

Fourth International

A JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL MARXISM PUBLISHED BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

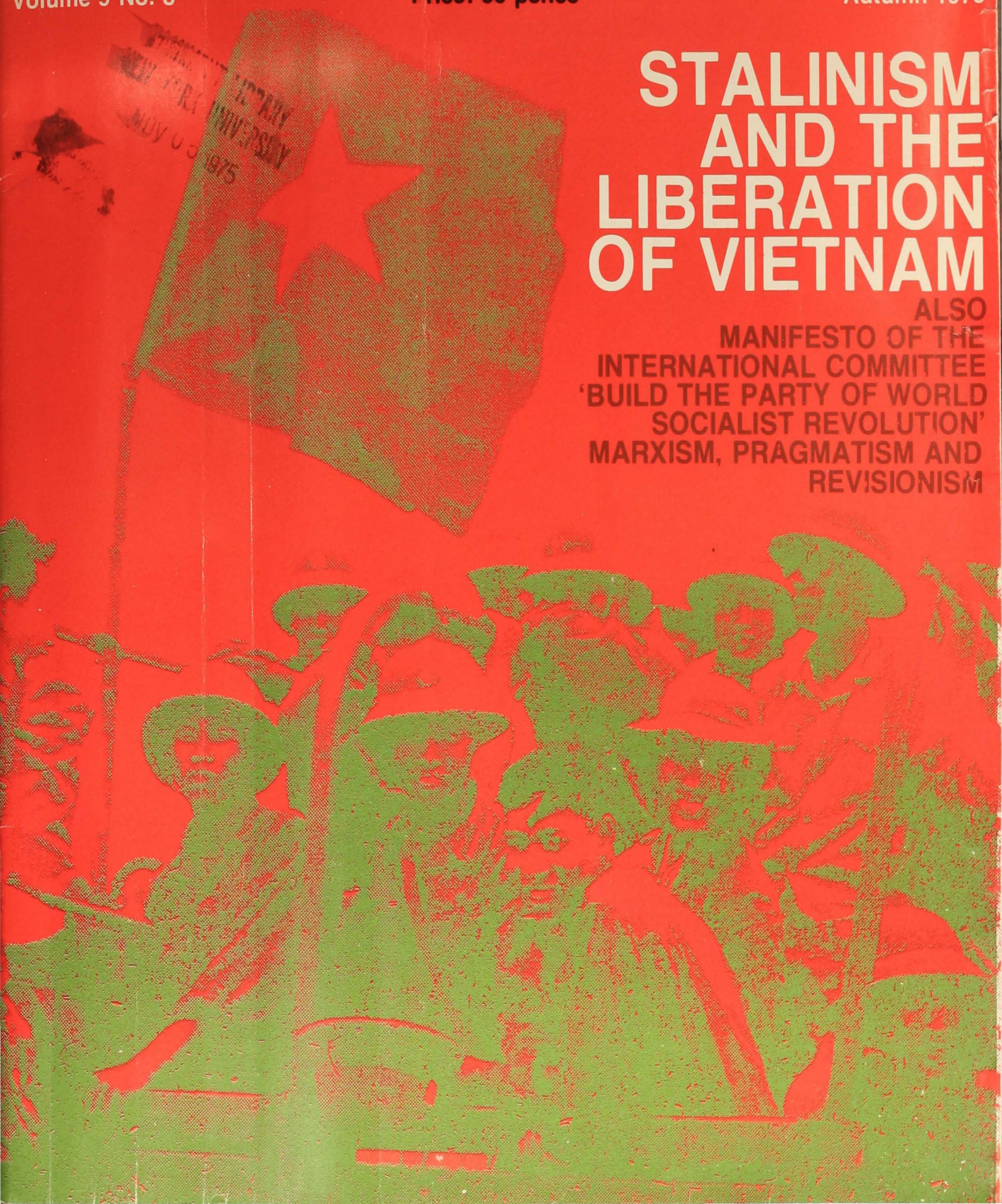
Volume 9 No. 3

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Autumn 1975

STALINISM AND THE LIBERATION OF VIETNAM

ALSO
MANIFESTO OF THE
INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE
'BUILD THE PARTY OF WORLD
SOCIALIST REVOLUTION'
MARXISM, PRAGMATISM AND
REVISIONISM



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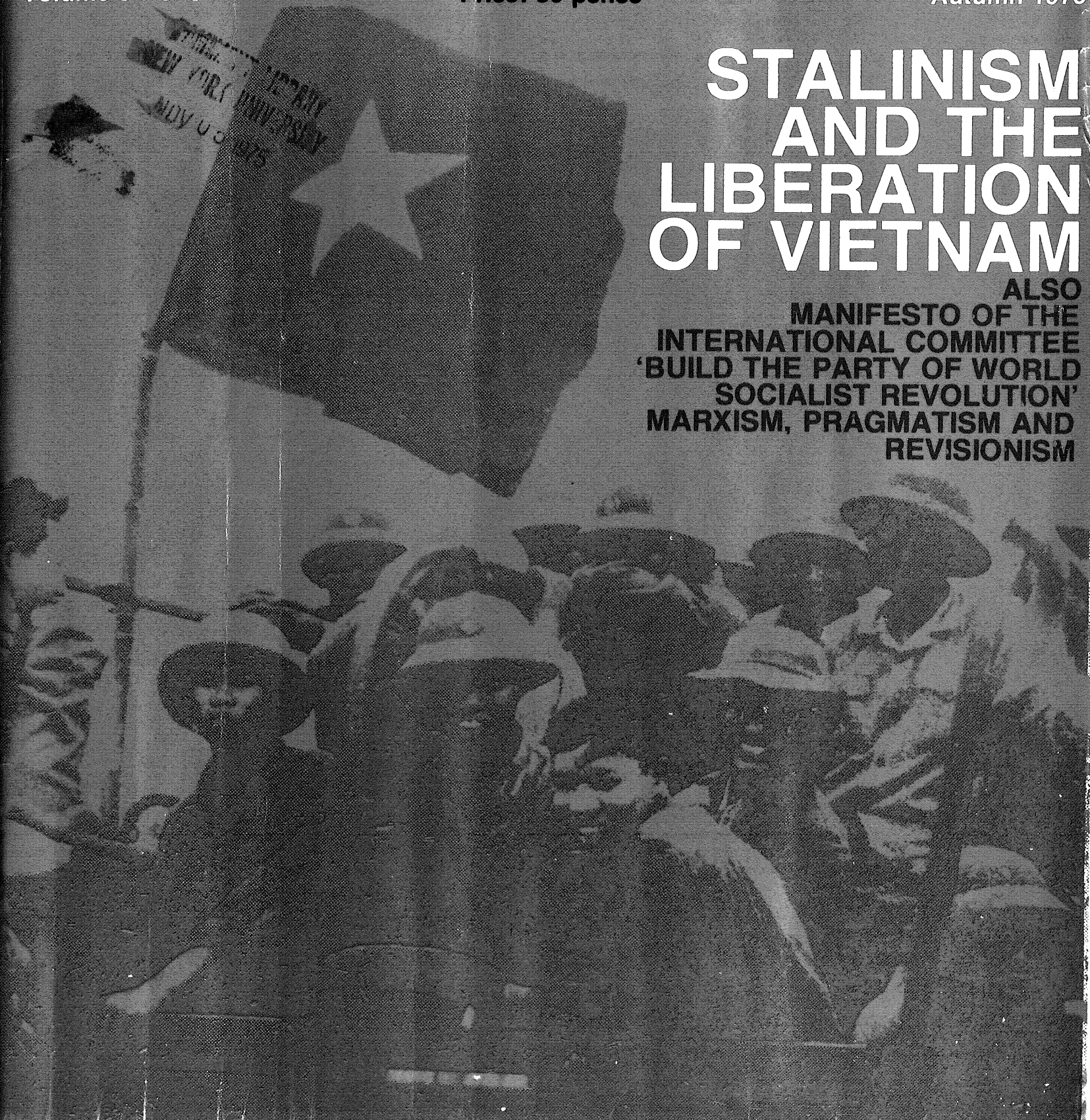
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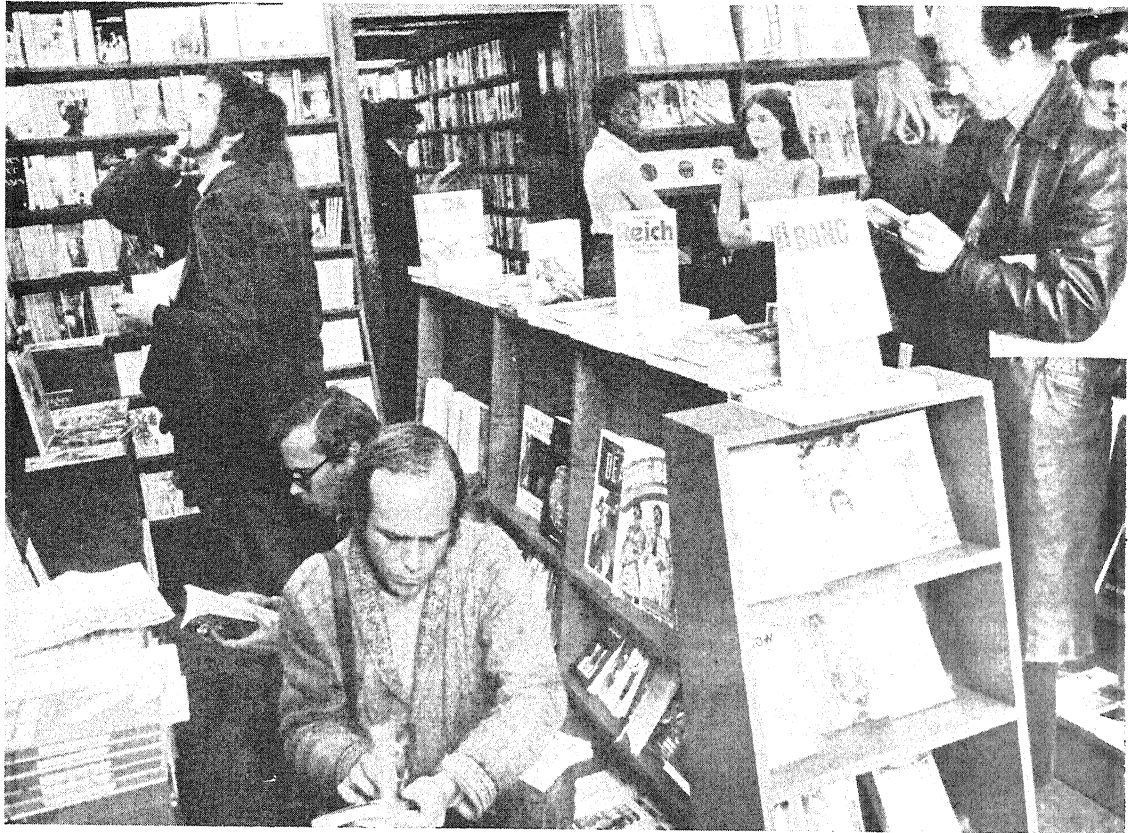


