietnamese workers can depend for support.

## Effective solidarity with the Czech people and the Czech working class

THE EFFECTIVE solidarity of the world proletariat with the Czech proletariat must make itself felt. It is capable of forcing Moscow to retreat. It is not enough for the trade union organizations,

\* World Federation of Trade Unions.

restoration against the proletariat in the Soviet Union and East European countries.

The deploring by the West European Communist Parties of the military intervention in Czechoslovakia has cut deep into the historical and political bond tying the CPs to the Soviet bureaucracy. The solidarity of the CPs and their apparatuses sprang from this bond. The ability of the apparatuses to control the Party membership and decisive sectors of the international working class came as a result of the identification with the October Revolution of the Soviet bureaucracy, which was presented as the continuator of October, the repository of the interests of the international working class and leader of the struggle for socialism. Whatever happens, by deploring and condemning the military intervention, the CP leaders have undermined this mystification.

Inevitably, a process of differentiation within the CPs, with the formation of oppositions, all sorts of oppositions naturally, and the break-up of the parties, is irreversibly set in motion. A bloody repression would only accelerate this process and make it impossible to shore up the breach. The WFTU\* has also been shaken up. L. Saillant refused to participate in the Congress of the East German Trade Unions, as long as the occupation of Czechoslovakia continued.

The military intervention in Czechoslovakia visibly sparked off a crisis in the Kremlin. The game is nowhere near played and the Soviet bureaucracy, in the grip of a political crisis, the scope of which is determined by all the implications of the intervention, hesitates.

## The implacable logic of the class struggle

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the WFTU, to condemn the military intervention by the Soviet bureaucracy.

Communist Party members, you cannot accept your leaders coming out on the one hand against this intervention and on the other hand 'congratulating' themselves on the Moscow diktat. An active campaign must be launched in the unions for the unconditional withdrawal from Czechoslovakia of the occupying troops and for respect for the demands drawn up by the 14th Congress of the Czech CP. An extraordinary Congress of the WFTU must be called to demand the withdrawal of occupying troops and organize an international struggle to enforce this demand.

In the same way, we must demand the liberation from the jails of the Kremlin and satellite bureaucracies, of all those who, like Pavel Litvinov and Larissa Daniel, courageously organized in the Soviet Union and elsewhere demonstrations in solidarity with the Czech nation and Czech working class.

## An inseparable fight

THIS fight is a part of the enormous struggle for socialism. There is not room in the world for two different social and economic systems.

The achievement of the capitalist mode of production consists in the fact that it has developed the productive forces to a very high level by establishing a world economy, the world market and the international division of labour. Its bankruptcy springs from the fact that it is imprisoned in the old shell, the old social relations in which the productive forces developed.

The proletarian revolution and socialism are the reply of the world proletariat to the crisis in the capitalist mode of production, to imperialism, and to the resulting decay in capitalist society. But socialism, if it is to be built, must take in hand and surpass all the achievements of the capitalist mode of production by destroying the old shell and the social relations which hinder the growth of the productive forces. By expropriating the bourgeoisie of the principal means of production, it abolishes capitalist relations of production which make a worker into a seller of labour power. It replaces the blind laws of the market by the conscious management of the economy by the producers. For the international division of labour and the unequal, antagonistic relations engendered by capitalism, it substitutes a world economy based on conscious, organized co-operation.

The theory of 'socialism in one country' and bureaucratic management of planning are a result of parasitic bureaucracies opposed to the world socialist revolution, of which the Russian Revolution was the first step. They lead to support for imperialism against the proletariat throughout the world. They end in the most brutal repression against the proletariats of Soviet Russia and Eastern Europe and the destruction of the revolutionary conquests of October.

They prolong the death agony of capitalism which is incapable of developing any further the productive forces. They permit capitalism to bring about, on an ever vaster scale, massive destructions of the productive forces, to bring about decay, barbarism, over the whole face of the globe, the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe included.

Socialism, because it will provide a fantastic new impetus to the productive forces, is the form of society on which depends any new development of civilization. Socialism will abolish social and national conflicts, the division between manual and intellectual work, and all organs of repression, by doing away with the need for repression.

But for socialism to be achieved, workers must take the power and transform the social structure in the capitalist countries, as well as in the countries where the means of production are collectivized, and also where the Soviet and satellite bureaucracies have removed the workers from political power and the management of the economy. The general strike in France, the heroic fight of the workers and peasants of Vietnam, the political revolution which was developing in Czechoslovakia, are different aspects of the same international struggle of the working class for socialism.

What is lacking for the workers in each country and the international proletariat is a programme and an organization to direct and unify their struggles. The development of the political revolution in Czechoslovakia and the counter-revolutionary intervention of the Kremlin, the general strike in France, the heroic struggle of the Vietnamese workers and peasants, entirely confirm the programme of the Fourth International founded by Leon Trotsky.

## The political function of the renegades from the FI

THE BANKRUPTCY of the renegades from the FI and the criminal responsibility they must bear for attempting to dismantle the FI is now clear.

A few years ago they were praising to the skies the 'liberalization' of the Soviet bureaucracy and self-reform, a theory dear to the heart of Isaac Deutscher, which people like Pablo, Germain-Mandel Frank and Hansen took up again. In 1956 they supported the 'liberal' and 'reasonable' Gomulka who according to them, had avoided the 'exaggerations and indiscretions' that Imre Nagy had not managed to avoid in the Hungarian Revolution. In the name of 'political realism' they asked the Soviet bureaucracy, in the period immediately following the break with the Chinese bureaucracy, to call a congress of the 'international communist movement' to regulate its differences and ensure unity, and they asked to participate in the Congress 'in the name of the FI'.

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The 'theories' of this eminent theoretical guide for renegades from the FI bring us to the petty-bourgeois conceptions of the 'technological civilization' and its 'problems'. Pierre Frank as well as Mandel and all their friends argue for a 'new-look transitional programme' which would take into account 'the rising standard of living of the masses', 'full employment', etc. . . . in short, the 'civilization of leisure'.

Thus, armed from top to toe, they declared that the 'epicentre' of world revolution was to be found in the backward countries. Only a few months before the general strike in France and the mounting tide of the political revolution in Czechoslovakia, Mandel, seeking to justify their infamous bloc with the Gaullists in the movement of a 'million francs for Vietnam', and their collusion with the Stalinist apparatus during a demonstration in Berlin, wrote, just as the Polish students took up the fight, that there was no revolutionary situation in the advanced countries any more, of course, than in the East European countries and the Soviet Union.

At the same time they burdened the toilers of Vietnam with the job of inflicting a military defeat on American imperialism, to shouts of 'Victory to the NLF'. They condemned China for not bringing about 'unity of the communist movement' with the Kremlin in support for the NLF. They then came to see in the NLF leadership and Castro's petty-bourgeois clique, even if they did occasionally tend to imprison and massacre Trotskyists, the continuators of Bolshevism.

They particularly admired Castro and his party who, according to them, had enriched Marxism and added new lessons to the teachings of Lenin and Trotsky. This in no way conflicts with the fact that Pierre Frank, from a rostrum in the Sorbonne, pompously greeted 'the Sorbonne, the first free territory in the Socialist Republic of France'.

It all hangs together and is absolutely coherent: having capitulated to the pressure of imperialism and the Soviet bureaucracy, the renegades from the FI become the heralds of the terrified petty bourgeoisie and the 'theoreticians' of fantasy. Their political function from now on is to hinder the re-building of the FI by usurping its name.

## The struggle for the reconstruction of the FI

INTERNATIONAL proletarian solidarity is the

Political revolution in Czechoslovakia

elementary expression of the world unity of the class struggle, the unity of the struggle for socialism. The International Committee (IC) of the FI, in calling for unconditional support for the Czech people and Czech working class, fights for the reconstruction of the FI. The IC has accepted the task of ensuring the continuity of the FI.

Even in the darkest days of the rise of Stalinism and the height of its power, in spite of all the crimes and assassinations of thousands and thousands of Trotskyists and Trotsky himself, despite all the vicissitudes, even through all the crimes against the FI, the theoretical and political heritage of the Russian Revolution and the Third International, enriched with the lessons of the struggle against Stalinism, have remained alive. This was only possible through the fight of the Left Opposition and Trotsky's fight to found the FI and the struggle of the IC against the Pabloite liquidationists.

These lessons are condensed in the programme of the FI. Henceforward, the joint crisis of imperialism and the Soviet bureaucracy merges the processes of the social and the political revolutions: the struggle for workers' power. But as the Transitional Programme precisely states:

'The historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership.'

The struggle for workers' power, for socialism, can only be successful if it is a conscious and therefore an organized process. It demands the re-construction of the FI and the building of its parties in the countries dominated by imperialism, in Russia, in Eastern Europe as in China.

The communist party members and the proletariat who henceforward clash directly with Stalinism and its international apparatus, as well as with the social democracy, need a programme, a banner, an organization. They will be those of the FI.

But they will only recognize this programme, this banner and this organization as their own insofar as the organizations which constitute the IC are capable of leading them in the fight.

- For the defence of all the conquests of the working class.
- Unconditional support for the Czechoslovak people and working class. Withdraw all occupying troops.
- For the liberation of the victims of Stalinist repression in the Soviet Union and the East European countries.
- For complete equality between the Slovak and Czech people within the federated Socialist Republic of Czechoslovakia.
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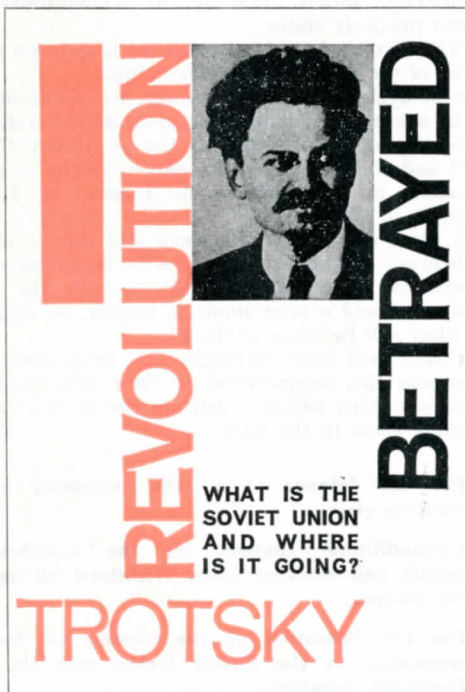
The Czech working class comes on to the scene of history once more, this time as part of an international working class which is taking the offensive, as in France and Britain. This working-class offensive coincides with the capitalists' necessity of destroying all past gains and organizations of the proletariat. But it also coincides, necessarily, with the acute crisis of Stalinism, of which the Czech intervention is part.

Under these conditions, revolutionary parties of the Fourth International can and must be built, around the programme of the Fourth International, in every country. Only such a party can take on the tasks of ensuring the political independence of the working class, through workers' councils, in Czechoslovakia. Only this will answer the needs of the Czech workers, not the compromises of any section of the bureaucracy.

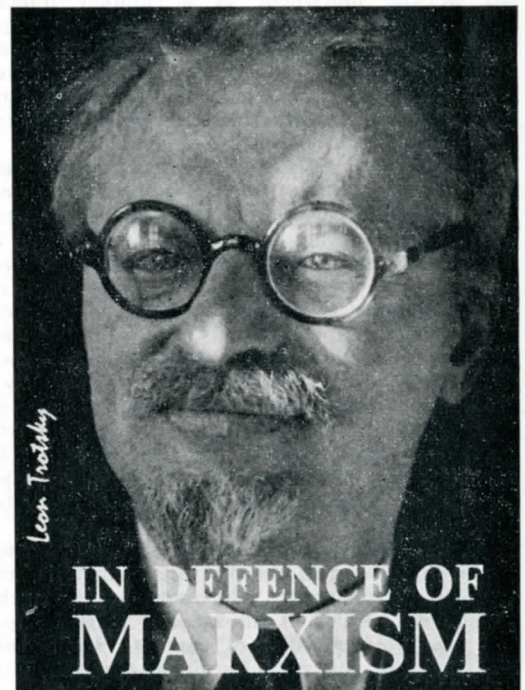
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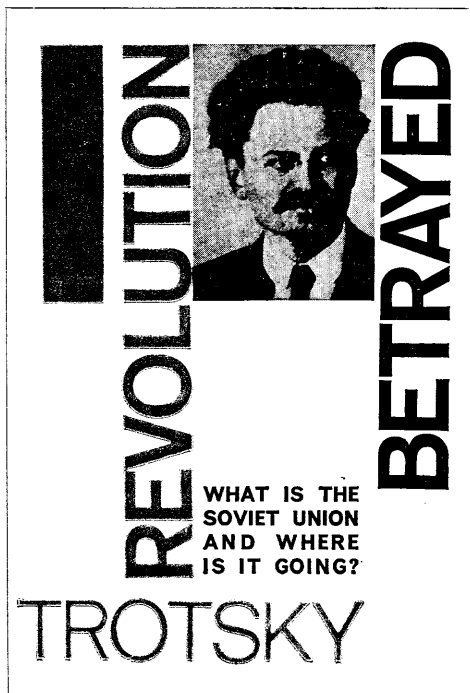
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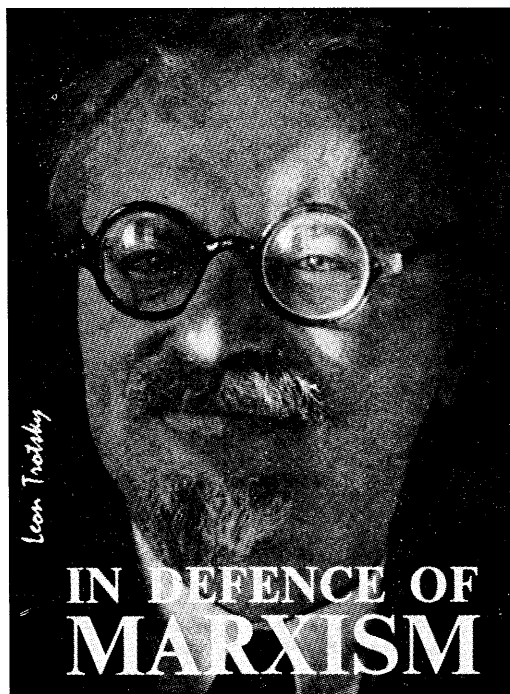
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# Towards a history of the Third International

**(Part 2)**

by Tom Kemp

## *From the third to the sixth congress*

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however, was not to create blindly obedient party leaderships that would mechanically translate Russian experience into another language or simply do as they were told. The situation required in each country a creative development of revolutionary practice in the light of Marxism and the lessons of the October Revolution. It therefore was vital to bring forward and develop a new type of working-class leadership able to build parties, Bolshevik in character, which would as rapidly as possible take advantage of the revolutionary possibilities of the post-war crisis of capitalism and take power in the advanced countries.