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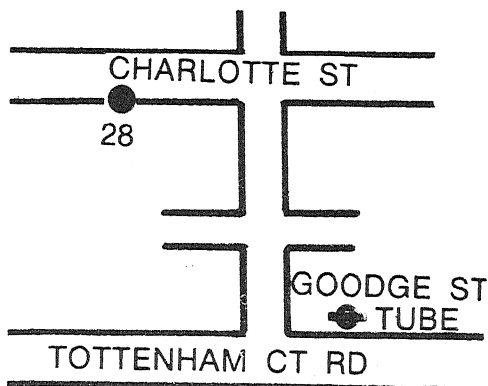
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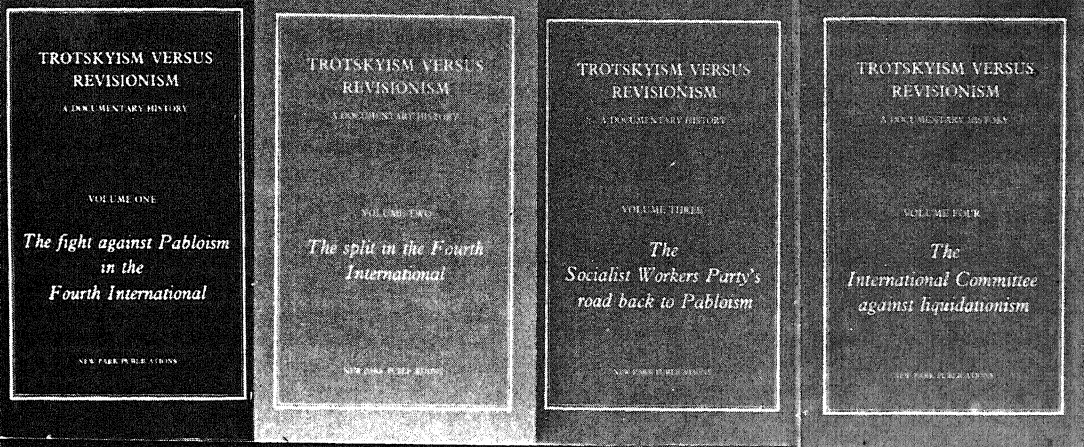
EDITORS: TOM KEMP, CLIFF SLAUGHTER

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TROTSKYISM VERSUS REVISIONISM

A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY



In today's conditions of capitalist crisis, only the International Committee of the Fourth International stands on a record of fighting for revolutionary leadership in the working class. To carry forward this struggle now, when every revisionist tendency is striving to turn the working class back into the arms of the bureaucracy, an understanding of its history is essential.

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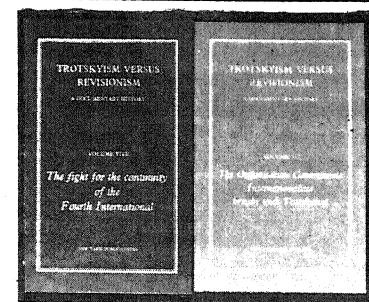
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As we go to press, the International Committee's sections have just completed a series of meetings to commemorate the 35th anniversary of the assassination of Leon Trotsky, founder of the Fourth International. These meetings, by far the most successful in the history of our movement, resulted from a decision of the Sixth World Conference of the International Committee in May 1975. They confirm most vividly the conclusions of our Conference, that we have entered a period of the preparation of the revolution itself, brought on to the agenda by the profound economic crisis of world capitalism. Stalinism must now do its counter-revolutionary work against a working class which has left far behind the great historical defeats of the 1920s and 1930s.

Our youngest section held a commemoration meeting of over 300 workers in the Alentejo agricultural region near Lisbon, stronghold of the Stalinists. In Greece, where the majority of our comrades could return from exile only one year ago, 1,500 youth and workers came to commemorate Trotsky in Athens. In New York, where the revisionist Socialist Workers Party could not even call a meeting for the occasion, the Workers League, which works in political solidarity with the International Committee, brought 600 to the commemoration. The Workers Revolutionary Party of Britain held a meeting of over 3,000 as compared with 800 on the 30th anniversary five years ago. And this was a party which Cannon and the SWP leaders, echoed by Mandel, dismissed as having condemned itself to complete isolation by going off on an 'ultra-left', 'sectarian binge'.

Ceylon has been a vital arena for the struggle between Trotskyism and Revisionism. After Joseph Hansen of the SWP, together with the Pabloite leaders Frank, Maitan and Mandel, had presided over the craven class capitulation of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (then a section of their spurious 'United Secretariat of the Fourth International'), when its leaders joined the bourgeois coalition government in 1964, it was necessary for the International Committee to restart with bare hands the construction of the revolutionary party in Ceylon. Today, as the second version of the 1964 coalition collapses, the Revolutionary Communist League, section of the International Committee, is able to hold a commemoration meeting of 700 workers and youth.

Above all, these achievements signify that, where there is a determined struggle for the development of Marxism and the construction of revolutionary parties, then thousands upon thousands of revolutionary cadres will come forward from the working class because of the insoluble crisis at the heart of capitalist economy. This is the essence of the Manifesto of the Sixth Conference of the IC, published in this issue of Fourth International. Nothing expresses this more emphatically than the glorious victory of the workers and peasants of Indo-China in April this year. Here is a qualitative change in the world revolution

which deepens immeasurably the crisis of world Stalinism as well as of imperialism.

An essential part of the work of the Sixth IC Conference was its decision to continue vigorously to pursue the basic questions of security in the Fourth International. Only now, from the standpoint of the great revolutionary tasks to be accomplished, and with the resources coming to our movement from the developments within the working class, does the road begin to clear for the solution of long-standing questions in the history of Trotskyism, not least among them the circumstances surrounding the death of Leon Trotsky.

The correspondence published in this issue, between the International Committee and Joseph Hansen of the Socialist Workers Party, speaks for itself. Having thrown out accusations about provocateurs and police agents in the leadership of the Workers Revolutionary Party, Hansen rejects out of hand an inquiry into all questions of security. He does not consider that it would be of any advantage for the truth on all these matters to be explored and revealed, despite the fact that some 4,500 pages of FBI documents recently published give details of day-to-day surveillance of his own party over a period of many years. Mandel and his associates in Paris play their usual cowardly role of silence on these matters. But the matter cannot rest there.

Already the inquiries begun by the International Committee have brought to light an extraordinary web of intrigue which went on long after the assassination of Trotsky. It is already clear that Hansen and other leaders of the SWP were guilty at the very least of criminal negligence in not fully informing and preparing the international movement on the grave dangers to which it was subjected by imperialist and particularly Stalinist infiltration. Hansen's defence of the IMG today on questions like that of Lawless, IMG Political Committee member who went to the police on his own initiative to inform on supposed Irish Republican terrorists, is all of a piece with his responsibility for the fact that absolutely vital information has been withheld from this movement for decades.

Such things do not happen without political reasons. The International Committee will not rest until these reasons have been discovered. We regard this as a historical responsibility in continuity with the work of Trotsky himself. His struggle against Stalinism, main counter-revolutionary force on the world arena, never left a single stone unturned in disentangling the lies of Stalin. He insisted on the most thorough investigation of the plots of the GPU, and he would have dismissed with contempt, as well as suspicion, those who treated such concerns as 'paranoia', as does Hansen. The foundations are at last being laid for the writing of the hidden history of the Fourth International, and we shall no doubt see why there is such bitter opposition to the truth being investigated.

BUILD THE PARTY OF WORLD SOCIALIST REVOLUTION!

Manifesto of the Sixth International Congress of the International
Committee of the Fourth International, May 19-24, 1975

The Sixth International Congress of the International Committee of the Fourth International hails the victories of the workers and peasants of Vietnam and Cambodia.

This defeat of US imperialism signals the unleashing of titanic revolutionary struggles on a world scale. The events in Vietnam and Cambodia represent the highest stage of the revolutionary struggle since the victory of the Russian working class in 1917.

They mark an historic turning point. The triumph of the masses in Indo-China has laid bare the rottenness of imperialism and has inflicted a defeat on its agencies in the Stalinist and social-democratic bureaucracies. Arms in hand the victorious workers and peasants have dealt a death blow to the Stalinist panacea of the 'peaceful road to socialism.'

The forces of the world revolution are now emerging. Powerful blows have been struck by the working class in Portugal and Greece. Thus, the victory of the Vietnamese revolution emerges together with the massive movements of the working class, impelled by the economic slump, in the advanced capitalist countries; and acts to intensify the revolutionary processes in these countries.

American imperialism has suffered a shattering defeat in Vietnam which paves the way for revolutionary explosions within the United States. Within the very arsenal of world capitalism, the American working class now rises to march shoulder to shoulder with the entire international proletariat.

For 30 years, the imperialists have sought to suppress the class struggle and divide the movement of the masses in the underdeveloped countries from that of the workers in the metropolitan countries. To accomplish this, they have resorted to the mechanisms of Keynesian economics which could be implemented only because of the collaboration of the Stalinist bureaucracies.

These policies now lie in ruins, broken up by the impact of the world economic crisis and the offensive of the working class. They cannot be resurrected. What is now at issue, in all the capitalist countries, is the outbreak of mass struggles in which the first responsibility is the actual preparation by the working class for the taking of state power.

The source of the revolutionary developments is the insoluble character of the capitalist crisis. From the uncontrolled inflation which followed Nixon's August

1971 decisions, world capitalism has been plunged into a slump whose scope and revolutionary implications are unprecedented in history. Collapse of the credit system and disintegration of the productive forces through plummeting investment, industrial bankruptcies, banking failures, destruction of living standards and massive unemployment are the economic realities of the present situation. A return to stability and 'growth' are the pipe-dreams of the Stalinists and reformists.

The stranglehold of capitalist private property and the nation-state now must lead to the destruction of the forces of production. Capitalism can survive only by resorting to the most savage repression against the working class and reviving the darkest barbarism through fascism and world war.

In the United States, the centre of the world crisis, there are now over 8 million unemployed. The Gross National Product is falling at a rate of over 10 per cent per year. Industrial production is falling at an annual rate of 40 per cent, the steepest decline ever recorded since the 1930s.

Underlying these statistics is the unprecedented fall in industrial earnings. Profits, as percentage of company earnings, show a decline from 22 per cent in 1950 to only 11 per cent in 1974. Profit losses in the last six months alone are bigger than the entire losses of the 1958-1959 and 1969-1970 recessions. Thirteen major airlines suffered \$150 m in losses, 23 large chain stores lost \$227m. Profits in the auto industry, the backbone of US industry, fell 97.9 per cent. In textiles the drop was 87.2 per cent; in railroads, 60.9 per cent; in building materials 43.8 per cent; in mining and metals 32.3 per cent; electronics 27.5 per cent; and in rubber 40.1 per cent.

These are the statistics of disaster; but they express what is still only the first tremor of the impending economic catastrophe. For three decades the capitalists have employed credit to preserve profits and avoid a showdown with the working class. The creation of this massive debt has utterly poisoned the entire financial and monetary system of world capitalism.

The US economy is awash with more than \$2.5 trillion in debt. Corporations alone have borrowed more than \$1 trillion. The total debt worldwide is in the area of \$10 trillion. The banks which have fuelled this debt are themselves extended to the point of collapse. In 1961 bank loans were 13.8 per cent of total production. By 1974 this

figure had more than doubled to 28.2 per cent. Fifteen years ago banks had reserves totalling one third of total deposits. By 1974 this had declined to only one seventh. Loans from banks outweigh deposits by a figure even larger than that which preceded the 1929 crash.

This colossal mass of credit demands a return. The debts must be repaid. But the boom has turned into its opposite. As profits plummet the credit system is making impossible demands on company earnings, i.e., the total surplus value produced by the working class. Whole sections of this surplus capital must now be destroyed. These are the objective requirements dictated by the laws of capitalist production. The immense proportions of this collapse can only be measured by the magnitude of the boom of the last 30 years.

The slump in the United States now coincides with slump in every country. Out of the stagnation of the productive forces capitalism has already created an army of unemployed totalling 25 to 30 million, recruited from the working class of the advanced countries. All the contradictions of this international crisis find their most advanced expression in Britain. The British economy moves into slump with the highest rates of inflation of any major capitalist country in the world. All the traditional defences of Empire, special position of the pound sterling and the City of London, are gone never to return. The reformist defences built up in the post-war period have disintegrated in the crisis.

The Labour government now adopts a policy of mass unemployment and comes into head-on collision with the working class. The collapse of major companies has already begun. The exhaustion of reformist policies in the very home of class compromise, and the opening of an era of mass revolutionary struggles, is the surest sign of all of the qualitative turn in the world revolution.

The ruling class will not lie down and accept the victories of the liberation forces in Indo-China, nor are they peacefully going to meet the industrial and political wrath of the British working class as the economic crisis produces large-scale unemployment and crippling increases in the cost of living.

The preparations for right-wing dictatorship are aimed at workers throughout industry who are being thrust into big struggles to defend the right to work. We have only to recall the words of the British Army Brigadier Frank Kitson to envisage the preparations of the bourgeois state.

'If a genuine and serious grievance arose, such as might result from a significant drop in the standard of living, all those who now dissipate their protest over a wide variety of causes, might concentrate their efforts and produce a situation which was beyond the power of the police to handle. Should this happen the army would be required to restore the position rapidly.'

For this reason the International Committee of the Fourth International and its British section, the Workers Revolutionary Party, insists that the working class must also make its preparations. The WRP places at the centre of all its campaigns in the labour and trade union movement the task of building the alternative revolutionary leadership which can mobilize and unite the whole working class, the most powerful force in society, in smashing capitalism and its counter-revolutionary conspiracies and establishing a workers state.

The mighty American working class is now forced on to the scene to defend itself against the destruction of its living standards and the impoverishment of tens of millions through mass unemployment. Already the American workers are challenging the trade union bureaucrats who

tie them to the capitalist parties, because they sense that the working class must above all achieve the political independence necessary to remove the corrupt and discredited ruling class and their system. For this working class, the victory of the Vietnamese workers is a mighty impetus. They know that the class enemy can be defeated!

'But precisely in the power of the United States is its Achilles heel; in this power lies its growing dependence upon countries and continents economically and politically unstable. The United States is compelled to base its power on an unstable Europe, that is, on tomorrow's revolutions of Europe and on the national revolutionary movement of Asia and Africa . . . Under these conditions a victorious revolution in Europe and in Asia would inevitably inaugurate a revolutionary epoch in the United States.'

These words of Trotsky in 1926 are now being richly confirmed! Not only is the stability of class relations in the United States completely undermined by the revolution in Asia and its onward march in Europe, but the United States is no longer in a position, because of the strength of the American working class in refusing to accept the imposition of the crisis on its back, to help the bourgeoisie of other countries to stave off revolutionary struggles.

Not only that: the decline of the market in the United States is a deadly blow to the capitalists of the countries in the European Economic Community, whose biggest volume of exports is to America. The European Common Market is a last-ditch capitalist effort to overcome the contradiction between the nation state and the socialization and internationalization of production but within the rotting capitalist framework. This attempt can only exacerbate the revolutionary struggles of the European working class, which must be mobilized under the banner of the Socialist United States of Europe.

Now that the US working class is forced on to the road of revolutionary politics, in the first place to find independent political expression in a Labour Party, it will itself have a direct effect in accelerating the struggle of the masses all over the world. Every step forward of the American workers incapacitates the American bourgeoisie in its international counter-revolutionary role and deepens the crisis at the base of capitalist society.

Because it is questions of the most profound revolutionary and historic character which are breaking up the old 'democratic' bourgeois control over the masses, only revolutionary Marxists, cadres of the Fourth International, can carry through the fight for the Labour Party in the US. Thousands and thousands of workers will grasp the need for revolutionary leadership in this fight, as the only way of clearing the bureaucrats and Stalinists from their path.

Not a single burning problem of the working class in Britain, the United States or any other country can be resolved outside the preparation of the struggle for state power. Out of all the advances in science and the breakthroughs in technology capitalism can produce only suffering, misery and bloodshed on a scale never seen before.

On direct orders from the bankers, the capitalist politicians must tear down the edifice of the 'welfare state' brick by brick. The basic social services in housing and medical care are being dismantled. In the United States, New York and other major cities are on the verge of bankruptcy; the funds for education, hospitals and transport no longer exist. During the last ten years in the United States, one new college was opened every week. It is forecast that colleges will close at the rate of one per two weeks in the next decade.

Millions of workers in every capitalist country now enter a series of mass struggles on a scale not seen since the inter-war years. Already refusing to accept impoverishment through raging inflation, the working class will resist mass unemployment through the occupation of giant industrial plants, in an ascending series of struggles whose only successful outcome will be the taking of state power.

Every elementary demand of the working class, every defence of past gains, every attempt of the capitalist state to control the trade unions, brings forward the two great necessities for the working class: the preparation of the conquest of state power and the building of the revolutionary party to lead this struggle for power. The bourgeoisie needs urgently to mobilize extreme right-wing and fascist movements of the middle classes against the unbroken organized strength of the working class. While the reformist, Stalinist and trade union leaders collaborate with the capitalist state in preparing the structure of corporatist institutions, the capitalist class knows that this by itself is not enough. It must divide the unemployed workers from the employed, and at the same time turn the disillusioned and economically ruined middle classes against the proletariat.

At this point the Stalinists return to the treachery of the Popular Front of the 1935-1939 period. They try to eliminate the independent socialist and revolutionary demands of the working class on the spurious grounds that the middle class will not go beyond mild reform demands and pious declarations about parliamentary democracy. On the contrary, the real defence of democratic rights and the mobilization of the middle classes behind the proletariat, can be achieved only on a socialist programme on the basis of which the revolutionary party exposes the reformist and Stalinist leaders with the tactic of the united front of the working-class organizations. The class-collaboration of the reformist and Stalinist parties is the most dangerous factor of all in leaving the middle classes prey to fascist reparations.

At the same time the capitalist state prepares the forces of physical repression. The Labour government in Britain has taken special 'anti-terror' powers. In Northern Ireland the British army virtually shares power with para-military right-wing and fascist bands of the extreme right, under the supervision of a Labour Minister. In Germany, the coalition government led by the social democrats builds up the police into a para-military force. Throughout western Europe, the CIA is attempting to penetrate and undermine the organized trade union movement.

It is the responsibility of our movement to expose these measures and to fight for the mobilization of the working class against them.

The blind alley of capitalism's crisis drives the imperialists inevitably towards the launching of World War III, which could only mean the use of nuclear weapons and the destruction of hundreds of millions of people. At every point where the march of the masses threatens the vital interests of imperialism, from the Middle East to South East Asia, the danger threatens of military intervention by the capitalist class which could initiate world war.

The only way to fight the war danger is through the revolutionary mobilization of the working class throughout the world. The International Committee of the Fourth International and its sections are for the unconditional defence of the degenerated and deformed workers' states of USSR, China and Eastern Europe, together with the new conquests in South-East Asia, threatened by the

necessity for imperialism to seek the reconquest of these vast areas torn from the world capitalist system.

Thirty-five years after the assassination of Leon Trotsky by Stalin's secret police, the International Committee of the Fourth International reaffirms:

'The crisis of humanity resolves itself into the crisis of revolutionary working-class leadership.'

But 1975 is not 1940! The Stalinist bureaucracy could succeed temporarily in isolating and even physically liquidating many of the Trotskyist cadres, because Stalinism flourished on the basis of the historic defeats of the working class in the 1920s and 1930s. Stalinism's own betrayal of the German working class led to the victory of Hitler in 1933, which made World War II inevitable.

Now, 35 years later, it is the hour of Trotskyism! An undefeated international working class moves into action, impelled by the collapse of living standards and the onrush of mass unemployment. Only Trotskyism, carrying forward the revolutionary work of Marx, Engels, Lenin and the early Communist International, can provide the leadership required for the struggle for working-class power which must now be prepared.