In the first few years it was taken for granted that Moscow was only the provisional home of the new International and that before long its sessions would be held in one or another of the capitals of Soviet Europe. The inability of the leaderships of the new parties to take advantage of the opportunities, whatever the reason, created new conditions for the work of the Comintern. It became apparent by the Third Congress that the revolutionary wave had receded, that the bourgeoisie had regained its self-confidence and that a period of capitalist stabilization was at hand. Clearly this required both an adjustment of the strategic line, which had hitherto been based on the immediate possibility of revolution in Central and Western Europe, and the setting of new tactical guidelines for the national parties. Moreover, in the new situation it was both possible and necessary to take into account the whole world picture. While capitalism had been able to hold up in the advanced countries, the effect of the war had been to stimulate the struggle of the oppressed masses in the colonial and semi-colonial territories. The early 1920s, therefore, saw growing attention being given to these parts of the world where the impact of the October Revolution was still reverberating.

Compressed into a short space of time, therefore, all the great problems of revolutionary Marxism came up for discussion in the light of a great diversity of concrete conditions and forms of practice. Participating in the proceedings and responsible for drawing up the resolutions and theses of the Communist International were not only many enthusiastic and talented young leaders from the other national parties, but also Lenin and his colleagues with their wealth of experience derived from the history of the Bolshevik Party, a successful revolution and the actual tremendous problems of holding power in backward and isolated Russia. Under these conditions, the debates and discussions, both behind the scenes and in open session, and the public documents of the Congresses, were of a particularly high quality. Everyone was aware how much was at stake, that the future of the working class for decades might depend on the decisions which were taken and the extent to which they were translated into practice. Not surprisingly, the great figures of the K Party, as well as the less experienced more heterogeneous representatives from

the other parties, did not automatically agree either about the general line or about its tactical application in the individual countries. Neither the parties nor the International were monolithic; on the contrary there was vigorous debate in which differences were expressed, not through some formal respect for abstract principles of freedom of expression or democracy, but because this was the only way to learn from experience, avoid repeating past mistakes and prepare for the next round of struggle.

However, very soon after the Fourth Congress, under the specious slogan of 'Bolshevization', the nature and purpose of the Communist International began to change. The source of this change is to be found in the exhaustion and decimation of the working class in Russia and the rise to power of the apparatus men of the party and the state. The degeneration of the party in Russia, a consequence of the failure of the revolution to spread to the advanced countries and thus of the isolation of the first workers' state in a predominantly peasant and economically backward country, had profound consequences for the international movement. In the first place the struggle within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union between the supporters and sycophants of Stalin and the Left Opposition, which remained staunchly attached to the principles of Bolshevism, had necessarily to be fought out also on the directing bodies of the Communist International and in the national parties. Secondly, the interests of the bureaucracy, as represented by Stalin, but for which leading figures of the Comintern such as Bukharin and Zinoviev also made themselves responsible, came to determine the policies of the International and its national sections.

The results of this initial degeneration of the Comintern in the 1920s, while the voice of the Opposition had still not been entirely stifled, were disastrous. In a number of countries of Europe and then in China between 1925 and 1927, under the aegis of the Stalinized Comintern, revolutionary movements were destroyed in hopeless adventures or in opportunist combinations, as happened with the Kuomintang. The lessons of history and particularly of the Bolshevik Revolution, which had been embodied in the resolutions and theses of the first four Congresses of the Communist International, were now being wantonly disregarded. As a derivative of the Stalinist theory of 'socialism

in one country' first enunciated in 1924, a whole new course was imposed on the Communist movement which the facile pen of Bukharin fashioned into the draft programme finally adopted at the Sixth Congress of 1928. The period from the Third Congress to 1928, here taken as a whole and summarized in very bald terms, will now be reviewed in more detail from another angle. Specifically we have to consider what principles underlay the decisions of the last two Congresses held in Lenin's lifetime, i.e. the Third and the Fourth, and how these were abandoned by Stalin in favour of an empirical and zigzag course whose only guiding principle was protection of the interests of the Soviet bureaucracy.

**Bukharin :**  
His facile pen  
fashioned a whole  
new course into  
the draft  
programme for  
the 6th Congress.



## 2

When the Third Congress met in July 1921, it confronted a situation in which it had to be expected that for a period the revolution would remain isolated in Russia and in which the bourgeoisie in the West had been able to re-establish its power on secure foundations and in some cases go over to the offensive. In this kind of situation there was a temptation either to take refuge in ultra-revolutionary gestures which marked an unwillingness to take account of realities or to abandon the preparation for the eventual re-opening of revolutionary possibilities and settle down to routine activity and conciliation with reformism. In some ways, indeed, the situation resembled that of the 1950s, with rather similar tasks posed for the Marxist movement. It required, for example, a deep analysis of the processes of capitalist development, which was presented by Trotsky with assistance from the Hungarian economist, Eugene Varga, later to become a supporter of Stalin. Coming soon after the disastrous March Action in Germany it also required a firm resistance to adventurism and to revolutionary impatience of the kind which a number of the delegates displayed.

The fact that the parties of the Second International had been able to survive the whirlwind of the war and the post-war revolutionary situations and, despite their class collaboration and betrayals,

retain their hold over the majority or a substantial part of the working class in the advanced countries also posed some crucial problems of tactics. There was certainly some wavering in the higher councils of the Comintern about what attitude should be taken towards the other workers' parties. These tendencies were reflected, too, in the rank and file and extended from outright rejection of any joint action to a tendency towards some kind of compromise.

In fact the primary task in the new situation was to build genuine communist parties with their roots in the working class which could 'win predominating influence over the majority of the working class, and bring its decisive strata into the struggle'. The *Theses on Tactics* set the aim, then, of winning the masses for communism. 'From the day of its foundation', the Theses ran, 'the Communist International has clearly and unambiguously made its goal the formation not of small communist sects, trying by propaganda and agitation only to establish their influence over the working masses, but participation in the struggle of the working masses, the direction of the struggle in a Communist spirit, and the creation in the course of this struggle of experienced, large, revolutionary, mass communist parties'. In a number of countries, indeed, the bases had been laid for such parties, but there were others, including the United States

and Britain—the principal bastions of world imperialism at this time—where little progress had been made.

The hallmark of these Theses is that the communist parties could only develop in struggle. In contradistinction to the minimum programme of the Social-Democratic parties, having the effect and often the intention of bolstering up capitalism, the communist parties had to put forward what was known as a *transitional* programme. The strategic aim was the overthrowing of capitalism, but to do this it was necessary to win the support of the masses, so that the party had to participate in and lead the day-to-day struggles in which the working class was involved under capitalism. Therefore, 'the communist parties must put forward demands whose fulfilment is an immediate and urgent working-class need, and they must fight for these demands in mass struggle, regardless of whether they are compatible with the profit economy of the capitalist class or not'. The intent of these demands in their totality should be to disintegrate the power of the bourgeoisie. 'The workers who fight for partial demands will automatically be forced into struggle against the entire bourgeoisie and their state apparatus', stated the Theses in a passage very relevant to the situation in the capitalist countries today when both the Social-Democrats and the so-called Communist Parties operate with minimum programmes designed to be acceptable to bourgeois parties and allies.

The Theses proposed that the Communist Parties should take advantage of every weakness in the bourgeois front and seek to turn every important local struggle into a general struggle. This could only be done through organization and discipline and by a co-ordination of national struggles. A further set of *Theses on the Structure of Communist Parties and on the Methods and Content of Their Work*, which went into some detail on party organization and methods of work, was also passed. It was stated that 'There can be no absolutely correct and unalterable form of organization for the communist parties. The conditions of the class struggle are subject to change in an unceasing process of transformation and the organization of the proletarian vanguard must always seek the appropriate forms which correspond to these changes. Similarly, the parties in the different countries must be adapted to the historically determined peculiarities of the country concerned'. Nevertheless there was a tendency both in the Theses and in the practice of the

parties to follow too closely the Russian model. At the next Congress Lenin criticized it, saying, 'It is an excellent resolution, but it is almost entirely Russian, that is to say, everything in it is taken from Russian conditions'. He went on to say that while it was a good resolution and he subscribed to every one of its 50 paragraphs, 'we have not yet discovered the form in which to present our Russian experience to foreigners, and for that reason the resolution has remained a dead letter. If we do not discover it we shall not go forward'.

Professor Carr considers that the Theses on organization 'contrasted oddly with the desire to create mass communist parties in the western world'. He is of the opinion that such parties could only have been created, and he is clearly thinking most of all of Britain and America, had the Comintern been willing 'to relax the rigidities not only of doctrine, but of discipline, and to concede to national parties and their leaders a far wider discretion in the framing of policies and tactics suited to national conditions, which could never be well or promptly enough appreciated in Moscow'. Braunthal, for his part, is puzzled to know why, especially after the adoption of the 'united front' tactic, the re-unification of the workers' parties could not take place.

It is remarkable that Carr can imply that the reason why communist parties made little headway in the Anglo-Saxon countries was a result of the insistence on doctrine and discipline. He suggests, in fact, that there was room for two parties of an essentially 'social-democratic' type, loose in organization and membership and with a programme adapted to catching votes. There are many reasons why the communist parties in a number of western countries remained small and weak, but it was not adherence to the Twenty-One Conditions or to the programmatic statements of the first four congresses which accounted for the failure to build mass parties. As for Braunthal's criticism, if he has read the documents of the early congresses their meaning must have eluded him. Not only in organization and methods of work, but in the conception of continuous struggle for transitional demands as a preparation for taking power, the communist movement at this stage was irreconcilably opposed to the theory and practice of social-democracy, even of its left wing. Of course, this did not preclude joint discussions of the sort which took place with the Second International and the so-called Vienna International in 1922, nor did it prevent united front activity.

The trouble in the period after 1923-1924 is not

that the communist parties adhered too closely to the earlier resolutions and decisions but that, under the influence of the Soviet bureaucracy, they neglected them. Therefore, instead of Bolshevik parties there came parties which were at the beck-and-call of Moscow, disorientated by the vagaries of the strategic line and swung on command between the extremes of opportunism and adventurism. Instead of the patient task of party building and preparation there was a search for short cuts or a lapse into sectarian propaganda activity. Instead of the disciplined party organization, true enough based upon the Bolshevik model and which needed adaptation to the special conditions of each country, which was proposed by the first four congresses, the parties became centralized bureau-

cracies ruled by leaders hand-picked in Moscow and brooking no genuine discussion. Obedience was substituted for discipline, repetition of the general line or of the current slogans took the place of creative revolutionary activity. On this basis, because of objective conditions and the disgust of a large part of the working class with the Social-Democratic movement, a few large parties were able to exist in the 1920s. The attractive power of the October Revolution remained strong. Many were convinced that the Stalinists were, as they monotonously proclaimed, the true heirs of Lenin, but the parties which developed were far from being of the sort which Lenin and Trotsky had fought to build in the early years of the Third International.

### 3

The acceptance of the need for a temporary retreat and for preparation was the basis also for the tactic of the united front which was put forward in the early 1920s. The basis of the united front, indeed, was that the situation no longer carried imminent possibilities of revolution but required the communists to gain the confidence of the masses by working for transitional demands and by assisting the working class to resist the offensive of capital. This definitely did not mean submerging the party in mass movements, concealing its identity or altering its organizational premises. In any case the question of the united front was of practical significance chiefly in those countries where important Communist Parties existed side-by-side with reformist parties and trade unions commanding the loyalty of a large part, and probably the majority, of the working class. It did not at all mean that the party should cease to struggle to establish its leadership of the class or to make completely clear the difference between revolutionary Marxism and reformism. But, as Trotsky pointed out, the united front did not mean that the Communist Parties could go straight to the masses under reformist leadership: in that case there would be no need for a united front. The question was to create a mass pressure which would oblige the reformist and centrist leaders either to take part in joint action on specific issues or to be obliged to explain why to their own supporters. Since united front activity required struggle bringing the masses into political life it would, however, create the most favourable conditions for the communists and make possible, though it would not guarantee, the wresting of

part of the rank and file of the reformist organizations from their existing leaders. Far from implying some form of durable agreement on a common programme on the basis of the existing balance of forces between the Marxists and the reformists, leading to an eventual merging and disappearance of differences, the united front, if operated successfully, would enable the former to emerge strengthened from the experience with the split actually widened and with large sections of the working class attracted to their side. As put forward at this time, therefore, the united front was a dynamic tactical turn attuned to a specific



Zinoviev :  
Argued for the  
united front in his  
'Theses on  
Tactics' for the  
4th Congress.

situation which existed in a number of key countries.

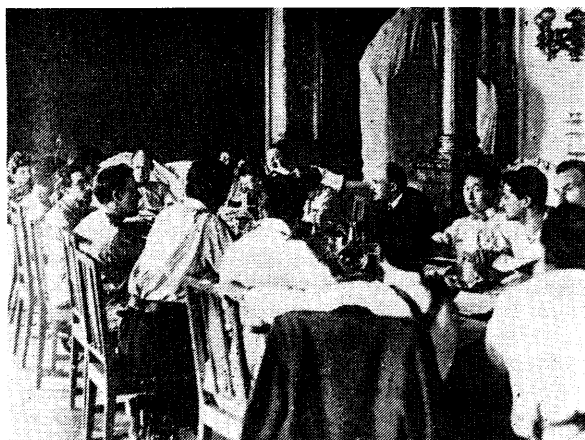
The Fourth Congress, which met at the end of October 1922, had as its principal theme the united front. The *Theses on Tactics*, drawn up and presented by Zinoviev, argued that the necessity for the united front followed from the existing situation of capitalism, the rise of fascism and the defensive position which this was imposing on the labour movement. Among the points which Zinoviev made was the need to preserve the independence and freedom of action of the communist parties. 'The most important thing in the united front tactic' he argued, 'is and remains the agitational and organizational rallying of the working masses. Its true realization can only come "from below", from the depths of the working masses themselves. Communists, however, must not refuse in certain circumstances to negotiate with the leaders of the hostile workers' parties, but the masses must be kept fully and constantly informed of the course of these negotiations. Nor must the communist parties' freedom to agitate be

## 4

By 1922 the Communist movement had become world-wide. Not only had Communist Parties been established in many countries, but the Young Communist International, founded during the war, had grown and the Red International of Trade Unions had been established. Between Congresses the business of the Comintern was transacted by its secretariat in Moscow and by an executive committee drawn from leaders of the Russian and other parties, while the practice of holding plenums between full Congresses was also established. In its resolutions and in its publications the International dealt with all the political problems of the day. It adopted important resolutions on the work of individual parties, on the national and colonial question, the agrarian question and the peasantry, trade union work, and so on. These resolutions and theses are models of their kind for clarity and a principled treatment of the matter in hand and can be studied with profit at the present day. Substantial extracts are available in the Degras collection but, since the tenor of these resolutions is entirely contrary to the practice of Stalinism and to that of the present-day Communist Parties, it is not surprising that most party members, even amongst the theoretically sophisticated, are ignorant of them. For the Fourth International, however, these documents are re-

circumscribed in any way during these negotiations with the leaders.'

In a resolution dated December 1922, the Congress called for the submission of draft programmes for the Communist International and asked the national sections to draw up programmes for their countries. A programme had already been drafted by Bukharin, though not as yet discussed even in the Russian party. It was presumably this draft which was the basis for the draft which was later published and circulated and adopted by the Sixth Congress in 1928. However, between the closure of the Fourth Congress and the publication of the draft programme fundamental changes took place in Russia and in the Comintern. The death of Lenin, the emergence of the General Secretary, Joseph Stalin, from the administrative shadows to lay down the theoretical line for the Party, and the domination of the Comintern by his yes-men and agents after a bitter struggle with the Left Opposition, changed the character of the world communist movement.



The Third International recognized the importance of the national movement. Lenin is seen here in conference with representatives of various nationalities.

garded as a part of the valuable political heritage which provides the bridge with Bolshevism. Many of them bear the mark of Lenin and Trotsky, who, of course, approved fully those which were adopted as Comintern policy, though some were drawn up by Zinoviev and Bukharin, both later to perish at Stalin's hand.

It is significant that, unlike the Second International, the Third quickly recognized the importance of the national movement in the colonies in the struggle against imperialism. At the present time, when so much is heard about the revolution in the underdeveloped countries, the documents of the early Congresses on this question conserve a particular importance. Furthermore, of course, failure to adhere to the principles which they lay down brought about the catastrophe in China in 1927. The *Theses on the National and Colonial Question* therefore deserve special mention both because they laid down principles which are especially valid today and because neglect of them in the 1920s reflected the abandonment of Marxist practice by the Stalinist clique which controlled the policy of the Comintern.

The Theses, drafted and introduced to the Second Congress by Lenin himself, were based implicitly upon an internationalist strategy of struggle against imperialism. Thus, rejecting abstract appeals to national equality and democracy, the exploitation of the great majority of the world's population by imperialism had to be exposed. It follows, the Theses went on, 'that the entire policy of the Communist International on the national and colonial question must be based primarily on bringing together the proletariat and working classes of all nations and countries for the common revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of the landlords and the bourgeoisie'. In exposing the violations of the oppressed nations it was necessary to point out that only a Soviet system could ensure real equality for the nations. Even before Lenin's death, it may be added, a violation of the nationalities policy was perpetrated by Stalin in Soviet Georgia.

The resolution warned against petty-bourgeois nationalism and pacifism typical of the parties of

the Second International which 'even occurs not infrequently among parties which call themselves communist'. It called for a struggle against reactionary and medieval tendencies in the less-developed countries, Christian missions, pan-Islamic, pan-Asian and similar movements. It called for a struggle against the landlords and for all assistance to be given to the peasant movement. It laid upon the working-class movement in the advanced countries the responsibility to support by their action the colonial liberation struggle.

Particularly important in view of later developments in the practice of the Stalinized Communist Parties and the discussion going on about tactics in the less-developed countries, is the passage concerning the building of revolutionary parties in the less-developed countries which deserves to be quoted in full and which runs as follows:

A resolute struggle must be waged against the attempt to clothe the revolutionary liberation movements in the backward countries which are not genuinely communist in communist colours. The Communist International has the duty of supporting revolutionary movements in the colonies and backward countries only with the object of rallying the constituent elements of the future proletarian parties—which will be truly communist and not only in name—in all the backward countries and educating them to a consciousness of a special task, namely that of fighting against the bourgeois-democratic trend in their own nation. The Communist International should collaborate provisionally with the revolutionary movement of the colonies and backward countries, and even form an alliance with it, but it must not amalgamate with it; it must unconditionally maintain the independence of the proletarian movement, even if it is in an embryonic stage.

In Algeria, Egypt, India, Ceylon and in Latin America the revisionists and the communist parties have in the past two decades made a series of



In the past two decades, the revisionists and the communist parties made a series of unprincipled and disastrous alliances with the bourgeois nationalists. Above: the coalition government in Ceylon in which prominent members of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party assumed cabinet portfolios.



unprincipled and disastrous alliances with the bourgeois national leaderships following the models established by Stalin in the 1920s.

Successful struggles in the less-developed countries require an international revolutionary strategy such as Lenin envisaged. They cannot be undertaken by subordinating the revolutionary movement to petty-bourgeois national leaders or by adventurist guerrilla actions. They require, as the resolution maintains, the formation of revolutionary Marxist parties even where the proletariat

## 5

After the Fourth Congress the Communist International began to experience the repercussions of the struggle which was shaking the Russian party. It was, however, the unsuccessful rising in Germany in October 1923 which became the centre of the first stormy debates. According to Trotsky, 'The German events of 1923 form the breaking point that inaugurates a new, post-Leninist period in the development of the Comintern'. It was the occasion for the writing of his pamphlet *Lessons of October*, which related the lost opportunities in Germany to the struggle in the Bolshevik Party which preceded the 1917 Revolution. The essence of the failure in Germany was that the leadership of the German Communist Party lagged behind events and behind the working class, just as a section of the Bolshevik Party, including Stalin, had done in 1917. Naturally, Stalin, as well as his temporary allies, wished to draw a veil over the real situation in the Bolshevik Party in 1917 as well as to justify the advice which they had given to the German party in 1923. From this period the leadership of the Comintern begins to take on the cloak of infallibility; increasingly it gives orders which have to be obeyed; the national sections become dependent upon the Russian party. This shift was at first accomplished gradually and was fought every inch of the way by Trotsky and his co-thinkers, to such effect that Zinoviev and others were won over to a common platform of opposition to the Stalinist course both in Russia and internationally in 1927. It developed in a situation still fraught with great dangers for the Soviet Union. Inside the Communist Party of the Soviet Union as well as in the national parties there was also a serious danger from the Right which had to be contended with. Moreover, many of the non-Russian communists, because they were not informed about the issues or because they had no theoretical grasp of

is small. And the movement in the less-developed countries must form an integral part of a worldwide struggle in which a decisive role is taken by the parties in the advanced countries; the very nature of imperialism determines this strategy. To turn away from this, however much it may be accompanied by enthusiasm, self-sacrifice and heroism, is to seek a short cut which has proved and is proving to be a blind alley at the end of which there can only come defeat.

them, simply failed to understand what was at stake and considered the discussions in the Russian party and in the Comintern to be a waste of time. Further, the falling away of some of the early leaders, the expulsion of others and the rise of a new hand-picked leadership as a product of the 'Bolshevization' of the national parties, all assisted Stalin and his allies to dominate the world communist movement and impose upon it the conceptions which seemed to conform with the needs of the ascendant bureaucracy in the Soviet Union itself.

The Fifth Congress, which met in June-July, 1924, was thus in a sense, transitional. It was dominated by the German defeat and by the desire of the Comintern leadership to find scapegoats. It established a precedent, subsequently followed invariably, of blaming everything which went wrong in a country on to the leadership of the national section. Similarly, in its analysis of world trends it begins to find justifications for pre-determined policies instead of honestly and objectively dealing with the situation.

Referring to this latter tendency Trotsky posed the question: 'Isn't it already clear that there cannot be serious talk of Bolshevik strategy without the ability to survey both the basic curve of our epoch as a whole and its individual segments which are at every given moment of the same importance for the party leadership as railway curves are for the engine driver? To open wide the throttle on a steeply-banked curve is surely to run the train over the embankment'.

Indeed, during the period from the Fifth Congress a wide gap began to open up between the Opposition and the dominant leadership of the Comintern, into which entered basic questions of perspective. Since the Stalinists began with the possibility of separately successful national struggles within the perspective of 'socialism in

one country', and the Opposition began with a unified strategy based upon the international character of imperialism as embodied in the theses and resolutions of the first four congresses, the rift inevitably widened as one issue after another brought them into conflict. However, the terms of

the debate were by no means free and equal. Stalin used his control of the apparatus of the Comintern to suppress and distort the views of the Opposition to prepare the way for dealing with them by physical means.

## 6

To put forward his perspectives for the Comintern Stalin employed the ill-fated Bukharin as his amanuensis. The choice was obviously no accident. Bukharin was clever and talented. Devoted in his way to the Revolution as an abstraction, he was inclined to be over-impressed by the difficulties of the moment. In the controversy over the economic questions in the Soviet Union he had become the leading theoretician of the 'right' tendency which sought to conciliate the peasantry and regarded the NEP as being an indefinite necessity. The draft programme finally adopted by the Sixth Congress in 1928 was principally Bukharin's work, but it was obviously attuned to the needs of Stalin and was based on the so-called theory of 'socialism in one country' which he had enunciated some years before. The draft programme therefore marked a sharp break with the conceptions of the first four congresses. Its correct partial analyses and various unexceptional statements from the point of view of Marxism-Leninism were thus vitiated by the framework, or the pre-suppositions, of the document as a whole. It is not read today even in the Communist Parties not only because it was written by one of the principal accused of the Moscow Trials but because even with all its faults and weaknesses it stands closer to Marxism than the programmes of the CPSU and the national parties which are now adhered to. In fact, it is difficult to find much common measure between the Programme of 1928 and, say, *The British Road to Socialism* as approved by Stalin and subsequently from time to time revised. By comparison, then, Bukharin's programme is still a revolutionary document in intention.

The programme of 1928 is chiefly known today because in draft form it was subjected by Trotsky to a merciless criticism in a document submitted to the Comintern but only circulated by mistake outside narrow circles. As it happened, Trotsky's critique was to play a crucial part in making known the differences between the Left Opposition and the Stalinist leadership of the Comintern and bringing about the formation of parties or groups which were to open the way, at a later stage, for



Trotsky almost single-handed, carried the fight between the 4th and 6th Congresses. Trotsky, his son Leon and Natalia Trotsky are seen above in their place of exile at Alma Ata.

the Foundation of the Fourth International.

Almost single-handed Trotsky carried on through the period from the Fourth to the Sixth Congress a running fight against the theoretical and moral degeneration which Stalin's domination of the Comintern involved. His writings, especially those collected in *The Third International After Lenin*, *The Stalin School of Falsification* and *Problems of the Chinese Revolution*, are accessible, and should be studied. It is not intended here, then, to go over the history of this period and to take up the issues related to the British General Strike, the Chinese events of 1925--1927 and the situation in the other countries where communist parties played an important political role. At this time capitalism was relatively stable and experiencing a boom. For the working-class movement it was a period of retreat and some defeats, of rearguard actions and defensive struggles. It should also have been a period of preparation and theoretical re-arming of the kind proposed by the Third and Fourth Congresses. In fact, as far the policy and programme of the Communist International was concerned, it was a period of domesticating the

national parties to the Stalinist line and of theoretical confusion. The life of the International itself becomes more barren of achievement, directed as it was to the self-justification of whatever line was laid down by Moscow and to the hounding of the Opposition, the first stage of

## 7

No more has been done here than to draw up a very cursory balance sheet of this stage in the history of the Communist International. Clearly there is need for the questions raised to be investigated in much greater detail. At the centre of the stage, leaving aside the obvious bureaucratic measures of the Stalin faction, there was plainly the struggle for Marxist theory carried on by Trotsky and his co-thinkers, as the heirs of Bolshevism, against a particularly pernicious and wholesale revision of Marxism. However, this revision imposed itself, not from its inherent strength, but because it was adopted by the dominant caste in the Soviet Union which carried it into the Communist International, using the prestige of the October Revolution with the world's communists, and enforced it by administrative means. The history of the individual parties shows how this was done, bringing to the fore a hand-picked cadre of leaders at the end of the 1920s and the early 1930s in the main national parties which was to

which was concluded with the exiling of Trotsky. The way was being prepared for the adventures of the 'third period', the opportunist turn to the 'Popular Front' and the final liquidation of the Third International.

survive through to the 1960s. This cadre was schooled to accept the programme and methods of Stalinism and became adept at making all the abrupt turns and adaptations which the interests of the Soviet bureaucracy required. At the same time, it began to put down roots in its own countries, establish a national social base and, approved by Moscow, to work out its various national roads to socialism in the true spirit of Stalinism. But in time, not only did the envelope of the Comintern cease to fulfil any useful function for the Soviet bureaucracy but it had become embarrassing to the national parties. Thus the formal disappearance of this body, which had completely changed its character during the 1920s, became only a matter of time.

*The third and concluding article will deal with the Sixth and Seventh Congresses of the Communist International and the events which led up to its dissolution in 1943.*

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# SCOTTISH NATIONALISM AND REVISIONISM

by Ian McCalman

FOR MARXISTS the task of building a revolutionary leadership of the working class requires a struggle against all forms of pressure exerted by the bourgeoisie upon the working class, both ideological and physical.

Marxists have the duty to examine, expose and fight against all such phenomena. As the decay of capitalism proceeds, efforts to divert the working class from its historic task increase in number, variety and intensity. Scottish Nationalism is one such tendency, the nature of which has to be understood from this standpoint of revolutionary responsibility.

A Marxist approach to the problem of Scottish Nationalism has to differentiate itself completely from all revisionist conceptions. Revisionism expresses itself politically in adaptation to given circumstances in order to win support, no matter what the cost in terms of socialist principles. This is exemplified brilliantly in the recent rise of Scottish (and Welsh) Nationalism and the reaction of revisionists to it, for almost every revisionist tendency has now stated its support for these movements.

The Communist Party has been a supporter of independent legislatures in Scotland and Wales since the 1920s, but in a perfunctory manner, according to prevailing moods in those countries.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The long-standing support for Scottish Nationalism by the CPGB may be related to the important contribution made by Clydeside to the foundation and development of the Party, especially in the person of Gallacher. John Gollan is also a Scotsman and author of a book favouring separatism, *Scottish Prospect* (1949). For a more recent statement see Bert Pearce, 'The National Future of Scotland and Wales' in *Marxism Today*, November 1967.

But now the Maoists are determined to prove themselves the true supporters of such 'nationalism' in the labour movement. Theoretical gloss is given to this in the pages of *Monthly Review*, the American quasi-Maoist magazine.<sup>2</sup> Not to be outdone, the supporters of the Unified Secretariat (Pabloite) have jumped on the band-wagon in their journal *The International*; they have received more sophisticated support from *The New Left Review*.<sup>3</sup>

A new force has seemingly emerged and so the revisionists scramble over one another in their haste to adapt to the current. Almost all of them of course safely attack the leadership of the SNP and its policies, claiming that beneath this lies a genuinely progressive popular force demanding national independence. This is paraded forth in a plethora of high-sounding phrases, 'Celtic resurgence', 'cultural autonomy', 'national liberation struggles', 'right of self-determination', etc. Marxism is prostituted to cover up an adaptation to a petty-bourgeois movement. Their efforts to conceal this reality of the situation reveal that their ignorance of Scottish history and social structure is second only to their abandonment of Marxist principles.

## Some 'historical' arguments

The Maoist argument that what is involved is the beginning of a national-liberation struggle rests upon the claim that Scotland has been historically in a colonial status in relation to England. We are told by the *Monthly Review* contributor that:

The pattern of oppression and exploitation followed

<sup>2</sup> K. Buchanan, 'The Revolt Against Satellization in Scotland and Wales' in *Monthly Review*, March 1968.

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# SCOTTISH NATIONALISM AND REVISIONISM

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the classic lines of all colonial adventures.

But then he goes on to draw all his examples from one area of Scotland only, the Highlands. Certainly the forcible de-population of parts of the Highlands in the early nineteenth century to make way for more profitable sheep farming and later game moors was carried out often with methods similar to those used in colonial countries in Africa and Asia.<sup>4</sup> But the areas of Scotland thus affected did not constitute the whole of Scotland. In fact Prebble in his work on the question reveals that Highland chiefs as well as Lowland contractors and agents were as ruthless in their treatment of their 'countrymen' as were absentee landlords residing in England. But how could it be otherwise? Since the seventeenth century the Lowland gentry and merchants had found much more in common with the English in terms of their social ethos than with the 'barbarians' they saw in the North. Traditional national antipathies still tended to cut across such lines, but increasingly less so as the eighteenth century advanced. Romantic attachment to the exiled Stuarts may have aroused the fervour of a few Highland chiefs, but it found no echo in the pocket-book mentality of the bourgeoisie of Lowland Scotland. In 1745 Charles Edward Stuart received little enough support once he had crossed the Highland Line.<sup>5</sup> The bourgeoisie of the Lowlands and North East Coast had developed a cultural and economic ethos far more akin to their English counterparts than to the clansmen.