From Portugal and Greece in 1974 to Vietnam in 1975, and now in the heart of the United States and Western Europe, the working class acts independently of the control of the Stalinist and labour bureaucracies. The liberation of Indo-China by the armies of Hanoi, Khmer Rouge and Pathet Lao does not in any way obscure the reactionary role of international Stalinism, of Peking and Moscow, whose policies of socialism in a single country and diplomatic horse-deals with the Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon administrations considerably prolonged the war and exacted an enormous toll in death and suffering.

After the historic victory of Dien Bien Phu the Indo-Chinese workers and peasants were deprived of total victory and imperialist rule was restored south of the 17th Parallel by the combined pressures of the Chinese and Russian bureaucracies at Geneva. When the Civil War was resumed in the south in the early 1960s the Soviet government exerted every pressure to prevent the north from aiding the south in the interests of the 'Spirit of Geneva'. When US imperialism established the Diem regime and brazenly intervened with so-called 'military advisers' and began its genocidal war against the NLF the Soviet Government as co-chairman of the Geneva agreement cynically abandoned the Vietnamese by scrupulously honouring the letter and spirit of this thieves' charter.

Unable to stop the civil war in the south the Soviet leaders then just as cynically tried to use South Vietnam as a pawn in their diplomatic game to pressure imperialism in Europe to abandon NATO and secure a 'Collective Security Treaty'.

When Johnson escalated the war by massive aerial bombardment of Hanoi and the mining of Haiphong harbour the Soviet and Chinese leaders, by strictly limiting the supply of sophisticated anti-aircraft weapons and planes tried to force the Hanoi regime to accept a 'negotiated peace' which would have meant the repartition of Vietnam. Internationally the Stalinist parties — together with their revisionist allies — supplemented Soviet policy by calling on the bourgeois regimes in Europe to 'dissociate' from US policy and make 'the Paris talks succeed'.

In Britain the high point of this pacifist popular-front fraud was the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign. The ICFI

alone expressed the confidence and combativity of the international working class by calling for the military defeat of US imperialism in South-East Asia and for the extension of the world revolution into the West through the building of revolutionary leadership — sections of the ICFI in Asia and Europe. Only in this way can the conquests of the Vietnamese Revolution be defended.

Indo-China was liberated and imperialism defeated not because of Stalinism but in spite of it. As in Yugoslavia and China the native Stalinist leaders having embarked on a struggle to defeat the occupation forces of imperialism were forced to abandon the reformist perspective of a two-stage revolution and mobilize the working class and poor peasants to establish a deformed workers state. But as in China and Yugoslavia the cadres of these movements were trained in the method of Stalinism and couldn't provide a viable revolutionary perspective for the working class in Asia or Europe.

As the foreign policies of Mao and Tito so clearly illustrate, these regimes very soon become an absolute obstacle to the further development of the revolution and are organically incapable of making any worthwhile contribution to the development of Marxist theory. Thus far from giving any credibility to Stalinism the victories in Vietnam only prove the unpostponable necessity of building the ICFI in every country and preparing for the tasks of political revolution against the Stalinist regimes and the conquest of power in the imperialist ones.

These achievements in Indo-China — empirically made at enormous cost — do not, in any sense, invalidate the principled struggles of the Indo-Chinese Trotskyists — murdered by Ho Chi Minh's agents — for the programme of Permanent Revolution. Their martyrdom was not in vain and their policies are indelibly inscribed in the progress of the revolution. New generations of Indo-Chinese revolutionaries inspired by the struggles and victories of Trotskyism will once again turn to the example of these Trotskyist pioneers in the coming period.

The reformists and Stalinists move closer to the capitalist state, even joining coalition governments, just at the point where that state is moving towards unprecedented repressive measures against the working class. They advocate corporatist policies and even provide the main pillar of military rule, as in Portugal. Because these bureaucracies are dependent on imperialism, the crisis of imperialism compels them to now play their most openly counter-revolutionary role.

Precisely at this point, the revisionists of the so-called 'United Secretariat' and other renegades such as Wohlforth, Thornett and the French OCI, become craven advocates for the reformist and Stalinist bureaucracy. All their fire is turned against the International Committee of the Fourth International in a campaign of slanders and provocations. They seek desperately to destroy the independent revolutionary leadership which the working class must have.

In Greece, Portugal, and in all those countries where the right-wing dictatorships collapse, as soon in Spain, it is necessary first and foremost to provide leadership for the fight for proletarian power, and against the Stalinist agents of the bourgeoisie. This road taken by the revisionists, by which they pioneer the way for witch-hunting and repression by the class enemy, only confirms the maturing of the revolution. It proves that not even the semblance of a middle road remains.

What places everyone in true political position is the revolution itself, which arouses the counter-revolutionary

pressure of the capitalist enemy. Only the International Committee of the Fourth International has fought all along the line for the preparation of parties for the leading of the working class to power, taking up the struggle successfully against all those revisionists who turned away from this task and tried to liquidate the Fourth International.

The myth of a 'neo-capitalism' free of the basic contradictions of imperialism, the myth of the invincibility of US capitalism — these are completely shattered by the slump and by the victorious revolutionary wars in Vietnam and Cambodia, which provide completely transformed conditions in the class struggle in every country for the building of revolutionary leadership.

The sections of the International Committee must be transformed into parties, the parties into mass parties. Every section must turn out to the masses as never before. This is the hour for which we have been preparing since the struggle to found the Fourth International!

In 1975 the revolutionary youth, inspired by the victory in Vietnam and Cambodia, will take a great step forward in building the international revolutionary youth movement, based on the Founding Programme of the Fourth International. Here is the principal source of the life-blood of the revolutionary parties of the International Committee. Youth unemployment has already reached monstrous proportions — 40 per cent in some of the great cities in the advanced capitalist countries. Education is being cut to ribbons; the housing programme is grinding to a halt. First victims of the slump, and promised a future of only depression and war, the youth will be in the vanguard of the revolution.

It is the struggle of the International Committee for the development of dialectical materialism which is the essence of the revolutionary preparation of the youth. The long years of Stalinist domination, with its vicious distortions of Marxism and its practice of betrayal, are at an end. In today's conditions, the historical necessity of preparing for power thrusts millions of workers into a position where Marxist theory and the revolutionary party will make unprecedented developments.

The victories in Vietnam and Cambodia open up an inexorable process of revolutionary struggles internationally. These revolutionary struggles, under the leadership of the parties of the Fourth International, sections of the IC, will create entirely new conditions and set an example for the workers of the Soviet Union and the deformed workers' states to carry forward the political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy and take their rightful place in the vanguard of the international proletariat.

The unity of the world revolution today is the most powerful vindication of Trotsky's struggle against the counter-revolutionary results of the politics of 'socialism in one country'. Every section of the International Committee of the Fourth International must make the 35th anniversary of Trotsky's assassination in August 1975 the climax of a fight such as we have never before conducted to recruit thousands of workers and youth to our parties.

Trotsky was killed by Stalin's assassin, but the work of Trotsky not only lives, it now achieves its fulfilment.

Workers — men and women — of all countries, place yourselves under the banner of the Fourth International. It is the banner of your approaching victory!

May 24, 1975.



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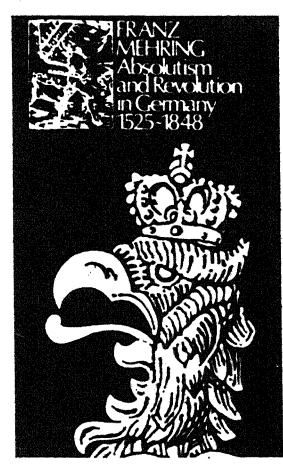
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MARXISM, PRAGMATISM AND REVISIONISM

by Alex Steiner

GEORGE NOVACK, philosophical spokesman of the revisionist Socialist Workers Party, recently published an assessment of the American pragmatist John Dewey called 'Dialectical Materialism vs. Pragmatism: The Logic of John Dewey,' in the *International Socialist Review* of July-August, 1974.

The consistent struggle of the International Committee to relate all political differences with the revisionists to their class basis and to differences on philosophical method, combined with the maturing of objective conditions, has produced an open discussion on philosophy with the revisionists. This struggle for dialectical materialism led to the necessary split with the OCI (Organisation Communiste Internationaliste) in 1971. The SWP entered the discussion on philosophy, a discussion they had sought to avoid for the previous decade, at the time. Novack, speaking for the SWP, launched an attack on the IC's struggle for dialectical materialism, labelling us 'sectarians' in the field of philosophy. (See 'A Malignant Case of Sectarianism in Philosophy' by George Novack, *Intercontinental Press*, July 3, 1972.)

The SWP solidarized with the OCI, both taking the pragmatic position that the struggle for philosophy within the party is unnecessary, and that the programme, based on an appreciation of the 'facts' (which to them are the immediate surface phenomena of society) is central. Most important, both the SWP and OCI denied that the conflict between theory and practice was the basis for the development of Marxism and to this they counterposed the unity-without-conflict between theory and practice. From this standpoint, it is of course impossible for theory to penetrate the world, develop to objective truth, and on this basis develop revolutionary practice. What this meant, as we said at the time, was that theory, the body of knowledge of Marxism, its principles and programme, was to be adapted to an opportunist practice. We wrote at the time:

'The youth of the OCI and of the SWP, educated in the spirit that the "programme" is the basis and starting-point for being a Marxist has resulted, through the integration of the experience of the working-class movement in this "supreme" expression of the content of Marxism, are now turned against the IC and its struggle for the fundamentals of dialectical materialism. This can result only in their liquidation into the petty bourgeois and centrist youth movements.' (*In Defence of Trotskyism*, ICFI February, 1973.)

This philosophical bloc against the Marxist theory of knowledge has now ripened into a political bloc against the

working class and the International Committee. Today the SWP openly supports Miller (miners' union) and other 'progressive' labour bureaucrats and calls for federal troops in Boston, while Lambert of the OCI gives uncritical support to the right-wing social democrat Mitterand in France. The SWP now makes a public initiative within the Pabloite United Secretariat for 'comradely' discussions with the OCI. (See the SWP Political Bureau statement, 'On the OCI's Proposal to Discuss Differences,' *Intercontinental Press*, January 13, 1975, p. 23.)