Moreover, in this they were aided by many chiefs who, under the impact of the more advanced economy to the south, had abandoned their 'patriarchal' role for a purely economic relationship with their tenants. They collaborated in selling away their people for the profits of sheep farming. Sir Walter Scott's picture of Highland society, which has influenced modern attitudes, was a 'romantic reconstruction of a never-never Highland past'.<sup>6</sup> What lies behind all this talk of 'colonialism' is a failure, wilful or otherwise, to comprehend that since 1707 and even before that the English and Scottish bourgeoisie had increasingly become peacefully integrated. The Scottish ruling class was not reduced to a subservient position to the English. Together the bourgeoisie of both countries swept forward in the nineteenth century on the basis of a common exploitation of the working class of both countries. (This was

carried out with great brutality in Scotland.) The Scottish economy was not in any way retarded in order to maintain English superiority. Scottish capitalism developed at a remarkable speed in the nineteenth century, especially in coal and iron,<sup>7</sup> bringing large profits to the owners of capital who could sit in the same boardrooms as their English counterparts without any feeling of inferiority. This was the class reality of developments. Comparisons with colonial areas of the British Empire are therefore totally misleading. In these areas the indigenous bourgeoisie was made subservient to the imperialists from the outset. This was not so in Scotland.

### Vulgar distortions of Marxism

The revisionists, in their theoretical poverty, group a few of the concepts of Marxism, such as that of colonial exploitation, and then impose them upon situations where it suits their opportunist political requirements. They cannot conceive of these categories of Marxism as part of a *method* for the comprehension of reality from the standpoint of the needs of the working class. Thus the concepts of Marxism are reduced to a sterile scholasticism to be imposed to suit their requirements. This is only the other side of the coin of their so-called respect for 'the facts' which the Trotskyists are continually accused of ignoring. It is obvious that in their treatment of Scottish history, their selection of facts is dictated by their own opportunism. This leads to the position where the present Scottish Nationalist movement is falsely equated with the Irish nationalist movement of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The great historical difference is that the Irish bourgeoisie, frustrated from achieving economic growth by the discriminatory methods of the English imperialist system, was forced into an uneasy alliance with the peasantry against the British government and Anglo-Irish aristocracy.<sup>8</sup> This was the social essence of Parnellism. This was very different from the Scottish situation, where the crofters' revolt in the Highlands in the late nineteenth century was repressed by the Scottish bourgeois authorities.

This Irish nationalist movement was then a genuinely nationalist movement with a progressive content. It was this that led Marx, Engels and Lenin to demand self-determination for Ireland. The

4 See J. Prebble, *The Highlands*.

5 See J. Prebble, *Culloden*.

6 Prebble, op. cit., p. 153.

7 R. H. Campbell, *Social and Economic History of Scotland Since 1707*, pp. 117-152.

8 E. Strauss, *Irish Nationalism and British Democracy*, p. 68.

fight for the implementation of this demand would directly deal a grave blow to British imperialism and at the same time, they conceived, spur forward the struggle of the British working class for democratic rights, thus facilitating the struggle for socialism. But this perspective was based upon a thorough class analysis of the progressive nature of Irish nationalism, and of the 'Irish' base of the English landlords, and not an empirical adaptation to the moods of a frustrated and frightened middle class, such as the revisionists reveal today in relation to Scottish Nationalism.

On the basis of this spurious equation, the revisionists falsely claim an identification of James Connolly and the Scottish revolutionary socialist, John Maclean. A Maoist group, the Workers' Party of Scotland, has recently collaborated with elements in the SNP leadership in establishing a 'John Maclean Society', there to link the name of Maclean with that of Connolly. What they avoid are the important differences between these two men. Connolly was part of a popular nationalist movement from which he could draw strength and to which he could give direction. Maclean was not part of such a tradition. His nationalism was only articulated fully after periods in prison, when he emerged broken in health and subject to illusions. It was in this period, in his last years, that he turned to the conception of a Scottish Republican Party.<sup>9</sup> It is to these years, the period of mental and physical decline, that the Maoists look, desecrating the man's earlier thoughts and actions as a Communist. Their claim that this interpretation is a slanderous product of Gallacher's hatred for Maclean is unacceptable, until they produce an alternative explanation which is in accordance with the facts.

### Real history of Scottish Nationalism

Such efforts to detect a revolutionary tradition within Scottish Nationalism are totally misleading. The movement has throughout its history been a petty-bourgeois tendency. It had its origins in the discontent of the nineteenth-century Scottish Liberal middle class, frustrated by their lack of either political or economic power. This petty-bourgeois basis has determined the character of the movement ever since. Like all such movements it is of course chameleon-like, changing its coloration according to prevailing conditions. In the 1920s, and especially in the 1930s, it had a left-wing bias. The National Party, founded in 1928,

was led by an, ex-ILPer, J. M. McCormick, and the SNP founded in 1934 was a fusion of left- and right-wing groups.<sup>10</sup> Magazines which appeared in the 1930s, such as *Outlook* and *The Northern Review*, emphasized more than ever before the economic reasons for separatism. It was then that arguments used by the present devotees of nationalism, that 'Scotland can stand on her own feet' economically were first advanced at length. It is clear from a reading of these magazines that what dominated these writers was a fear of working-class unrest, which they hoped they could buy off by concessions extracted from the central government by threats of secession. Others saw it simply as a means of diverting the working class from socialist revolution. The left-wing phraseology was indispensable in this process. The aims of these nationalists were essentially reactionary.

### Revisionists jump in

Other revisionists do not deny this petty-bourgeois nature of the movement, but see the middle class as continuators of a distinct Scottish culture, which provides an argument for separation. In a recent issue of *New Left Review*, Tom Nairn, writing in the curiously inflated prose which is a characteristic of that magazine, attempts to define a genuine Scottish culture, as distinct from the vulgar conception of bagpipes, haggis and kilts. He searches for some genuine national 'character' which has been overlaid by successive layers of mythology—'a wholeness expressing its life instead of hiding it, a three-dimensional being freeing the national will and tongue from their secular inhibitions, a realness to startle itself and the watching world'. What is therefore required is a 'cultural liberation from Scotland's pervasive myths as a pre-condition of political action'.<sup>11</sup> R. Purdie, of the 'International Marxist Group' (Pabloite) is also of the opinion that 'the traditional carriers of culture in a nation, the middle class, . . . maintained a distinct Scottish culture and consciousness which it transmitted to the working class'.

Although they never express themselves clearly, what these revisionists appear to be saying is that Scottish separatism can be defended on the basis of cultural autonomy. That is to say, that Scottish culture has been suppressed by the English, thus denying the workers certain elementary rights. Separatism would therefore secure these rights. This sort of argument has been advanced now

10 W. Ferguson, *Scotland, 1689 to the Present Day*, p. 377.

11 *New Left Review*, p. 17.

9 See W. Gallacher, *Last Memoirs*, p. 163; Tom Bell, *John Maclean*, p. 124.



for several decades by some Scottish intellectuals, especially poets, such as Hugh MacDiarmid (C. M. Grieve), prominent Scottish Nationalist and member of the Communist Party.

The argument is in fact artificial. Those socialists who argued in the early years of the present century for national independence on the grounds of cultural autonomy were dealing with East European states dominated by the Russian and Austro-Hungarian Empires before the First World War. Then whole peoples were not allowed to express themselves in their native tongue, the embodiment of their own culture. Instead they were compelled to use the language of the dominant imperialist state. No such situation prevails in Scotland where Gaelic has been the preserve of a small minority for centuries.

Insofar as traditional Scottish 'culture' has been destroyed, that has been more the result of the commercialization of all aspects of life under capitalism than anything else. This debasement is an international phenomenon and not specifically Scottish.

### Lenin on 'national culture'

Above all for Marxists, 'national culture' arguments are insufficient grounds for supporting separatism. Lenin states:

The slogan of national culture is bourgeois . . . deception. Our slogan is the international culture of democracy and the world working-class movement.

Lenin concluded this on the grounds that 'the general "national culture" is the culture of the landed proprietors, the clergy and the bourgeoisie'. He concluded, 'the place of one who advocates the slogan of national culture is among the nationalist petty bourgeois and not among Marxists'.<sup>12</sup>

This aptly describes McDiarmid and the revisionist tendencies who have adopted his arguments. No doubt he and his followers draw upon Scottish traditions, stemming from the historical Scottish social structure, the impact of Calvinism upon it, etc. No doubt also their poetry is of literary value (that we are not qualified to judge). But to create an ersatz 'culture' and claim that this is the 'national culture' is simply effrontery. And then to argue that this constitutes an argument for separation is to compound their philistinism with political confusion and deceit.

At the same time as Lenin attacked such views, he argued (against Rosa Luxembourg) that Marx-

ists had to concede those East European states under imperialist domination the *right* to self-determination. But to transpose these arguments to Scottish conditions is simply ludicrous. For here, as we noted, Lenin is dealing with countries whose own language had been suppressed by the dominant empires. In some cases their separate laws and educational systems had been liquidated. None of these conditions applies to Scotland, the legal system of which still continues separate as do many aspects of its traditional regime. These were some of the main conditions that Lenin considered necessary to justify the slogan of the right to self-determination. When Purdie claims, 'there is nothing, in principle, wrong with socialists supporting the right of separatism' (of Scotland), he makes a mockery of Lenin's formulation. No amount of qualification or talk of 'principle' can conceal that this is a pandering to nationalist sentiments and a capitulation to the petty bourgeoisie.

### One of three main types of nationalism

Lenin went on to describe the three main types of nationalism in the world. There was firstly that of the colonial and semi-colonial countries and secondly that of the East European and Balkan states which we have referred to. Scottish nationalism does not qualify for either of these two categories. But it does find a place in Lenin's third category of nationalism, that in advanced capitalist states. In the era of capitalism this is a totally reactionary ideology, as distinct from its role in the period of the rise of the bourgeoisie.<sup>13</sup> In these circumstances nationalism becomes primarily a means of confusing and dividing the working class.

More specifically, Scottish Nationalism is the cry of the desperate petty bourgeois. Since the mid-nineteenth century sections of the Scottish middle class have been frustrated by their exclusion from the decision-making process. Unable to gain sufficient representation in a British parliament, they looked to a Scottish Assembly as a means of asserting themselves politically. But this nationalist movement has only begun to grow significantly in recent years as the crisis of capitalism has placed the middle class under severe pressure. Seeing themselves crushed between an increasingly militant labour movement and the powerful growth of monopoly, they desperately seek some middle way out of their impasse. These are the social roots of Scottish nationalism. They also gain support from sections of the working

12 Lenin, *Questions of National Policy and Proletarian Internationalism*, pp. 28-30. (Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow.)

13 *Ibid.* pp. 144-145.

class, under attack from the ruling class and disillusioned by the betrayal of their social-democratic leaders, the Labour government. It is this combination that accounts for the recent success of the SNP in local and national elections.

The intensity of this crisis in Scotland has its origins in the catastrophic decline of Scottish capitalism in the twentieth century. From being a leading manufacturing country in the nineteenth century, especially in shipbuilding, it has decayed rapidly. Unable to compete with the giant combines of the capitalist nations, it suffered grievously in the inter-war period, with the fall in world trade. Concentration on basic industries meant and still does mean a deep depression of the Scottish economy. These staple industries have been virtually stagnant since the 1870s and little has been done to correct this 'imbalance'. This, combined with a constant high rate of emigration and a lack of certain necessary raw materials or semi-processed goods, has meant that there has been little change in this position. The result is that the crisis of British capitalism today, as in the inter-war years, hits Scotland with a special intensity.<sup>14</sup> Rising unemployment, low wages and poor housing are the result.

The nationalists claim that this is caused by the discrimination levelled against Scotland by the government in London. Statistics are compiled to 'prove' that under home rule the Scottish economy would flourish through fewer taxes and duties and increased exports. This sort of argument, first raised in the 1930s, has now become the most common one for separatism.

Undoubtedly, the Scottish economy has declined more deeply than large sections of the English, but that is a product of the way in which Scottish capitalism has developed historically. Moreover, it is true not only of Scotland but also of Wales and of certain regions of England, especially in the North East and North West. 'Neglect' of these 'development' areas by the central government has been brought about by inability to tackle the basic problems of British capitalism. This crisis is given extreme expression in the depressed regions, but is not peculiar to them alone.

### **Reactionary Utopia**

However, it is through an exploitation of this position that the nationalists have gained support. They try to construct on this basis what is no more than a petty-bourgeois utopia. How else can one describe their efforts to isolate the Scottish

economy from the developments of international capitalism, to discuss its future balance of trade, etc., in a vacuum? Since the late nineteenth century Scotland has been the target of large American investments. The establishment of Singers on Clydeside in the 1880s and Babcock & Wilcox in the 1890s are early examples of this. Since 1945 we have seen the establishment of subsidiaries of large US firms, such as motor car manufacturers. Investments by English capitalists have also tightened the grip of international capital on the Scottish economy, where there has been an almost total lack of indigenous development on a significant scale. In these circumstances what can 'Home Rule' mean but greater reliance upon US investment and management? Some Scottish nationalists have in fact made it clear that they are in favour of such a development. Seen in this light nationalism becomes more clearly a means of splitting the Scottish and English working class in order to facilitate greater exploitation by the monopolies.

Within such a petty-bourgeois movement radical tendencies may appear, as seen in the philandering of some of its leading members with Stalinists on 'peace committees' and in the John Maclean Society. Mr. Purdie in his article obviously regrets that it is not more 'radical', as he could then support it more enthusiastically. For Trotskyists however, 'radicalism' is not the criterion by which we judge political tendencies. That can in fact be simply the complement of right-wing 'radicalism', or fascism. Both have in common a rejection of independent working-class action. We see this in the SNP where an extreme right-wing tendency has arisen in the shape of the '1320 Club', aiming at the establishment of Scottish 'independence' by military means and the imposition of a temporary military dictatorship. Composed of ex-army officers, backwoods gentry and some 'literary' figures, it enjoys the support of Hugh MacDiarmid, poet, nationalist and Stalinist (he re-joined the Communist Party of Great Britain immediately after the Russian intervention in Hungary in 1956 and also approved of the recent intervention in Czechoslovakia). Although now expelled from the SNP so as to avoid embarrassment, this group is only an extreme expression of strong right-wing tendencies in the movement.

In the face of such dangers, it is clear that the first priority is unity of the British working class in struggle against capitalism. This requires a consistent offensive against all efforts to split that unity by racialists and nationalists. Mr. Purdie tells us that we must support such separatist

<sup>14</sup> Campbell, op. cit., pp. 236-262.

movements because of 'the independent support they gain from the workers'. It was precisely this argument that led the Pabloite group of Ernest Mandel in Belgium to make concessions to Walloon nationalism and thus help scuttle the Belgian socialist movement in the quicksands of separatism.<sup>15</sup> The task of Communists is not to adapt thus to temporary shifts in the mood of sections of the working class, but to fight for their principles and organize within the class, making no concessions on these basic issues.