These new developments bear out once again the correctness of the struggle for dialectical materialism pursued by the International Committee. It is within this context that we must first of all approach Novack's latest disquisition on pragmatism.

Novack's article, while presented as a purely academic discussion of the comparative merits of Dewey's logic and dialectical materialism, is part of the whole political orientation of the SWP toward the petty bourgeois and trade union bureaucrats and *their* philosophy. Its purpose is to blur over the differences between dialectical materialism and pragmatism which has been the ideological mainstay of bourgeois liberalism for several decades.

Firstly, Novack's presentation of the historical development of pragmatism is a complete distortion. While he has little to say in the current article on Dewey, which is apparently part of a coming book on the subject, he has written on this subject previously in his *Empiricism and its Evolution*. In this work, he contended that pragmatism was a progressive development out of empiricism though it was deficient in relation to the outlook of Marxist materialism.

He wrote, 'In addition to renovating empiricism by removing some of its archaisms and inadequacies and revising its doctrines in the light of later scientific development, pragmatism redirected the line of its interests.' (p. 124.)

He added that, 'by hammering away at these bulwarks of idealist error, the pragmatists helped bring philosophy closer to reality and the results of scientific discovery.' (p. 127.)

History

The falsity of this assessment is revealed in a look at the actual historical development of pragmatism. First, pragmatism, before Peirce, James and Dewey even formulated it, was the implicit philosophy of the American

bourgeoisie. It was characterized by the importing and use of techniques and ideas from Europe. The conclusions of scientific and philosophical development were appropriated for immediate use in an eclectic way, without any attention paid to the origins and process of development of these ideas. This was an ideological reflection of the way American capitalism itself developed. This failure to develop theory out of a struggle against scholasticism and feudalism and reliance on the ideological conquests of other countries led to a situation in which the most backward idealist notions flourished side by side with the most advanced techniques.

We can see how this was expressed in the development of John Dewey's philosophy. Dewey began his career as a Hegelian. Under the tutelage of William Morris, he became part of the school of American Hegelianism that grew up in the American Mid-West in such places as Chicago and St. Louis. This Hegelianism was of course borrowed from European philosophy.

Politically, it was well adapted to the post-Reconstruction spirit of compromise and reform, itself part of the ending of the 'pioneer' period of the small entrepreneur. What the American school took from Hegelianism was its *system*, its idealist reconciliation of society with the individual, not the revolutionary implications of the dialectical *method*.

At this point of his career, Dewey was a firm idealist and God-believer. He could write in this period, 'The cause of theology and morals is one, and that whatever banishes God from the heart of things, with the same edict excludes the ideal, the ethical, from the life of man.' (Quoted in *Guide to the Works of John Dewey*, edited by Jo Ann Boydston, Arcturus Books, April, 1972, Chicago Illinois University Press.)

From this idealist starting point, Dewey became converted to pragmatism by way of William James' *Principles of Psychology* and also under the influence of Darwin's theory of evolution. He himself saw in his conversion the search for an intermediate, 'viable alternative to an atomism which logically involves a denial of connections (the reference to 'atomism' is probably to Hume's phenomenalism and denial of causality as well as the extreme individualism of the social Darwinists — A. S.) and to an absolutistic block monism which, in behalf of the reality of relations, leaves no place for the discrete, for plurality and for individuals.' (*Ibid.*, p. 25.)

It was the new developments in science, particularly Darwin's demonstration of evolution, that forced Dewey to drop the open idealism of Hegel. He drew from the limited but sure development of knowledge in experimental science the sceptical conclusion that all knowledge is only partial and relative. From this he rejected the element of absolute, objective truth within the relative. Lenin put it thus: 'For objective dialectics there is an absolute within the relative. For subjectivism and sophistry the relative is only relative and excludes the absolute.' ('On the Question of Dialectics', Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p. 360.)

Idealism and Materialism in Logic

Proceeding from this epistemological scepticism, Dewey rejected the notion that there is an objective world existing independently of our ideas. For materialists the objective is the material world, of which our ideas are reflections. Hegel inverted this relation and held that the

material world was the alienated expression of the (objective) idea. The consistent development of this objective idealism in Hegel's *Logic* achieved an understanding of the unity and conflict of subject and object which is on the very brink of dialectical materialism.

Lenin translates Hegel materialistically, to mean,

'The notion (= man) as subjective, again presupposes an otherness which is in itself (= nature, independent of man).' (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p. 212.)

In place of this unity in conflict of the subjective and objective i.e., between man and the rest of nature, Dewey dismissed the most fundamental question of all, the relation of being to thinking, and in this way was ready to accept the idealist denial of the revolutionary implication of the dialectic in which Hegel himself ended. The Achilles heel of idealism led Hegel to a static 'system' in which the revolutionary dialectic was imprisoned. It had to be 'rescued', as Lenin said. Dewey does the opposite. He throws out the dialectic and accepts the 'reconciliation' of opposites by wiping out the being-thinking distinction. Instead, as in William James, we have thinking and being amalgamated with 'experience'. Dewey gives his own account of his conversion against the dialectic:

'With respect to more technically philosophical matters, the Hegelian emphasis upon continuity and the function of conflict persisted on empirical grounds after my earlier confidence in dialectics had given way to scepticism. There was a period extending into my earlier years at Chicago when, in connection with a seminar on Hegel's *Logic* I tried reinterpreting his categories in terms of "readjustment" and "reconstruction". Gradually I came to realize that what the principles actually stood for could be better understood and stated when completely emancipated from Hegelian garb.' (*Guide to the Works of John Dewey*, p. 24.)

The logic of inquiry which Dewey developed was part of this idealist and sceptical outlook. According to Dewey, logic deals solely with the psychological and biological adaptation of an individual when he is confronted by a 'problem'. Dewey defines this process:

'Inquiry is the controlled or directed transformation of an indeterminate situation into one that is so determinate in its constituent distinctions and relations as to convert the elements of the original situation into a unified whole.' (*Ibid.*, p. 85.)

The successful solution to the problem (the 'indeterminate situation') in practice is the sole criterion of truth in Dewey's logic. This is a logic based on a one-sided understanding of the experimental procedures of natural science, forgetting that it is not only experimental results which become the basis for scientific laws and concepts, but a conception of certain kinds of lawful relations that direct scientists to make certain experiments. For Dewey, logic is not a reflection in thought of the movement of matter, but a series of psychological and biological functions divorced from the material world. This subjective individualist conception of logic is, scientifically speaking, a degeneration in the theory of logic as it has historically emerged out of man's social struggle against nature and the development of knowledge. It not only rejects the progressive content of dialectics but even falls below Aristotle's logic which did have an objective content. (For Aristotle, the Forms of logic correspond to the Forms of Being.)

At the same time, Dewey's idealist theory of knowledge adapted to the findings of the natural sciences in order to give itself 'scientific' credentials. This real history and content of Dewey's 'instrumentalism' is what Novack

conceals when he tells us that pragmatism was a philosophical development in the direction of materialism. He says for example that:

'Dewey's eventual solution of the relation between logical Forms and content in his *Logic* (*Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*, published in 1938 — A. S.) was neither fully formalistic nor thoroughly materialistic, although his "naturalistic" theory came much closer to the materialist than the formalist standpoint.' (ISR, *op. cit.*, p. 15.)

Admittedly, Dewey rejected formalism since he rejected the conception that truth was anything more than a particular and relative truth, but how could he come closer to materialism after rejecting the independent existence of matter, the conflict between the subject and object, and also rejecting dialectical logic, which is the only logic that can reflect the contradictory movement of matter? Novack's mention of Dewey's interest in the natural sciences in order to label Dewey as being close to materialism is a sophistical trick on the part of Novack. The issue is our appraisal of the philosophical method, the theory of knowledge of pragmatism — not whether the pragmatists were interested in the sciences. The fact that Mach made an important contribution to physics did not prevent Lenin from combating the idealist theory of knowledge Mach propounded. (*Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*) Nor was Lenin concerned with a merely academic polemic against Machism. The struggle against the influence of Machism in the Bolshevik Party was decisive for the political rearming of the Bolsheviks after the defeat of the 1905 Revolution. It was also the essential preparation for Marxism to meet the new stage of imperialism and the collapse of the Second International. Today it is just as essential to defeat pragmatism.

Formal logic and dialectics

Novack's historical assessment of pragmatism and Dewey is an expression and development of the long established compromise with subjective idealism which has exposed the SWP to the most reactionary, petty-bourgeois influences. Let us examine how Novack maintains this compromise in his discussion of Dewey's logic.

First, Novack takes up Dewey's complete rejection of Aristotle's logic. It is of course correct to defend the aspect of truth in Aristotelian logic against Dewey's attack on logic. But the question is how does Novack see the relationship between formal logic and dialectics, and here Novack loses his bearings. He writes:

'Its principles (of formal logic — A.S.) correctly formulate, if but in a partial and one-sided way, existing features of objective reality. These endow its laws with a degree of validity and usefulness.' (*Ibid.*, p. 45.)

The usefulness of formal logic within certain limits is here beside the point. The real issue is what is the relationship of formal logic to dialectics, or to put it another way, in what sense does formal logic contain implicitly an aspect of the truth which is revealed in dialectics? Novack does not ask this question, much less answer it, either now or in any of his previous writings.

Hegel, in his *Logic*, showed that this was the *key* question in order to understand formal logic and dialectics:

'Therefore, though ordinary thinking everywhere has contradiction for its content, it does not become aware of it, but remains an external reflection which passes from likeness to unlikeness, or from the negative relation to the reflection-into-self, of the distinct sides. It holds these two determina-

tions over against one another and has in mind *only them*, but not their *transition*, which is the essential point and which contains the contradiction.' (*Science of Logic*, p. 441.) (Emphasis in original — A.S.)

The formalist takes separate aspects of reality, aspects that are inherently contradictory to begin with, and rigidly separates them into their 'elements'. He is blind to the fact that these 'elements' imply and pass into their opposites. The truth of formal logic therefore can be grasped, from the point of view of dialectics, only when the so-called laws of formal logic are grasped in their *transition* and *negation*. Thus, the law of identity, $A=A$, implicitly contains within it also its opposite, the law of difference, A does not equal A . The truth of $A=A$ is only grasped when we have understood that this includes A does not equal A , that identity is identity with difference.

Thus Hegel writes, and not only Hegel, for Lenin paid close attention to this section of the *Logic*, which he copied very carefully (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, pp. 134-142):

'... They [formal logicians] do not see that by clinging to this unmoved identity which has its opposite in difference, they thereby convert it into a *one-sided determinateness*, which as such has no truth (our emphasis — A.S.). It is admitted that the law of identity expresses only a one-sided determinateness, that it contains only a formal truth, a truth which is abstract, incomplete. In this correct judgment, however, it is immediately implied that truth is complete only in the unity of identity with difference and hence consists only in this unity.' (*Logic*, p. 413.)

For dialectical idealism as well as dialectical materialism, the laws of formal logic actually grasp different moments of the dialectic. When these moments are however seen separately, when the transition from moment to moment is not seen, and their negation is denied, then they are 'one-sided' and *have no truth*. Hegel could not be clearer on this. Yet Novack maintains that the laws of formal logic, seen in this one-sided way, 'retain a degree of validity'. Again, let us reiterate that it is not at all a question of the usefulness of formal logic. The question is whether Identity is the one-sided and therefore *incorrect* $A=A$, or is it $A=A$ and A does not equal A , i.e., the unity of Identity with Difference. Novack cannot have it both ways; he cannot straddle between dialectics and abstract identity.

Proceeding from here, Novack enumerates the laws of formal logic, identity, contradiction and the excluded middle. Novack correctly insists, against Dewey, that the elaboration of these laws by Aristotle represented historically a development of scientific knowledge and reflected in a partial, one-sided way the actual behaviour of the material world. But he does not say what is wrong with these laws of formal logic and how they have been superseded. Hegel maintained that what was wrong with them was precisely their separate enumeration:

'The *several propositions* which are set up as *absolute laws of thought*, are therefore, more closely considered, *opposed to one another*, they contradict one another and mutually sublate themselves.' (*Logic*, p. 411.)

That is to say, taken as separate principles, the laws of formal logic are false. We must see them as self-related, through their transition and negation. It was Aristotle who first formulated logic in this static way. Kant made the first attempt to overcome this by deriving all the categories of logic systematically as different modes of a single transcendental unity of apperception. But Kant's solution was merely formal. He did not derive the different categories out of their intrinsic inner connection, but instead

appealed to the transcendental unity of apperception (the synthesizing function of the ego) as a kind of independent organizing principle. But Kant had derived the different modes of the transcendental unity of apperception through a previous implicit acceptance of the categories of Aristotelian logic.

Rejecting Kant's attempt to overcome Aristotle, Hegel proceeded to demonstrate dialectically the inner movement and transition of the logical categories. Consideration of each one leads necessarily to its opposite and their negation into a higher category. This is in fact what the whole of the *Logic* is concerned with. Dialectics is revealed precisely through the *transition* of one form to its other. It is this *transition* that Novack leaves out in his formal enumeration of the laws of formal logic.

What then is the point of this lengthy disquisition on formal logic by Novack? He is correct, of course, to demonstrate the historical importance of formal logic against Dewey. But the obligation of a Marxist does not stop in demonstrating the progressive conquests of the past against the pragmatists who deny them. Much more important is to fight against the one-sided limitations of formal logic inherited from the past which can only play a reactionary role today. The tasks of revolutionary leadership of the working class require a struggle for dialectical materialism in the revolutionary party, *against* the 'everyday common sense' which is bourgeois ideology basing itself on formal logic.

It is Novack's opposition to the struggle for dialectics that leads him to compromise with formal logic as well as with Dewey.

The other side of Novack's criticism of Dewey is his implicit view that Dewey made some valuable contributions to logic. Thus, he writes:

'Dewey's criticisms of the metaphysical non-revolutionary, teleological traits of Aristotelian logic are well-founded.' (p. 45.)

He also makes the point earlier that Dewey's rejection of formal logic had its progressive side in that it carried forward the critique of formalism he first learned as a Hegelian.

'He acquired a repugnance to formalism from the transcendental logic of the neo-Hegelians, which held that form and content, subject and object, reason and reality not only existed in inseparable unity, but in the last analysis of reality, where the Absolute reigned, were even identical with one another.' (p. 14.)

He adds that after the break with Hegel, 'He likewise clung to the conviction, shared with Hegel, that the severance of the forms of thought from their objective content was an inadmissible distortion of reality.' (p. 15.)

But we have already seen that Dewey's break with Hegel was a rejection of even a tenuous connection with dialectics. Dewey did maintain a lifelong interest in unifying opposites, but this as we have shown was nothing but the outlook of subjective idealism. His attempt to unite form and content, subject and object, idea and reality, was the endeavour of a subjective idealist who denied the independent existence of matter and its conflict with thought. Dewey left no trace of Hegel's objective idealism in which the unity of Being and Consciousness is only established through a continuous process of negation, of the practice of man in transforming the objective world. Hegel as well as Marx recognized that the unity of theory and practice presupposes their conflict. What Novack glosses over in his remarks is that the Hegelian heritage of Dewey became transformed, precisely because of

Dewey's rejection of the unity and conflict of opposites, the mainspring of the dialectic, into the crassest form of subjective idealism.

This does not mean that Dewey followed through the logical consequences of subjective idealism. Few subjective idealists do. Even Bishop Berkeley rescued himself from the consequences of his solipsistic philosophy by appealing to the Mind of God, which gave his behaviour a relationship to the objective world. In Dewey's case, subjective idealism meant the adaptation of the individual to the given social order of capitalism, which one can improve in various ways through experimentation in reforming society. Dewey even considered that socialism could, after sufficient experimentation, prove to be a better way of life than capitalism. He denied, however, that it was possible to determine in advance what course to pursue in practice. He recognized no objective laws of society, upon which the actions of men must be consciously based. (See Dewey's 'Means and Ends', his reply to Trotsky: *Their Morals and Ours*.)

Material content of logic

On the relations of logical forms to their material content, Novack claims that Dewey took over Hegel's conception that form and content are united and that the content of logic is objective. He writes that Dewey agreed with Hegel that logic had an objective content. It is not only the viewpoint of Hegel, but also of dialectical materialism that the forms of logic reflect an objective content. The objective content of logic for dialectical materialism however is the movement of matter, not the Absolute Spirit as for Hegel. How does Dewey see the 'objective content' of logic?

Novack himself answers that for Dewey this consists in 'biological operations and structures'. But in what sense are 'biological operations and structures' objective? Since Dewey sees these 'biological operations' isolated from the rest of the material world from which they originate and with which they interact, his logic is based on the observed behaviour of man. But if logic is to have an objective and a materialist content, then it must be a reflection of all that is external to man's thinking, i.e., it must refer to the behaviour of independently existing matter in motion, including man himself as part of nature.

With any other starting point we cannot but arrive at the subjective, empirical conception of logic developed by Hume and extended by Mill. For these empiricists, logic was in the final analysis a psychological habit of individual man. Neither the forms of reasoning nor the content of thought had any necessary reference to the material world, although their material content is implicitly accepted in practice. Dewey was an opponent of this subjective, empirical conception of logic, but his substitution of 'biological operations' for the psychological habits of Hume and Mill in no way overcame the subjectivism of their conception. For one thing, the forms of 'Biological operations and structures' which are supposed to explain the forms of logic are themselves simply presupposed as given, just like the psychological habits of Hume and Mill. A materialist would show how these biological operations themselves are determined by the movement of matter independent of men's consciousness. They are the forms of behaviour of the highest developed level of matter and they operate only in a way based upon and consistent with the laws of nature, (such as physics) which existed before

their origin. This being the case, we can see the fraud Novack perpetrates in appraising Dewey's logic as 'objective'. He tries to reconcile the materialist logic of Marxism with the subjective idealist conception that men create logic and 'impose' it on the world. In doing so, Novack must appeal to the petty-bourgeois conception which denies that the basic philosophical struggle between idealism and materialism takes the form today of the struggle for dialectical materialism against bourgeois ideology. Novack instead panders to the prevailing myth that the question of the priority of matter or idea is 'meaningless' and that some third position is possible. This latter is dubbed 'scientific method'. It is said to be basically materialist. Its paradigm is said to exist in the working habits of the natural scientist. And this is how Novack presents Dewey: as a proponent of 'scientific method' who, if he had been consistent enough, would have become a dialectical materialist. This is why Novack writes:

'Dewey's view that logical forms are created through historical processes of inquiry was correct. But he did not go deeply enough into the problem because he failed to divulge the ultimate roots of the science of logic in the interactions and interrelations of the constituents of the physical world.' He further states: 'Dewey seriously attempted to provide an empirical basis for the process of thought and account for the unity of logic with the rest of reality as experienced. A consistent materialism (our emphasis — A.S.) or evolutionism would hold that the fundamental matrix of inquiry, in which methods of inquiry are generated and operate and to which they refer, is the physical world.' (p. 15.)

We can say several things about these passages. First, to say that Dewey is 'correct' but 'did not go deeply enough' is to completely deny the whole historical struggle for Marxism against bourgeois ideology. It would be just as correct, employing such a method, to say that 'liberalism is correct but it does not go deeply enough.' In fact, the SWP has said this and carries this conception into its practice.

Furthermore, the fact that Dewey 'seriously attempted to provide an empirical basis for the processes of thought' is somehow meant to impress us with the sincerity of Dewey's 'scientific' approach. But Dewey's 'seriousness' or sincerity is beside the point. However, what Novack considers 'consistent materialism' is very pertinent. In a nutshell, Novack tells us that 'consistent materialism' would be simply the method already employed by Dewey (i.e., the empirical method) but carried out beyond the biological realm to encompass the physical world.

Now it is of course true that we must provide an account of the physical world. But would such an account, in the manner of the natural scientist, be sufficient to call itself 'consistent materialism'? On the contrary, it leaves out that which mediates between nature (including the physical and biological) and man's thinking: i.e., men's production and reproduction of their material life, carried out within definite social relations of production, which are part of the movement of matter. Marx made this very point against the limitations of the method of the natural scientists. He wrote:

'Technology discloses man's mode of dealing with Nature, the process of production by which he sustains his life, and thereby also lays bare the mode of formation of his social relations, and of the mental conceptions that flow from them . . . It is, in reality, much easier to discover by analysis the earthly core of the misty creations of religion, than, conversely, it is to develop from the actual relations of life the corresponding celestialized forms of those relations. The latter method

is the only materialistic, and therefore the only scientific one. (Our emphasis — A.S.) The weak points in the abstract materialism of natural science, a materialism that excludes history and its process, are at once evident from the abstract and ideological conceptions of its spokesmen whenever they venture beyond the bounds of their own speciality.' (Capital, Vol. I, p. 372, note 3.)