### Once again, Lenin on nationalism

In the context of a society where the workers have control, then various problems of devolution of power to regions, etc. can be settled in the

15 See *Belgium: A New Party?* (New Park Publications.)

interests of the masses. Under capitalism, however, the unification and centralization of the conflict facilitates the tasks of the working class and the revolutionary party. Lenin had this to say:

The Marxists are, of course, hostile to federation and decentralization, for the simple reason that capitalism requires the biggest and most centralized possible states for its development. 'Other conditions being equal', the class-conscious proletariat will always stand for the larger state . . . will always welcome the closest possible economic amalgamation of large territories in which the proletariat's struggle against the bourgeoisie could develop on a broad scale.<sup>16</sup>

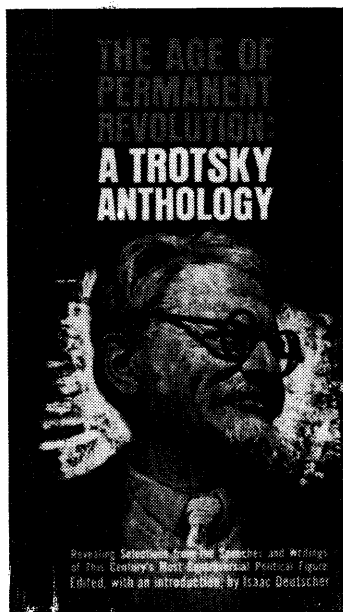
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16 Lenin, op. cit., p. 53.

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# THE AGE OF PERMANENT REVOLUTION

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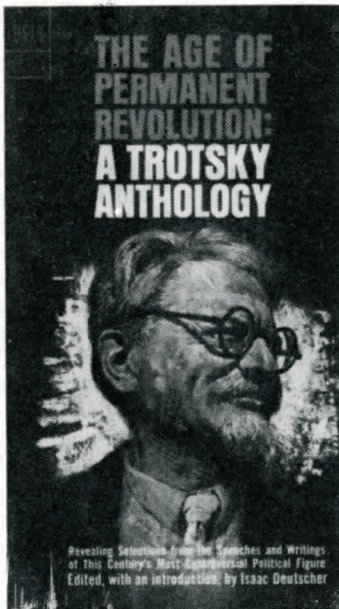
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# Insurrection or Democratism

## *Bolsheviks and Mensheviks in the 1905 revolution*

By JENNY WOODHOUSE

THE PRECISE FORMS of struggle which the working class will adopt in a revolutionary situation cannot be predetermined by Marxists. It is, however, vital that Marxists study the experience of past revolutionary movements, not to imitate them in a routine way, but to analyze them and learn their lessons. Of all forms of struggle adopted by workers in revolution, the general strike is one of the most significant, as the recent events in France have shown us once again. It is therefore important to study the Russian Revolution of 1905, since it was there for the first time that the general strike emerged not merely as a tactic but as the main form of motion of the Revolution. Lenin described the significance of the 1905 Revolution in a lecture delivered for its twelfth anniversary, a month before the outbreak of the 1917 Revolution, as follows: 'The peculiar thing about the Russian Revolution is that in its social content it was a bourgeois-democratic revolution, but in its methods of struggle it was a proletarian revolution. It was a bourgeois-democratic revolution since its immediate aim . . . was a democratic republic, an eight-hour day and confiscation of the immense estates of the nobility. . . . At the same time the Russian Revolution was a proletarian revolution not only in the sense that the proletariat was the leading force, the vanguard of the movement, but also in the sense that the strike, the specifically proletarian weapon of struggle, was the principal means employed for bringing the masses into motion and the most characteristic phenomenon in the wave-like rise of decisive events.'

The Russian Revolution has a special significance in that it took place in an economically backward country where the industrial proletariat, although numerically small, had a decisive role: from the time of its emergence as a class it was organized in large, technically-advanced factories and was directly confronted by international finance capital. In these conditions its organizations and consciousness developed rapidly. The first disciplined Russian strike

movements date from the 1890s, and yet by 1905 the Russian working class was able to face, and win concessions from, the Tzarist autocracy. But in spite of the peculiarities of Russian social development, the lessons of the 1905 Revolution are universal ones. Rosa Luxemburg recognized this in her pamphlet *The Mass Strike, the Political Party and the Trade Unions*, but she drew from it only the lessons which were relevant to her fight against the reformist bureaucracies of German Social Democracy and the German trade unions. For her the important feature of 1905 was the spontaneous, elemental activity of the workers, and the victories which could be won by the general strike: she failed to consider the role of the revolutionary parties in Russia, and the way in which failures of political leadership contributed to the defeat of the revolution.

### From Zubatovism to the Potemkin

In Tzarist Russia, as in any capitalist country in crisis, strikes which began on purely trade union issues became political actions as the forces of the state were turned against the strikers. From 1901 onwards in Russia successive waves of strikes, sparked off by some minor question of wages and conditions, spread to involve whole towns and areas in southern Russia and the Caucasus; for the first time revolutionary agitators were able to speak in public, and as the strikes spread and the police and military were called in, more general demands such as the eight-hour day and political democracy were added to the aims of the strikers. The first open discontent in the bourgeois intelligentsia also appeared in the student movement and, with the beginning of the war against Japan and the successive Russian defeats in 1904, the movement of political protest grew wider. Sections of the bourgeois intelligentsia began to turn their attention from piecemeal local government work to the demand for political democracy, and held meetings, disguised from the police in the form of banquets, at which calls were made for a constitution.



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By JENNY WOODHOUSE

THE PRECISE FORMS of struggle which the working class will adopt in a revolutionary situation cannot be predetermined by Marxists. It is, however, vital that Marxists study the experience of past revolutionary movements, not to imitate them in a routine way, but to analyze them and learn their lessons. Of all forms of struggle adopted by workers in revolution, the general strike is one of the most significant, as the recent events in France have shown us once again. It is therefore important to study the Russian Revolution of 1905, since it was there for the first time that the general strike emerged not merely as a tactic but as the main form of motion of the Revolution. Lenin described the significance of the 1905 Revolution in a lecture delivered for its twelfth anniversary, a month before the outbreak of the 1917 Revolution, as follows: 'The peculiar thing about the Russian Revolution is that in its social content it was a bourgeois-democratic revolution, but in its methods of struggle it was a proletarian revolution. It was a bourgeois-democratic revolution since its immediate aim . . . was a democratic republic, an eight-hour day and confiscation of the immense estates of the nobility. . . . At the same time the Russian Revolution was a proletarian revolution not only in the sense that the proletariat was the leading force, the vanguard of the movement, but also in the sense that the strike, the specifically proletarian weapon of struggle, was the principal means employed for bringing the masses into motion and the most characteristic phenomenon in the wave-like rise of decisive events.'

The Russian Revolution has a special significance in that it took place in an economically backward country where the industrial proletariat, although numerically small, had a decisive role: from the time of its emergence as a class it was organized in large, technically-advanced factories and was directly confronted by international finance capital. In these conditions its organizations and consciousness developed rapidly. The first disciplined Russian strike

movements date from the 1890s, and yet by 1905 the Russian working class was able to face, and win concessions from, the Tzarist autocracy. But in spite of the peculiarities of Russian social development, the lessons of the 1905 Revolution are universal ones. Rosa Luxemburg recognized this in her pamphlet *The Mass Strike, the Political Party and the Trade Unions*, but she drew from it only the lessons which were relevant to her fight against the reformist bureaucracies of German Social Democracy and the German trade unions. For her the important feature of 1905 was the spontaneous, elemental activity of the workers, and the victories which could be won by the general strike: she failed to consider the role of the revolutionary parties in Russia, and the way in which failures of political leadership contributed to the defeat of the revolution.

### **From Zubatovism to the Potemkin**

In Tzarist Russia, as in any capitalist country in crisis, strikes which began on purely trade union issues became political actions as the forces of the state were turned against the strikers. From 1901 onwards in Russia successive waves of strikes, sparked off by some minor question of wages and conditions, spread to involve whole towns and areas in southern Russia and the Caucasus; for the first time revolutionary agitators were able to speak in public, and as the strikes spread and the police and military were called in, more general demands such as the eight-hour day and political democracy were added to the aims of the strikers. The first open discontent in the bourgeois intelligentsia also appeared in the student movement and, with the beginning of the war against Japan and the successive Russian defeats in 1904, the movement of political protest grew wider. Sections of the bourgeois intelligentsia began to turn their attention from piecemeal local government work to the demand for political democracy, and held meetings, disguised from the police in the form of banquets, at which calls were made for a constitution.

Although the Menshevik faction of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (the Russian Marxist Party) tried to involve workers in this 'banquet campaign' with the aim of pushing the liberal bourgeoisie to the left, the entry of the workers into the political movement took place independently of Marxist leadership, almost accidentally. A local strike in a St. Petersburg factory spread to other workers in the city, and a series of demands was formulated including the eight-hour day, an end to the war, political freedoms and the responsibility of ministers to the people. These and other demands were embodied in a petition which was to be taken to the Tzar by a mass procession of workers. At this stage the political consciousness of many of the workers involved was at a very low level; speakers from the revolutionary parties had a poor reception at meetings, and the movement was led by a priest, Father Gapon, who was involved in the police-sponsored trade union movement known as Zubatovism. If not Gapon himself, many of his followers seem to have thought that the Tzar would help his people, if he was made aware of their grievances. In fact, the Tzar had already prepared his answer. When the procession began on January 9 police and military were out in force, and the peaceful demonstrators were shot down. Bloody Sunday, as it was called, was the signal for the beginning of the revolution. A wave of strikes spread outwards from the capital culminating in many areas in street fighting, and although the strikes began to break up before a week was out, they had begun a radical development in working-class consciousness. The traditional loyalty to the Tzar, a feature of peasant consciousness which had been carried over into the factories, was rapidly broken down, and for the first time not merely a small section of 'advanced' workers but broader and broader layers of the working class became receptive to socialist ideas. The months that followed saw the development of trade unions, which the police now had no alternative but to tolerate, waves of strikes which spilled over from trade union to political demands and, on a more limited scale, peasant revolts and mutinies in individual regiments and in the fleet. The mutiny on the battleship Potemkin, in May, is fairly typical: mutineers seized the ship and sailed it to Odessa, which was then in the grip of a general strike. But the co-ordination between the revolutionary groups in the city and on the ship was poor, and when the rest of the fleet failed to respond the Potemkin mutineers gave up the ship in a neutral port.

### **The Bulygin Duma**

Meanwhile Tzarism was forced on to the defensive. In February the Tzar had proposed the setting-up of an elected body, the State Duma, which was a parody of constitutionalism, since it was to be elected indirectly and to have only consultative powers. But this body, the Bulygin Duma, was swept aside by the revolution before it was even elected, by the most widespread and solid strike movement of the entire

revolution, in October. This strike was once again a spontaneous movement which snowballed from a number of isolated events into a mass political protest. We will mention here only two of the major causes of the strike, both occasions when concessions by the insecure government gave weapons to the revolution. First, a decree granting some autonomy to the universities in an attempt to end the six-month-old student strike had induced the students to return to the universities for the new academic year. They threw open the university buildings to the workers, and every night mass meetings were held, giving a powerful impetus to the political development of the workers. Secondly, the railway unions were allowed to hold a congress; thanks to the railway telegraph system the congress was in constant contact with the rank and file, who pressurized the delegates into calling a strike. From Moscow, the venue of the congress, the strike spread along the railway network, and in each city affected railwaymen called the other industries out, until all Russia was paralyzed, and even the Tzar's ministers could reach him only by boat. At this stage in the Revolution, as Lenin saw, the forces were equally balanced; the government was too weak to repress the revolution, and was forced to make a further concession; Count Sergei Witte, the most 'liberal' of a reactionary body of bureaucrats, was made premier, and the suffrage for the Duma was slightly extended, some legislative powers were given to it and freedom of speech was conceded. This October Manifesto was the highest point of the revolution; following it the bourgeois intelligentsia and the capitalists, having gained the concessions they wanted, took fright and withdrew their passive support from the workers. The attitude of large sections of workers was summed up by Trotsky: 'We have been granted freedom of assembly, but our meetings are surrounded by soldiers . . . we have been granted a constitution, but the autocracy still exists . . . we have been granted everything, but we have nothing'. The general strike was not called off, and the workers now demanded a political amnesty. In some places prisons were stormed and prisoners freed. But gradually the impetus of the movement died down, the storm-troops of Tzarism, the notorious 'Black Hundreds', re-appeared on the streets, and Witte began to take actions as repressive as those of any of his predecessors. After wavering on the brink of being overthrown, Tzarism began to re-conquer its positions. The victories of October had been won by the mass strength, largely unorganized, of the working class. But to go beyond this position strong organization and conscious leadership were needed: and no sufficiently developed leadership existed in 1905.

### **Political Parties in the Revolution**

In our account of the events of 1905 little mention has been made of political parties; and certainly they were to a great extent peripheral to the main struggle of the workers. The Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party had been split since 1903 between

Bolsheviks and Mensheviks; and although this split meant little at local level, where what differences had existed between the factions were rapidly being dissolved by the wave of revolutionary enthusiasm, it was of vital importance to the work of the party's central leadership. The split, which had begun on apparently minor organizational grounds, revealed itself with the development of revolution to involve major differences over the nature of the Russian Revolution and the class relationships within it. It was generally accepted that at the level of social development of Russia in the early twentieth century the working class was not sufficiently developed to win socialism; the aims of the revolution must therefore be solely to achieve the level of democracy possible under capitalism, and to win reforms which would assist the working class in its own struggle against the capitalists. This analysis was interpreted in a routine fashion by the Mensheviks; in the period of the banquet campaign, before Bloody Sunday, they saw their role as being to exert pressure from the left on the liberals, so that the workers would assist liberalism and make sure that it fought for the broadest possible democracy. The emergence of the working class as the most significant force in the revolutionary movement completely disorientated this policy, and a section of the Mensheviks joined Trotsky in fighting for the continuation of the bourgeois revolution and its transformation into a proletarian revolution. Others, like Martov and Axelrod, avoided the question of taking power. Martov envisaged the creation of 'islands of revolutionary self-government'—he considered that the revolution would triumph, initially, on a local scale, with the taking-over of individual municipalities, etc., by the workers. When the Bulygin Duma was announced, he called for electors to this Duma to elect, at the same time, deputies to a second assembly which, at the appropriate time, could function as a Constituent Assembly. In fact this policy of ultra-democratism meant the complete abandonment of any hope of political power. The islands of revolutionary democracy, the embryonic Constituent Assembly, remained targets for Tsarist repression, as long as the central organs of power, the army and the police, remained loyal to the government. As Lenin clearly recognized, democracy could be won in Russia only by an armed uprising of the proletariat and the peasantry to defeat and smash the Tsarist state.

### **The emergence of the Soviet**

The role of Menshevism can be seen most clearly in its activities in the St. Petersburg Soviet, where, thanks to Bolshevik abstention, they held the leading position. The Soviet was formed, as a committee of workers' deputies, as part of the Menshevik campaign of revolutionary self-government, and soon represented most of the industrial workers of the capital. In spite of its initial conception as a 'political' body, it owed its mass basis, which extended to the less politically-conscious workers, to the fact that it

became a co-ordinating committee for strike action. After the October Manifesto the Soviet continued to exist and indeed increased its activity. It was instrumental in forcing the St. Petersburg press to defy the censorship and become the centre of the fight for an eight-hour day. Lenin greeted the appearance of the Soviet with enthusiasm, regarding it as a possible nucleus for a provisional revolutionary government, which could take power by armed struggle (the role which the Soviets played in 1917). But later, according to the memoirs of a leading Bolshevik, he said that 'The Soviet is just like a talking-shop; They are trying to turn it into a workers' Parliament.' This was, in fact, precisely the aim of the Mensheviks. They were trying to 'link up' the Soviet to the Peasants' Union, a body which represented the land-holding peasants rather than the rural proletariat, but the gesture was purely formal. Where, on the other hand, real struggle was needed, the Mensheviks hesitated and retreated. When, towards the end of October, the campaign began for the eight-hour day, which had been spontaneously instituted in the factories by the simple expedient of walking out after eight hours' work, the Menshevik leaders tried to hold it back, for fear of alienating bourgeois support for the revolution, and for the purely doctrinaire reason that it was considered necessary to finish off Tsarism before attacking capitalism. In the absence of a clear lead, the eight-hour movement began to disintegrate, and the authority of the Soviet among the workers began to collapse. Witte thus had the satisfaction of seeing one of the most important of the forces opposing his government alienate its own support, so that when he arrested first its chairman and then many of its delegates, there was little response from the workers to a call for its defence.

### **Lenin's rôle in the Bolshevik leadership**

The Mensheviks, like the Bolsheviks, suffered from the absence of effective leadership caused by the party split. But this factor influenced them less than it did the Bolsheviks, since for their policy of vague 'democratic' activity a firm centralized leadership was not vital. For the Bolsheviks, on the other hand, organization was essential. Lenin had recognized that the Russian bourgeoisie was weak and vacillating, and that, provided it could secure minimal concessions from Tsarism, its fear of working-class action was such that it preferred autocracy to revolution. The only way forward, therefore, was for the oppressed classes—the proletariat and the peasantry—to form an alliance with the aim of establishing what he called the 'revolutionary-democratic dictatorship'. Although the balance of class forces in the country was such that a socialist revolution was impossible, even democracy could be won only under the leadership of the proletariat. Insisting that democracy could be achieved only by the armed defeat of Tsarism, Lenin saw the aim of the Bolsheviks to be the turning of the general strike into an armed insurrection. The October Manifesto was of no significance in



the reforms it promised, which benefited nobody but the bourgeoisie: its significance lay in the fact that it revealed the strength of the working class, a strength which must be exercised even more forcibly to overthrow Tsarism. He therefore stressed the need for Bolsheviks to become both political and military organisers, combining the political education of the working class with the preparations for an armed uprising. Lenin's proposals were, however, hampered not only by the confused state of party organization following the initial split and subsequent factional struggles, but also by the conservatism of many leading Bolsheviks throughout the country. The organization of the RSDLP had from its outset consisted of 'committees' composed of the ablest and most reliable members (in practice usually intellectuals) who took the important decisions for their area, decisions which were then carried out by a 'periphery' of rank-and-file workers. Lenin's organizational theories, (which he had set out in *What is to be Done?*) stressing the need for a party of trained professional revolutionaries, had the result of confirming this pattern of organization, and the attitudes of the committeemen had hardened into dogmas. Much of Lenin's efforts during the revolutionary period were devoted to stressing the need for inner-party democracy, aspects of which had been impossible under Tsarist repression, and to demanding that more and more workers and youth were brought into the committees, reflecting the leap which had taken place in working-class consciousness. But in spite of this there was a resistance to change in the Bolshevik local leaderships. The St. Petersburg Bolsheviks, for instance, interpreted Lenin's stress on the leading role of the party as a prohibition of work in non-party organizations, and thus failed to work in the Soviet, leaving it as a Menshevik preserve.

### The armed insurrection

Lenin's slogan, 'organize the revolution', which he opposed to the Martovite concept of 'unleashing the revolution', meant, in effect, that the party must strive to raise every stage of the movement to a higher level—to transform waves of partial strikes into a general strike and to carry the general strike forward into an armed insurrection. Only through the final stage of insurrection could the workers' strength win real change in society. Lenin's view of the revolution was anything but narrow: the party must work to develop all the forms of struggle which the working class itself brought into being, lead strike movements, organize and arm the workers' militias which came into being to fight the right-wing Black Hundred mobs, and train them for the uprising. By local Bolsheviks, however, Lenin's ideas were interpreted narrowly, and each of his recommendations was carried out only as a fixed formula. Only the revolutionary mobilization he demanded could have kept up the impetus of the October strike when the political betrayal of the Mensheviks took

effect: and when, in December, the Moscow Bolsheviks took up Lenin's call for an armed insurrection, they did it in circumstances in which it was by then foredoomed to failure.

### The Moscow uprising

The Moscow working class had always been politically less developed than that of St. Petersburg: the scale of industrial enterprises was smaller, and many workers tended to have closer ties with the land. The Moscow Soviet was not formed until November 22, when the impetus of the St. Petersburg Soviet was already beginning to falter. A combination of circumstances—among them a mutiny in one of the regiments garrisoned in the city—decided the Soviet leadership, dominated by the Bolsheviks, to call a general strike with the aim of transforming it into an armed insurrection, in protest against the suppression of the St. Petersburg Soviet, and this decision was reinforced by over-optimistic reports of the readiness of the St. Petersburg workers to come to the aid of Moscow. The uprising was, however, badly prepared—there were few arms available, and the workers' militias were small—and in addition several of the most prominent leaders were arrested on the eve of the insurrection, leaving no effective guiding centre. For a short time it seemed as if the rising would be successful—the police were withdrawn from the streets because their forces were completely inadequate—but within a few days, with the arrival of army reinforcements, the rising was forced back to a heroic last stand in the working-class district of Presnya (known today as Red Presnya in memory of 1905) where it was finally brutally suppressed.

### Some lessons

From the suppression of the Moscow uprising dates the end of the active phase of the 1905 Revolution—the period in which the working class had the initiative. The beginning of 1906 marked the re-establishment of Tsarist power, the gradual suppression of the remnants of the revolutionary forces, and the fighting of a parliamentary rearguard action. The revolutionary struggles of 1905 were fought almost exclusively by the workers, and it was for this reason that failure was inevitable: without the mass support of the peasantry, and especially of the largely peasant army, the working class was too weak to tip the balance of power against Tsarism. But the immaturity of the contradictions in Russian society was accompanied by the political immaturity of the revolutionary leadership. Bolshevism as a political tendency was only two years old in 1905, and the type of party organization for which Lenin had been fighting throughout those two years had not been built in time to undertake the tasks of the revolution. The failure of 1905 pointed to the need to build a party which was both strongly organized and theoretically developed—a party such as Lenin was aiming for, and which began to emerge in a developed form after 1910.

**FRENCH REVOLUTION BETRAYED**  
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# Syndicalism -- a case history

The South Wales Miners—A History of the South Wales Miners' Federation, 1898-1914

by R. Page Arnot

Allen and Unwin, 1967 60s.

R. PAGE ARNOT'S book on the miners of South Wales could have been a major contribution to the understanding of the development of the revolutionary movement in Britain and in particular the role of revolutionary politics in the trade unions. From the 1890s onwards the South Wales coal industry was a storm-centre of industrial conflict in Britain. It was an area where an increasing number of rank-and-file trade unionists turned to Marxism as a guide to action against capitalism, an area which saw the growth of revolutionary syndicalism from 1909 and the emergence of the basis for the mass appeal of the Communist Party from 1920. By the mid-1920s the Communist Party and the Miners' Minority Movement were the effective determining influence in union policy in the coalfield and it was in South Wales that the CP had gone furthest in establishing a mass influence among the working class. Arnot's book covers the period which saw the beginnings of this development, the formative years of the South Wales Miners' Federation (SWMF). The feature of central importance to Marxists in this period is obviously the great conflict of 1910-1911, the Cambrian Combine Strike, from which emerged the syndicalist Unofficial Reform Movement (URM), the organisation which played a major role in linking the struggles of the Welsh miners to those of miners throughout Britain in the fight for a minimum living wage and which, in effect, forced the right-wing bureaucracy of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain into the great strike for the minimum wage in 1912. Even more important, it was the URM which set the pattern for revolutionary syndicalism in the unions with its

publication of the famous manifesto, *The Miners' Next Step*.

Arnot's book is concerned with none of these issues. He devotes less than two pages to the unofficial movement; such information as he provides is vague and inaccurate. His excuse of the scarcity of sources is simply false. The Labour press of the period allows a full analysis to be made of the revolutionary movement among the Welsh miners. The point is, of course, that not only is Arnot not interested in the revolutionary developments in South Wales in the 1900s, but he finds it impossible to understand and relate them to the present problems of the miners, to whom he has the effrontery to dedicate his book. In the first place, given the counter-revolutionary role of Stalinism in Britain, Arnot, a life-long apologist for Stalinism, is unable to draw any revolutionary lessons from the experiences of the Welsh miners; such lessons are meaningless to a party which has totally rejected revolutionary politics. In the second place, as far as the Welsh miners are concerned, the last thing Arnot wants to do is to draw attention to their past revolutionary experience and the origins of the movement that led directly to the formation of the CP in Wales. From the 1930s the history of Stalinism in the miners' trade unions has been the history of the betrayal of the rank and file. In the interests of popular front politics the militant struggles of the Welsh miners in the 1930s to crush company unionism in the coalfield and to rebuild the SWMF as a fighting union were compromised and in some cases blatantly sold out in order to avoid offending progressive parsons on the platforms of the popular front. Again, in the

post-war period, to avoid conflict with the Labour government in the interests of peaceful co-existence, the CP supported what was a purely capitalist nationalization even when it was well aware that this must be the prelude to rationalization schemes at the expense of the miners. It was because of this that the CP avoided any principled policies against the bureaucracy of the NUM. Identified with this bureaucracy through successive general secretaries, Horner and Paynter, the CP refused to give any effective lead against pit closures and the speeding up of production. As a result, in South Wales, as elsewhere, the National Coal Board has been able to destroy the jobs of tens of thousands of miners since 1947 and threaten the security of every single miner left in the area. Only a principled political and industrial fight against closures could have prevented this; the policy of peaceful co-existence has led to quite the opposite result.

## History of trade union bureaucracy

It is therefore not coincidental that Arnot's book (apart from the initial chapters on the formation of the SWMF) concentrates almost wholly on the activities of the leadership of the union. For Arnot, trade union history is the history of the trade union bureaucracy, and even within this limited context he is not interested in serious analysis of the factors causing the growth of bureaucracy. The same point applies to all his other works on the history of miners' trade unionism. In none of these does Arnot attempt seriously to examine the conflict between the rank and file and the union bureaucracy, nor does he show at any point that such conflicts were essentially political, that they represented the repeated attempts of the rank and file to fight capitalism as against the readiness of the bureaucracy to accept the capitalist system and to work

within it. But it was these conflicts from the 1900s which provided the basis in leading trade unions in Britain, the railworkers and engineers as well as the miners, for the attempt by the younger generation of trade union militants to find their way to a revolutionary opposition to capitalism and to realize in the process the need for the destruction of the trade union bureaucracy as one of the main obstacles preventing the full strength of the working class being deployed against capitalism.

#### **From the 1870s to the 1890s**

It is from this position that an understanding of the history of the South Wales miners has to begin. What was so prominent in the history of the SWMF in the period covered by Arnot was the deep division between a growing section of the rank and file, particularly the young miners, and the pro-Liberal leadership of the union. The origins of this division lay in the circumstances surrounding the formation of the union. In the period between the destruction of Halliday's Amalgamated Association of Miners in the 1870s and the creation of the SWMF in 1898 trade unionism among the miners had virtually ceased to exist in South Wales. What took its place in most of the valleys was a form of company unionism, the Sliding Scale Association. Wages were regulated not through any form of struggle against the owners but through the automatic upward and downward movement of wages in relation to the market price of coal. This meant that the owners were compensated for the sharp fluctuations in prices on the export markets for which South Wales produced; profit levels were maintained at the expense and frequent destitution of the miners. Furthermore, the only contact between miners and owners was through the miners' agent on the Sliding Scale Association, a paid official whose money was deducted from individual miners' pay-packets at the colliery office. To all intents and purposes this agent was in the

owners' pocket. The strongest exponent of this form of company unionism was Mabon (William Abraham), boss of the Cambrian Miners' Association in the Rhondda, Liberal MP for the area from 1885. The Mabon approach to the owners—industrial harmony—stemmed not only from the Liberal position shared with many owners but also from shared religious non-conformity which reinforced the belief in social and industrial peace, respect for the ordained divisions between master and man. From 1889, with the formation nationally of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, there was mounting rank-and-file opposition to the sliding scale system in South Wales. The great strength of the MFGB lay in its complete rejection of the sliding scale, its demand for a living wage as the basis for all wage agreements and its policy of national strike action in defence of constituent unions. The contradiction at the heart of the MFGB was the fact that its leadership was mainly in the hands of Liberals, notably the formidable Ben Pickard of Yorkshire. For these leaders there was no discrepancy between efficient trade unionism and Liberalism. Such trade unionism was, for them, one of the means for extracting concessions from capitalism; the other was the Liberal Party. They were not therefore committed in any way to challenging the capitalist system as such. In fact, once the MFGB had consolidated itself after the bitter Midlands strike in 1893, its leaders formed increasingly close ties with the coalowners through the system of collective bargaining set up to replace the sliding scale, the Conciliation Board. It was in this way that a bureaucracy based on the Liberal attitudes of the MFGB leaders and their peaceful relations with the owners began to emerge during the 1890s.