Marx says here, without any ambiguity, that the method employed by the natural scientists (and we might add by the positivist social scientists) is abstract and is *not* consistent materialism. (See also Engels' Preface to the Second Edition of *Anti-Dühring*.) The movement of matter from the physical world to its reflection in the mind as logical forms must be followed dialectically, through all the historical mediations. The natural scientists (who employ the predominant method of empiricism) cannot account for the *forms* of thinking. His materialism is limited to the *abstract* assertion that matter shapes thinking; but *how* matter shapes thinking, i.e. what specific forms are taken by thought, is a question which does not arise for him.

Novack's defence of this procedure of the natural scientist is an open attack on Marxism. Yet Novack is driven to this conclusion as the necessary outcome of his attempt to bridge his brand of 'Marxism' with the methods of empiricism and pragmatism. Novack simply hopes that by labelling them 'Scientific' no one will notice the subjective idealist conclusions of these bourgeois methods.

The dialectical process and the nature of negation

Let us now examine how, under the guise of defending dialectics against Dewey, Novack attacks dialectical logic. In the following lengthy passage, Novack tells how he conceives of the dialectical process and the nature of negation:

'This critical changeover at the extreme end of a development is slurred over in Dewey's thought. Contradictions do not remain static; their terms keep changing. Their interrelationships can unfold in very different ways, depending upon circumstances. They can be readjusted in accord with shifts in the balance of contending forces. In that case, the original contradiction subsists and is reinstated and reproduced in a variant more highly developed form. Although its essential elements are reciprocally modified, both endure. Negation is partial, not thoroughgoing.

'However, sooner or later, at some point along the way, the accumulated changes so alter the relationship to the advantage of one side or the detriment of the other that their polarization is driven to the extreme and their unity disrupted. At the climactic point of their conflict one of the opposing forces shatters the existing set-up and eliminates the other. This disposes of the contradiction in a decisive and conclusive manner. In the totally new formation that results from this radical negation the unviable attributes belonging to the old components of the opposition are eradicated while their positive elements are preserved, although in a transfigured form.' (Novack, pp. 52, 53.)

The first element Novack introduces into the dialectic is scepticism. He tells us that, 'Their interrelations can unfold in different ways, depending upon circumstances.' This is another way of saying that we can never know the outcome of a process because 'circumstances' always intervene. This denies that there is a *logic* inherent in all processes, in nature and in history. To be sure it is not the logic of a smooth, even, straight-line development. History often takes a step backward in order to prepare two

steps forward. The 'circumstances' that Novack mentions are not something external to the process, but are already inherent in the determinate nature of a particular process. Hegel put it this way in relation to the circumstances surrounding a moral act:

'... That is to say, there can be imputed to me only what I knew of the circumstances. On the other hand, there are inevitable consequences linked with every action, even if I am only bringing about some single, immediate, state of affairs. The consequences in such a case represent the universal implicit within that state of affairs. If of course, I cannot foresee the consequences — they might be preventable — but I must be aware of the universal character of my isolated act. The important point here is not the isolated thing but the whole, and that depends not on the differential of the particular action, but on its universal nature.' (Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, paragraph 118, translated by J. Sibree.)

Of course, our understanding of processes is always approximate and must be continually developed. But the point is that such knowledge is real and is knowledge of the transitions by which the particular to which knowledge refers is connected with universal matter in motion, and not just this or that circumstance, as Novack would put it.

Novack proceeds from the note of scepticism to vulgarize the dialectic and of course in so doing to change it into something else. He completely confuses different moments of the dialectical process. First of all, in what sense does Novack mean 'negation', 'partial' or otherwise, after saying that 'the essential elements are reciprocally modified'? Does he mean the first negation, as opposed to the negation of the negation? But then it would not be simply a matter of the elements being 'reciprocally modified' for that is what characterizes the interpenetration of opposites, which comes before their transition and negation.

In any case, Novack's conception of negation is much clearer in the next paragraph. Novack states that at the high point of the conflict of opposites, 'one of the opposing forces shatters the existing set-up and eliminates the other.' But that is not the case. *Both* opposites are eliminated and a new unity is established. To give an example, the victorious social revolution not only expropriates the capitalist class and destroys it as a class, but it also starts the process of destroying the working class.

Furthermore, in the 'totally new formation', the positive elements are *not* preserved. The positive is only determined by its relation to a particular negative. Insofar as the old unity of the positive and negative has been broken up, a new entity emerges which contains within itself a new unity and conflict of opposites with its specific context. Also, what is the meaning of the word 'transfigured' in this context? Is Novack trying to eliminate any distinction between the notion that the positive is retained through the process of negation (which is his position) with the (correct) notion that the positive, like the negative, is *transformed* through the process of negation?

Novack, by vulgarizing dialectics, transforms it into a peaceful process without conflict, and upholds a vulgar evolutionary conception of change which denies qualitative leaps. This attack on dialectics has been the stock in trade of all those revisionists who have followed Bernstein in seeking to substitute the outlook of bourgeois liberalism for that of revolutionary Marxism. Novack, having pioneered the SWP's attempt to build a bridge between Marxism and liberalism, now seeks to sell the logic of Marxism, dialectical materialism, as something compati-

ble with the logic of liberalism, the subjective idealism of pragmatism.

Contradictions, continuity and discontinuity

Novack further tries to peacefully reconcile opposites through his distortion of contradiction and continuity in the dialectic. Let us first take his conception of continuity. Novack correctly says that 'continuity in discontinuity is characteristic of all progressive developments' (p. 54). But Novack's conception of continuity is the opposite of dialectics, which sees continuity as being established through *discontinuity*, not in spite of it. The continuity from the old entity to the new entity is worked out *through* the negation of the old entity, not despite it. Novack, however, maintains that continuity is established despite discontinuity and despite negation, through the preservation of components of the old in the new entity. We have already seen how Novack denies the qualitative leap inherent in negation by appeal to the positive elements which are preserved. Similarly, he appeals to the elements that are preserved in the process of negation as the embodiment of the continuity of the old with the new. Thus, he writes:

'The rupture in these successive stages of progress in physics was more consequential than the residual elements of continuity between them.' (p. 54.)

The continuity from the old entity to the new (in the case Novack discusses, from Newtonian theory to relativity theory) does not rest in 'residual elements' that are preserved, but in the fact that the new entity received its specific determination through the negation of the old entity. Thus Engels pointed out:

'Negation in dialectics does not mean simply saying no, or declaring that something does not exist, or destroying it in any way one likes... I must not only negate, but also sublate the negation. I must therefore so arrange the first negation that the second remains or becomes possible. How? This depends on the particular nature of each individual case... Every kind of thing therefore has a peculiar way of being negated in such a manner that it gives rise to a development, and it is just the same with every kind of conception or idea.' (*Anti-Dühring*, p. 169.)

While it may be true that degrees of similarity remain in the new entity, the continuity of the new from the old is not established in these *seemingly* similar elements. (They are in any case not 'components' that are retained. The similarity is only superficial.) This is a static and formal way of understanding continuity, which for dialectics is inseparable from negation and discontinuity.

This last point is related to Novack's denial of contradiction. For contradiction exists in matter at every moment of time. There is always a coming together of opposites in unity and conflict, their interpenetration, their transition into each other and their break-up through the transformation of the entity into something new which establishes a new unity of opposites. Dialectical logic must reflect this movement. Contradictory opposites must be brought together in consciousness, seen in their continual movement at every moment. Novack denies that dialectics means bringing together the opposites in our thought at every moment. He sees the opposites as existing only alongside each other. Thus he says:

'Formal thinking fastens upon only one side of a contradictory phenomenon and then fails to see or denies the existence of its correlative.' (Novack, p. 51.)

But formal thinking is quite capable of recognizing contradictions. The deficiency of formal thinking lies in the fact that opposites are not brought together in thought as they exist in their unity and conflict *at every moment*.

An example of contradiction suggested by Novack should make this clearer. He says that debts are intrinsically contradictory.

'On a broad scale in the course of the business cycle, the invigorating (positive) effects of borrowing are most evident during the boom while its debilitating (negative) side is violently demonstrated in times of downturn and crisis.' (p. 51.)

The contradictory nature of debt can only be grasped if it is seen that the period of the boom which was built on credit was itself an expression of the crisis which necessarily became transformed, because of the contradictory nature of credit, into the collapse of the boom. It is not that for a period this aspect of credit prevails, and then at another period its opposite prevails, but both opposites are already present and work themselves out through their negation from the very beginning. It is this formal method that led the revisionists to deny the character of the crisis of capitalism during the boom and see only the 'positive', but not *the negative within the positive* which was preparing the way for the present crisis.

Novack gives another example which makes a complete mockery of contradiction. He says that the petty capitalist embodies the contradiction between workers and capitalists:

'This transitional figure is a living contradiction, an aspiring boss who has not yet shed all the characteristics of his original status as one labourer among others and who may fail in his bid to join the exploiters.' (p. 51.)

What Novack is really saying is that the contradictory poles lead to a neutral, indeterminate situation, to a 'transitional figure'. But one pole is always dominant. Being is always determinate being and changes from determination to determination. It is never indeterminate.

Empiricism

Novack does make many formally correct points about Dewey. He shows how his denial of contradiction, when translated into the arena of society, leads to the politics of liberalism and class-collaboration. But what is crucial in Novack's article is his conciliation with Dewey on the key philosophical issues. Among these is Novack's agreement with Dewey that science is the discovering of 'facts'. He states,

'Dewey correctly remarked: "The first distinguishing characteristic of thinking is facing the facts." His logic suffers from the fatal flaw that it prevented him — and others who think like him — from facing the fundamental facts about the nature of American capitalism.' (p. 56.)

In this way, Novack characteristically lapses into the concept of 'facts' shared by the empiricists and Dewey; that is, the immediately observable surface phenomena. All such 'facts' can only be understood when seen in their formation as the result of more fundamental contradictory forces which are historically developed and whose regularity of behaviour is approximately reflected in scientific laws. Furthermore, the abstract analysis of the signifi-

cance of facts is only one aspect of the theory of knowledge which becomes lifeless when separated out from the moments of living perception and of practice. Thus Lenin quotes Hegel approvingly:

'As we find in all expressions of perception and experience, as soon as men speak, there is a notion present. It cannot be withheld, for in consciousness there is always a touch of universality and truth.' (Lenin *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p. 264.)