#### **Rise of the MFGB in South Wales and the 1898 lock-out**

In South Wales a somewhat similar process occurred. The formation of the MFGB stimulated an increasing number of miners to re-

ject 'Mabonism' and to demand the formation of a militant, fighting union. Essentially this meant outright opposition to everything Mabon stood for, including the ideology of Liberalism and non-conformity. It was, in fact, during the bitter struggle to break the sliding scale in the 1890s and to defeat Mabon and his associates that the deep distrust of the pro-Liberal union leaders was evolved. The fight to break the sliding scale was prolonged and intense and, most important, was fought almost entirely through the initiative and militancy of the rank-and-file miners. The first encounter came in 1893 with a massive unofficial strike by the Rhondda hauliers against the sliding scale. Its effect was immense. Miners of all grades came out in many valleys in defiance of the pleadings of Mabon and other leaders of the Sliding Scale Associations; in fact, one of the main features of the strike was the identity of outlook between the owners and these leaders against the strikers. Only in backward areas was there rank-and-file opposition to the movement. At Ebbw Vale, for example, owners armed and paid their employees to attack and beat up the groups of strikers who were marching from valley to valley calling out the miners. The defeat of the hauliers was only episodic. The growth of support for the MFGB policies continued. Across the 1890s membership of the MFGB developed secretly in many areas in South Wales, spreading from Monmouthshire where there existed a branch of the MFGB led by William Brace and Tom Richards. In the more distinctly Welsh areas where 'Mabonism' still had some hold membership was an undercover affair. In the Rhondda, rank-and-file militants belonged openly to Mabon's union, secretly to the MFGB. To avoid victimization by owners and Mabon, they were forced to work as a disciplined faction holding meetings under cover of darkness on remote mountainsides. The decisive turning-point came with the lock-out of 1898. The growth of MFGB influence was now sufficient to allow the rank-and-file militants

to insist on the breaking of the sliding scale through a decisive confrontation with the owners. Mabon and the supporters of the old methods were forced reluctantly to adjust to this mood but this shifting of position was not sufficient to appease rank-and-file hostility. The fear of a sell-out to the owners produced the rank-and-file decision, by large majorities, to withhold all powers of settlement from their negotiators and for the reference of all actions by the leadership to rank-and-file approval. This decision was completely in line with the predominant role played throughout by rank-and-file miners in building the union. The result was the great 1898 lock-out. Involving over 100,000 miners directly, it lasted six months accompanied by increasing destitution and distress. A participant in the struggle recorded that 'during this time strike pay was paid to us about six times of 1s. or 1s. 6d. per person to members of the Cambrian Association' (Mabon's union). It was in the face of sheer starvation that the miners were forced back without at this point breaking the sliding scale; but the six months' sacrifice was not wasted. The immediate result of the struggle was the formation of the SWMF (South Wales Miners' Federation) as a member of the MFGB, that is, committed to the ending of the sliding scale and now backed by the strength of the national union. This move in itself meant that the South Wales owners must again be challenged in the near future from a position of much greater strength. To avoid such a conflict in a period of high profits and rapid expansion the owners formally abandoned the scale in 1903. A Conciliation Board on the English model was set up; wages now were not to fluctuate below a guaranteed minimum.

#### **Ideological development of the youth**

The creation of an effective union in South Wales had an immense effect on the workers throughout the coalfield. The means now seemed to exist for decisive oppo-

sition to the owners. The phenomenal growth of the SWMF in its first few years indicated how ripe conditions were for carrying the fight against capitalism in South Wales to a higher level. Starting with 60,000 members in 1898, the union had attracted 127,000 by 1900 out of a total of 132,000 miners in the coalfield. At the same time this spectacular growth was accompanied by the rapid breakdown of traditional attitudes among the miners. Among the young miners in particular there was a rejection of Liberalism and religious non-conformity which had been so deep-rooted among the miners throughout a large part of the nineteenth century. There was a search for a completely alternative system to capitalism and its religious ideology. In the first place, religious idealism was rejected for a materialist outlook as the reality of the conflict with capitalism became increasingly clear and understood. A young miner of the period expressed this ideological struggle exactly; '... young people were pondering; "Shouldn't there be some visible influence of spiritual teachings in Social and Industrial Life?" The Lord's Prayer spoke of "Thy Kingdom come on Earth as it is in Heaven." What and where are the signs of this? Personally, I was reading Darwin's *Origin of Species* and couldn't square it with Genesis. I could turn to no-one for guidance. The teachers were silent and ignorant, the preachers considered such ideas as heresy, and so one was left to brood. Slowly the certainty grew that the Church was fallible.' This sort of experience was widespread and it was in this way that young miners brought up in the religious traditions turned to socialism and revolutionary theories. Noah Ablett and Arthur Horner, for example, both to be leading figures in the origins of the revolutionary movement among the miners, were initially training for careers in the chapel when they rejected religion for Marxism. It is important to stress this turning away from religion because it was directly linked to the rapid growth of Socialist influence in South Wales

from the turn of the century and the emergence of revolutionary groups basing themselves on Marxism. Chapel attendance was in rapid decline from the 1890s and paralleling this was the steady breakdown of support for Liberalism. By the middle 1900s the SWMF was one of the leading areas in the MFGB in forcing the national union to affiliate to the Labour Party in 1908.

#### **A conservative leadership**

But these developments did not occur in any straightforward way. They were the product of ideological, political and industrial struggle against the established relations with the coalowners, yet the SWMF, while it was seen as a break from these traditions by the mass of the rank and file, continued to be led very largely by representatives of these old traditions. Mabon emerged in 1898 as president of the new union, and while his fellow officials, Brace and Richards, had originally led the fight against 'Mabonism', they were no more committed to class-conscious trade unionism than he. While they stood for a more effective form of trade unionism, they saw this wholly in terms of establishing a workable system of collective bargaining procedures with the owners. Like Mabon, they were leading figures in the chapel and active supporters of the Liberal Party; they joined Mabon as Liberal MPs in the 1906 election. They shared these characteristics with the great majority of the members of the SWMF executive and the result was that soon after the formation of the union they came to form a tight bureaucracy with close and cordial relations with the owners on the Conciliation Board. This institution served in an ideal way to reinforce the basic opposition of the executive to militant, class-conscious policies. On the Board differences between the two sides could be ironed out through peaceful compromise virtually irrespective of the feelings of the union membership because of the fact that the district agents of the union, who made up the executive and

sat on the Board, were unaccountable to the rank and file through any system of recall or annual election.

### **Concentration of ownership and intensification of exploitation**

The marked differences between the union leadership and the attitudes of the rank and file became increasingly clear throughout the 1900s. The relationship between the officials and owners centrally was in stark contrast to the position of the rank-and-file miners in the districts. The 1900s were, in fact, a period of mounting attacks by the owners on wages and established conditions throughout the coalfield. To offset the cost of labour legislation (e.g. the Mines Acts, the Workmen's Compensation Acts, the miners' Eight-Hour Day legislation in 1908) and to compensate for the loss of the sliding scale, the owners began a concerted policy of speeding up production, cutting costs at the expense of the long-established customs of the miner, generally intensifying the rate of exploitation. The lead in this was taken by the great combines that began to emerge in the coalfield in this period, notable the Cambrian Combine of D. A. Thomas. These combines represented the concentration of ownership of what had hitherto been a multitude of individually owned collieries. They permitted the introduction of 'scientific' managerial techniques for the systematic intensification of exploitation. Attacks on conditions centred on the question of 'abnormal places', i.e. those places where physical conditions in the colliery prevented a miner on piecework from earning a living wage. Hitherto coalfield custom had been for owners to pay 'consideration' money to make up wages; now the attack on conditions focussed on the abolition of this custom. The problem of abnormal places was common to all coalfields in Britain; in South Wales it was rendered particularly acute by the extremely difficult conditions of production. At the same time, the effect of this attack was made all the more serious by the

growing inflation of the 1900s which reduced real wages at the very time when these wages were being threatened by the policy of the owners. The result in South Wales was rapidly mounting rank-and-file unrest and militancy which was to explode in the Cambrian Combine strike of 1910. Moreover, while the conditions for a bitter conflict between the owners and the rank and file were maturing, the leadership of the SWMF showed itself unable and unwilling to resist the owners' attacks. Despite the rank-and-file unrest expressed via successive conferences, the SWMF leaders would do nothing to prejudice the smooth working of the Conciliation Board system to which they were so devoted. When a new wage agreement was signed in 1910 it did nothing to solve the now desperate question of abnormal places.

### **The conflict in the Cambrian coalfield**

It was this situation which was the basis for the Cambrian Combine strike. What the strike represented was a direct repudiation of the methods of the SWMF bureaucracy. It was an attempt by the 12,000 workers of the Combine to force a settlement of the abnormal places question by direct action. Rejecting the whole procedure of the Conciliation Board system, the strikers aimed at forcing from the management payment of piece-rates that would guarantee a living wage whatever the conditions at the coalface. More than this; the strike was linked directly to the general problems of miners throughout the coalfield. During 1910 there had been mounting rank-and-file attacks on the SWMF bureaucracy and its whole policy towards the owners. The conciliation system was condemned as a method of class co-operation and the demand grew for the extraction from the owners of a living wage by militant union action. It was not the role of the union to subordinate itself to the economic laws governing the coal industry but to win a decent standard of living for its members. It was this mood which provided the

basis for the extension of the Cambrian Combine strike into a general demand for a minimum living wage and which provided the conditions for the partially successful minimum wage strike in 1912. Even more significant was the fact that implied in the mood of the rank and file was the demand for the destruction of capitalism in the mining industry and its control by the mineworkers. It was not coincidental that the nationalization of the mines emerged as a central part of the policy of the MFGB after the 1912 strike.

### **The great Cambrian strike**

It was the Cambrian strike, then, which served to bring to a head the growing radicalization among rank-and-file miners. In this context it needs noting that the strike was no isolated affair; elsewhere in the coalfield unofficial strikes occurred at the same time on the question of abnormal places, notably in the Aberdare Valley where the struggle which developed simultaneously with that in the Rhondda was, if anything, even more bitter. That the strikes were the culmination of years of intense frustration expressed almost as much against the bureaucrats in the leadership of the SWMF as the coalowners was shown by the character of the struggle and the position adopted towards it both by the state and the union leadership, nationally and in South Wales. In the Rhondda the Cambrian Combine strike was characterized by the mobilization of the whole mining community against the Combine, the police and troops dispatched by Churchill, and the union negotiators who attempted throughout to negotiate a compromise settlement which rested, in fact, purely on belief in the goodwill of the Combine management. The pitting of the whole mining community against these forces was evident from the start of the strike in November 1910. The situation was one which must lead to an inevitable and bitter clash. With the approach of winter, and the dependence of the strikers on

their 10s. per week strike pay, it was clear that success depended on the total immobilization of the Combine. So long as the pumping and ventilation equipment functioned and the collieries could be maintained in a good state of repair, the Combine could hold out indefinitely until the strikers were forced back by starvation. Two courses of action thus emerged; the first, to prevent blacklegging by all workers engaged in maintenance—engineers, safety officials, etc.—so as to force the Combine to surrender in the face of breakdown of the pits through flooding and roof falls; the second, to attempt to win the South Wales coalfield and the Miners' Federation nationally to general strike action for a minimum wage for all mineworkers. It was this second course which was the main outcome of the strike, and the lead here came from the syndicalist-dominated Unofficial Reform Movement. The first course of action was ultimately frustrated by the intervention of the state with police and troops. Initially the strike leadership, the Cambrian Combine Committee, was able to prevent blacklegging by mobilizing the whole working population of the mid-Rhondda. The mass picketing involved was immensely efficient and impressive. A local newspaper recorded that 'A vast procession, comprising thousands of workers, marched from one side of the valley to the other side at Penygraig. . . . Prominent in the procession were two men garbed in white shirts bearing the phrase "Take warning". These two men were further led along with halters round their necks—another significant reminder to the offenders as to the treatment to which they would render themselves liable.' The so-called 'Tonypany Riots' were the direct outcome of this determination to halt the collieries completely. While blacklegs were adequately disposed of, colliery officials, led by L. Llewellyn, the general manager, had manned the power houses and were maintaining the pumping apparatus. Llewellyn later made it clear that he and his officials were armed and ready to shoot

any intruders. The 'riots' proceeded from successive attempts to storm the power houses and rake out the boiler fires. At the Naval and Cambrian collieries these attempts were initially successful; at the Glamorgan, Llewellyn and the police successfully resisted. In all these actions the evidence of the total commitment of the whole mining population against the Combine was overwhelming. As the press noted, 'A surprising feature of the whole disturbance was the part played in it by the women who . . . were the ringleaders in many of the assaults on the collieries and exhorted the men to further violence.'

It was at this point that the state intervened, via Churchill, the Home Secretary in the Liberal government. Churchill's policy was twofold. While on the one hand he and the ruling class as a whole were aware of the radically new mood in the working class represented by the strike—its insurrectionary character and its tendency to virtual civil war—he was equally aware of the electoral dependence of the Liberal party on Labour support. Direct military repression could shatter the already weakened position of Liberalism. The first-line forces used against the strikers were thus police; while they were backed by troops, the latter were held in reserve and kept as far as possible from direct conflict with the strikers. The police did an effective enough job, however; their savagery in clashes with strikers is well documented, and, backed by the military, they were able to maintain a reign of terror in both the Rhondda and Aberdare valleys during the most critical period of the strikes. Even the ultra-Tory *Western Mail*, ardently supporting the owners, was shocked at the character of police action. As it recorded of police handling of a demonstration at Aberdare: '. . . the police resorted to their truncheons, with which they eventually succeeded in beating back the strikers along the side of the canal, into which nearly a hundred of them were precipitated among the number being women and children who had figured prominently in the riot. The

spectacle was now of an alarming nature. From dozens of heads blood flowed profusely and the cries of the women and children were pitiful beyond description . . .'

It was repression like this that defeated the policy of bringing the collieries to a total halt. The strike in the Rhondda thus inevitably turned into a war of attrition with the odds weighted heavily to the owners. The main factor now, of course, was the isolation of the strikers. The leaders of the SWMF and the MFGB were successful in their attempts to prevent any general sympathetic action and eventually, against intense rank-and-file resistance, were able to force a purely local settlement on the strikers after the conflict had lasted for ten months.

#### **Emergence of an alternative leadership**

What was so momentous about the Cambrian strike, however, was not simply the heroism of the miners involved, but the way a revolutionary leadership at rank-and-file level emerged from the conflict and began to win support throughout the coalfield, and then the MFGB as a whole, against the union bureaucracy. The alternative leadership within the SWMF was based upon the branches of the Plebs League in the Rhondda and adjacent valleys. This organization had been established in 1909 as a direct result of the strike at Ruskin College of that year. The whole aim of Ruskin College, then as now, was the training of young trade unionists for the role of tame trade union bureaucrats through capitalist economics and social theory. It was against this indoctrination that the strike took place, and prominent in it were a number of Welsh miners, notably Noah Ablett and Noah Rees, the latter a leading figure on the Cambrian Combine Committee during the 1910 strike. The strikers demanded training in Marxist theory as a preparation for trade unionists to play a revolutionary role in the unions with the aim of building a trade union movement powerful enough to smash



capitalism. The strikers broke away from Ruskin, founded the Central Labour College as a trade union educational centre for revolutionary trade unionists, and formed the Plebs League as a complementary movement which would establish branches in all industrial areas to carry out local educational work on Marxist lines. It was significant that the whole movement was an expression of total opposition to the growing bureaucracy in the Labour movement and its close involvement with the state and employers, and it was this point which meant that the branches of the Plebs League in South Wales were in a position from 1909 to provide an effective leadership against the executive of the SWMF. It was members of the Plebs League who played a leading role in the Cambrian Combine strike in developing the policy of broadening the strike into a general demand for the minimum wage, and who mobilized rank-and-file opinion not only into getting this policy officially adopted by the SWMF but in committing the union to a 'missionary' campaign throughout the other districts of the MFGB into converting the rank and file as a whole to action. This campaign evoked widespread response, so much so that at national level there was a growing realization among MFGB officials that unless the Federation took up the policy officially they would lose control to the revolutionary movement at rank-and-file level. As one official put it, unless they opened negotiations for a minimum wage '... there will be a strike, and that strike will be brought about in such a way that the leaders of the Federation will have no command over the men and the men kept in hand...'. It was to head off the movement at rank-and-file level that the MFGB in fact took up the question and eventually led the 1912 strike.

**Critical appraisal of the new leadership: two important points**

It is necessary to assess critically, however, the nature of the Unoffi-

cial Reform Movement in South Wales (i.e. the movement in the SWMF based on the policies of the Plebs League) for the methods of the movement were to determine the character of the revolutionary movement in South Wales and, by example, in the trade unions generally, into the 1920s. The great strength of the URM was the way in which it understood the role of bureaucracy within the trade unions and saw the need for complete rank-and-file control over officials if the unions were not to become increasingly tied into the employers and the state. It was this demand which featured so prominently in the famous publication of the URM, *The Miners' Next Step*. Despite its Marxist inspiration, the URM was wholly syndicalist in character. Its interpretation of Marxism was of a one-sided nature. The basic argument of the movement (and this applied to the Plebs League and Syndicalist movement throughout Britain) was that as capitalism moved from an individualistic to a monopolistic form, so the working class, in reaction to this development, would strengthen and extend the power of its trade union organization. In particular, the formation of Industrial Unions embracing all workers in a given industry would be necessary to confront capitalism on an equal basis. The process of forming Industrial Unions, it was argued, would inevitably lead to the progressive encroachment of the working class on the power of the capitalists; the profit margin would be whittled away as wages were pushed up; the control of the capitalists over production would be eroded as hours were shortened and conditions improved. Eventually a point would be reached where the working class, through Industrial Unions, would be able to take complete control by means of the General Strike.

Two important points emerge in connection with this theory, as expressed in the *Miners' Next Step*; its rejection of political action by the working class and its opposition to revolutionary leadership. To a large extent the rejection of political action was a direct reaction

against the opportunist politics of the Labour Party under Macdonald in the 1900s. What the syndicalists were attempting to do was to develop a revolutionary alternative to Lib.-Lab. reformism, but they failed to see that all mass struggles of the working class must assume a directly political form, that in challenging the control of industry such struggles were a direct challenge to the capitalist state upon which the defence of private property relations rested. The theory of direct industrial action was, in fact, only possible in a period of vigorous capitalist expansion, when the system, if pressed strongly enough by militant trade unionism, could afford to make concessions. This situation was reversed in a period of economic crisis and capitalist decay. Up to 1921 the methods of the URM could yield results; an immensely powerful organization had been built in some areas, notably the Rhondda, by 1920, whereby, for example, the whole 40,000 miners of the valley would strike, as they did, in defence of one victimized comrade. In 1921, however, the bottom dropped out of the boom; the coal industry was particularly severely hit, and, backed by the state, the owners demanded savage cuts in wages. In such conditions, purely trade union action was insufficient; the crisis could be resolved only by a struggle for power against the capitalist state. There was no question now of steadily encroaching on the power of the owners. The great miners' strike of 1921 was a directly political struggle and revealed that the syndicalist unofficial movements were able to provide no revolutionary leadership for the working class.

The denial of the need for political action by the working class was logically accompanied by a rejection of leadership. In their analysis of the causes of bureaucracy in the trade unions, the authors of the *Miners' Next Step* had argued that the institution of leadership itself created bureaucracy. The only way of avoiding this was to ensure complete rank-and-file control over the actions of the trade unions. In this way, as the rank and file

automatically came to see the need for Industrial Unionism directed towards the seizure of control in industry, so their outlook would be reflected automatically in the policies of the union. The whole theory of syndicalism was thus dependent on the spontaneous actions and moods of the working class. What syndicalism existed for—movements like the South Wales URM—was to stimulate rank-and-file militancy, and to work for the assertion of democratic control over trade union leadership. This tendency of opposition to all leadership became deeply rooted in South Wales and in other areas where the South Wales example was imitated. While this form of organization could serve to get militant policies adopted through ginger group activities in periods of capitalist expansion, in acute revolutionary situations, as in 1921, it was completely unable to take effective, concerted action to assert a revolutionary leadership. In short, a purely mechanical approach to Marxist theory, a rejection of politics, and an inability to provide revolutionary leadership were all essential parts of the basic weakness of syndicalism. It is worth noting, furthermore, that syndicalism, which was essentially the reflection of purely 'trade union consciousness', provided the basis for opportunism

within the trade union movement. It was quite possible, given the loose, untheoretical character of the movement, for trade union careerists to associate with the movement, exploit the mood of the working class through left talk, and to use the movement as a basis for gaining high trade union positions. The clearest case in this respect was Frank Hodges, closely associated with the URM in South Wales before 1914. It was undoubtedly his playing up of his association with the left wing of the SWMF, and the question of workers' control, that gained him the secretaryship of the MFGB in 1918. From there his career went rapidly to the right, aiming at an eventual Cabinet position in a future Labour government. From 1921, moreover, Hodges became the darling of the coalowners.

#### **An important outcome**

It would, however, be wrong to see the syndicalism of the South Wales miners, as it evolved between 1909 and 1914, purely in terms of its weaknesses. Essentially, it represented a genuine attempt to find a way to a consistently revolutionary position, a way out of the opportunism of the Labour Party and trade union bureaucracies. The use made of the movement by people

like Hodges did not alter the fact that through the activities of the URM many hundreds of rank-and-file miners in South Wales were won to a revolutionary position. It was these miners who made up the basis of the Communist Party when it was formed in 1920-1921 and who began the process of learning from the mistakes of the URM the need for revolutionary politics in the trade unions. The fact that the syndicalist tendency in South Wales was never fully overcome was due wholly to the impact of Stalinism on the CP from 1925. As the CP leadership moved to an anti-revolutionary position by the 1930s, so it became necessary to encourage a purely trade union consciousness among its industrial militants. In this work of re-inforcing the syndicalist tradition in South Wales and subordinating it to the opportunism of the policies of the CP, Arthur Horner, one-time leader in the URM, played a major part. It is by assimilating the lessons of the experience of the South Wales miners, understanding the conditions which gave rise to it, the reasons for its failures and the way it was eventually exploited by Stalinism that industrial militants today can re-inforce their theoretical understanding of the vital need for leadership by a revolutionary party in the unions.

**M. Woodhouse**

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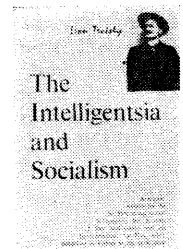
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# Centrist architect of defeat

## OTTO BAUER ET LA REVOLUTION

Textes présentés et annotés par Yvon Bourdet

Editions et Documentation Internationales, Paris, 1968. Price 18.10 francs

LITTLE IS KNOWN about Bauer in this country; his works have not been translated and no biography of him exists. Yet for a whole period he was one of the leading figures of European Social Democracy, representing a particular centrist trend described as Austro-Marxism. Starting out among the circle of Viennese intellectuals who met around the cafe tables in the years before 1914, referred to scathingly by Trotsky in his autobiography, it defined itself more clearly after the First World War as part of the left-wing of Social Democracy.

Bauer was a man of considerable talents and literary ability who had already established a reputation as a theorist before the First World War, notably by his writing on the nationality question which came in for criticism in a once frequently quoted pamphlet by Stalin. After the war, which he ended as a prisoner in Russia and a friend and sympathizer of the internationalist wing of the Mensheviks, he returned to become a minister in the government of the newly-established Austrian republic created out of the ruins of the multinational Hapsburg Empire. The first problem for the biographer of Bauer, then, is why the Socialists, who had the backing of the mass of the urban working class, did not take power.

Bauer's own answer is contained in the first long extract in this volume from a work published in 1919. According to this, while it would have been possible to take power, there would have quickly followed a victorious counter-revolution backed by the Western powers. However, in view of the situation which prevailed throughout Central Europe and the level of class struggle in Britain and France, this claim is far from convincing. Bauer's writing at this period reads very

much like an elaborate justification for not having made the attempt to overthrow bourgeois rule in Austria.



Despite Austria's post-war economic difficulties, during the boom of the 1920s the Socialists, entrenched in the cities, were able to carry out a programme of social welfare which was the admiration of reformists everywhere. In city planning, housing, medical services, child care, education, this has seldom been attained, far less improved upon, in the so-called Welfare States of the post-Second World War period. This policy was based upon a theory of gradual reform and 'slow revolution' to be attained through parliament. Bauer calculated that if the swing to the left continued, at the next election or the one after that the party would have a majority, have 'power'. He by no means neglected the danger of an attempt by the bourgeoisie to launch a counter-revolution in defiance of its own legality. In fact the Austrian socialists had an armed defence corps, the *Schutzbund*, to counter just such an eventuality. Bauer and the other party leaders claimed to be Marxists and they did not ignore the fact that there were times when the class struggle required the resort to illegality and violence and the danger of civil war. But they hoped to avoid such dangers by policies which, in fact, only increased them.



Bauer's writings in the 1920s are really an exercise in scholastic Marxism of the sort which had prevailed in the Second International before 1914 but from which a large part of the movement had subsequently retreated. It was accompanied by an unwillingness to give

firm leadership when the situation demanded it. Thus, after 1919, when Bauer and his friends helped to establish the bourgeois republic, came 1927 when they held back a working class ready for struggle. When a clash between members of the *Schutzbund* and some fascists led to the death of two socialists whose assailants were acquitted by the courts this precipitated a national crisis. The indignation of the working class was tremendous and demonstrations and strikes broke out. The story is told that when the electric power workers arrived to see the socialist party leaders about shutting down power supplies as a signal for a general strike the latter avoided the meeting by hastily taking the lift down to the side exit. Whether this is true or not, Bauer decided once again that the time was not ripe to make a bid for power.

By losing their opportunity once again the Austrian socialists merely encouraged their opponents. The next few years saw the rise of the right-wing *Heimwehr* as a counterforce to the *Schutzbund* and a shift to the right in the government which enabled Dolfuss to assume dictatorial powers in March 1933. He then struck at working-class rights and liberties, outlawed the *Schutzbund* and prohibited the party press. Even so, the rising in February 1934 came about almost by accident, without real preparation, and brought the workers into collision with the army under the worst possible conditions. The working class was now weakened by unemployment resulting from the depression, the Nazis had already taken power in Germany and the vacillations and missed opportunities of the previous years had undermined its morale. After a few days of heroic but hopeless struggle the workers of Vienna were shelled into submission and Bauer had to flee the country. At the same time the final bankruptcy of Austro-Marxism was revealed.

As the extracts from Bauer's writings show, perhaps despite the compiler's intention, he was essentially a scholastic Marxist. He emphasized objective forces in social development and neglected the importance of subjective factors. Thus he explained the absence of revolution in the Western countries from the nature of the working class. For example, he writes, 'It was not the "treason" of a few leaders, but the level of consciousness of the masses themselves from which these leaders had come and to which they easily responded, which explains the failure of the great mass parties'. By arguments of this sort Bauer exculpates himself and the other leaders of European social democracy. Naturally he opposes the thesis of Lenin's *What Is To Be Done?* and underplays the significance of leadership and organization. As an objectivist, he comes near to arguing that the defeat of the revolution in Germany was inevitable and that the Revolution in Russia only succeeded because the workers were more revolutionary by nature.

In Austria he pinned his hopes on a 'slow revolution' brought about by the parliamentary road. He recognized that there were times when the class struggle required resort to illegality and violence. He hoped, however, to confine violence to a response to that of the bourgeoisie to be used as a last resort should the bourgeoisie infringe its own legality. Thus, despite the *Schutzbund*, Austrian socialism was essentially reformist. It adopted a defensive stance which left the initiative permanently in the hands of the class enemy; it imposed on itself rules which had no counterpart in the opposing camp. When it suited the bourgeoisie to stamp on the workers' liberties it did so; when it sent the artillery against the workers' flats in Vienna in 1934 it displayed

no scruples about the morality of violence in politics.

Bauer's policy was thus a standing contradiction which ended in disaster. The circumstances of Austria in the 1920s and 1930s permitted no middle way: a violent resolution of the class conflict was inevitable. Bauer's arguments, plus the existence of the *Schutzbund*, led workers to believe that the Socialist Party meant business and there was never much room for a Communist Party. In fact the class was not prepared for struggle, despite the talk about the possible need for violence to meet a counter-revolutionary coup. The party never took the initiative and was finally out-manoeuvred and crushed.

☆

If the editor of this volume thinks that there is much to be learned, except in a negative sense, from a study of Bauer's writings and political career, he is mistaken. On major questions Bauer made colossal mistakes. For example, he denigrated the Bolsheviks and claimed, like his Menshevik friends, that only a bourgeois revolution was possible in Russia. Yet in Austria, in 1919, his party enabled the bourgeoisie to conserve power. While being a stringent critic of the Soviet Union in Lenin's day, he later discovered that Stalinism was necessary and that socialism was being built by its methods.

After 1934, as a disappointed and defeated political exile by no means devoid of responsibility for his fate and that of the Austrian working class, Bauer made some agonising re-appraisals of his position. He had always avoided the platitudes of the right-wing of Social Democracy and claimed to be a Marxist. In exile he shifted further to the left, making some admissions about the weaknesses of the reformist posi-

tion. But methodologically his position has not changed. He is still seeking in objective conditions rather than in the tactics and strategy of the leadership the explanation for the catastrophe which befell the working class in one country after another in the 1930s. Now he finds the key in an underestimation of the capacity for resistance of the bourgeoisie. He chides the reformists for having become an essential part of the bourgeois social order and thus being unable to combat fascism when the economic crisis struck. He revises his former position on the Soviet Union and Communism and becomes a supporter of the Popular Front.

☆

In short, Bauer failed to learn the essential lessons from his experiences. He still conserved a faith in the virtues of parliamentary democracy and thus in the willingness of the bourgeoisie to respect its own legality when its privileges were at risk. He tried to reconcile the obvious need for a revolutionary struggle in the countries which had gone fascist with the allegedly ethical virtues of reformism. Bauer died in 1938, an unhappy exile in France, with his contradictions unresolved. This attempt by Bourdet to resurrect him through his writings is a sign of the times. As a consummate centrist, Bauer's ideas will no doubt find an echo today in certain revisionist and New Left circles. His seeming rejection of reformism is coupled with a permanent hostility to revolutionary leadership. The jangling of revolutionary-sounding theories with the absence of any perspective of struggle or concept of leadership is very much to the liking of some people and they are welcome to any consolation which a perusal of Bauer's writings may give them.

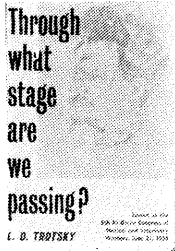
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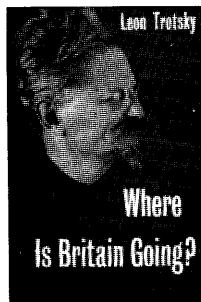
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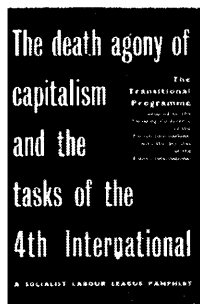
## The Draft Programme of the Communist International by Leon Trotsky

This is part of the author's criticism of the draft programme submitted by the Executive Committee of the Third (Communist) International to the 6th Congress of the Comintern which was held in July 1928. The manuscript of that criticism was written by Trotsky during his exile in Alma-Ata (Central Asia). It was sent to the Congress in Moscow together with an appeal for reinstatement into the party from which he had been expelled a few months before by the Stalinist faction in 1927. Stalin and his supporters had invented the theory of 'Socialism in one country', which was made party policy in 1925 and converted into an article of faith to be defended by the world institutions of Stalinism. It is this theory which Trotsky criticises in these pages.

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