Lenin adds his own remark to this:

'Quite right and important. It is precisely this that Engels repeated in more popular form when he wrote that natural scientists ought to know that the results of natural science are concepts, and that the art of operating with concepts is not inborn, but is the result of 2,000 years of the development of natural science and philosophy.' (cf. Engels, Introduction to the Second Edition of *Anti-Dühring*.)

What the empiricist does is to present the facts through the prism of his own implicit but unstated impressionistic concepts and pass off such impressions as a reality which we must accept. The SWP has consistently used this empirical method as the basis for its opportunist adaptation to all manner of petty-bourgeois movements for many years. Thus, it is not surprising that Novack uses the opportunity of an appraisal of Dewey to solidarize himself with Dewey's conception of 'facts.'

Practice

The last area we examine is Dewey's and Novack's conception of practice. Most often, a discussion of pragmatism begins and ends with the pragmatist's high esteem for practice as against abstract theory. Sometimes, a vulgar comparison is made between Marxism and pragmatism, and the two are judged similar in their emphasis on practice (as well as their common rejection of *a priori* social norms.) Novack expresses this position. He writes:

'Dewey did take a big stride forward in the right direction by making practice an integral constituent of his logical method . . . but he halted midway in unifying theory and practice, by keeping his logic of purposive action at an unbridgeable distance from objective reality.' (p. 56.)

The conception of practice held by the philosophy of pragmatism is, contrary to Novack, the complete opposite of that held by Marxists. For Dewey and all pragmatists, practice is the work of an individual solving his own individual problem. For Marxists, practice is social activity, it is the transformation of nature, through the medium of the specific mode of productive forces and productive relations, to meet the needs of man, together with the struggle of men to become conscious of and fight out the conflicts in the economic base of society. The individual plays a part in this practice through his relations to the socially organized forces of production. For the pragmatists, practice cannot be guided by any lawfulness, since they deny the existence of objective laws which determine the course of history. For Marxists, revolutionary practice must be consciously guided by an understanding of the lawful movement of nature and society. For the pragmatist, practice can only establish relative truths for the moment. For the Marxist, practice is continually brought into conflict with previous theory and new knowledge derived. This is a continual process which leads to an ever closer approximation to absolute universal truth, without ever being completed.

For the Marxist, practice is revolutionary practice, man's conscious purposive activity, which involves the subordination of individual subjective whims. For the pragmatist, practice is ultimately the adaptation of one's individual activity to the subjective desires of the individual. It thus becomes clear why it was necessary for Dewey to deny the conflict of opposites. The outside world must 'merge' with the subjective notion of the individual. No conflict can be admitted because this might have the implication of having to subordinate himself to something other than himself. This is of course subjective idealism in practice, and perfectly expresses the immediate consciousness of the middle class.

Conclusion

Novack is the man who was personally urged by Trotsky in 1937 to fight for dialectical materialism against the bourgeois method of pragmatism in the SWP. Novack

quotes Trotsky as saying '... you comrades must at once take up the struggle against Eastman's distortion and repudiation of dialectical materialism. There is nothing more important than this. Pragmatism, empiricism, is the greatest curse of American thought. You must inoculate the younger comrades against its infection.'

The SWP never understood Trotsky's warning and failed to develop Marxism against pragmatism in theory and practice. This led to their subsequent political degeneration, as the subjective idealism with which they compromised left them open to all the class pressures of the bourgeoisie.

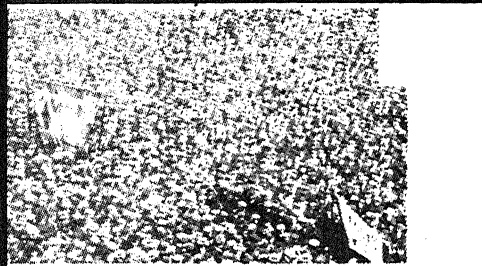
Novack has for the past 20 years provided the ideological justification for the SWP's break from Marxism. His latest article on Dewey further cements the marriage between this bogus 'Marxism' and pragmatism. Under the guise of a formal critique of Dewey, Novack has gone over to the theory of knowledge of pragmatism on every major question. He has finally succeeded in Americanizing 'Marxism' to the point where every good bourgeois liberal can feel at home with this brand of 'Marxism'.

TROTSKY'S WRITINGS ON BRITAIN

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PART TWO: THE DECLINE OF BRITISH IMPERIALISM 1908-1926

PART THREE: THE BRITISH LABOUR MOVEMENT 1906-1924



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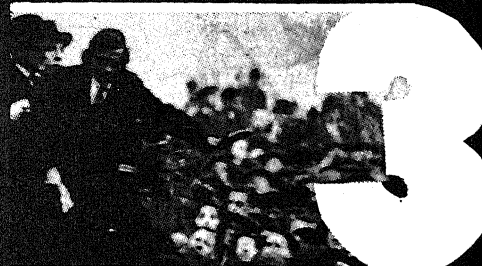
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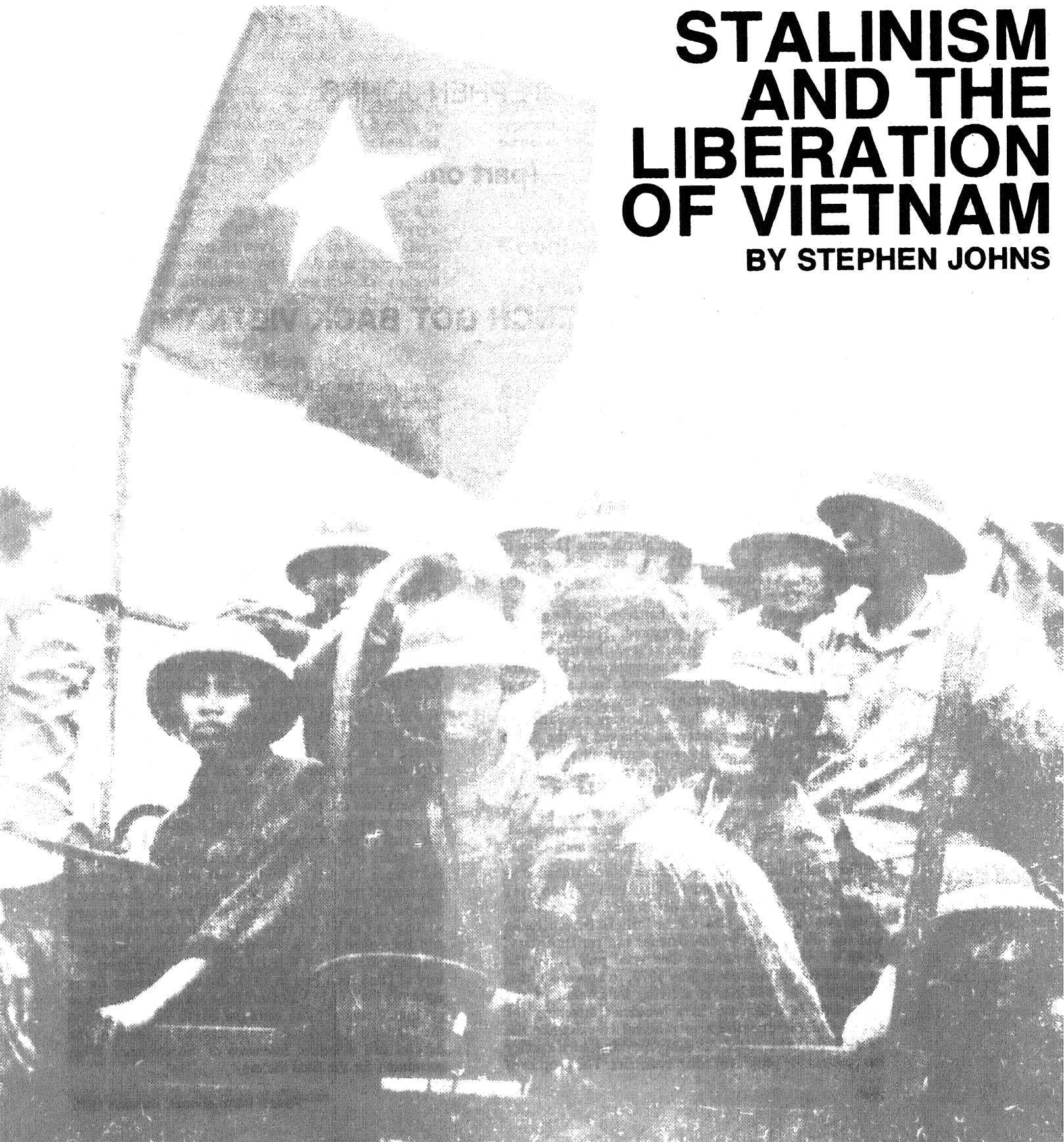
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STALINISM AND THE LIBERATION OF VIETNAM

BY STEPHEN JOHNS



Stalinism and the liberation of Vietnam

BY STEPHEN JOHNS

(part one)

HOW THE FRENCH GOT BACK VIETNAM

THE revolutionary war in Vietnam has been the most bitter and protracted in the history of mankind. It is decisive proof that the masses when mobilized in revolutionary struggle can defeat the mightiest imperialist power.

The destruction caused by the American forces is hardly conceivable. It is said that the US ruling class were preparing to use nuclear weapons against Vietnam and its 31 million inhabitants. In fact during the bombing holocaust unleashed against the North over 12 days in December 1972-January 1973, the equivalent of four atomic bombs was dropped on the densely populated areas of the Red River Delta.

Yet the North withstood the battering and fought on. The entire population was prepared. Production and administration had been decentralized. Factories operated deep in the jungle. Those who remained in Hanoi and Haiphong lived virtually underground. Such a degree of unity in struggle and organization involving the entire population can only be achieved through revolutionary mobilization. No less a feat was achieved in the South where the workers and peasants sustained and won a resistance war against 500,000 fully armed US troops and one million soldiers of the puppet Saigon armies.

Blow to Stalinism

The total victory of the revolutionary forces signalled by the liberation of Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City) on April 30 was therefore a momentous defeat for US imperialism. It was also a shattering blow for the Stalinist bureaucracies and the line of peaceful co-existence and parliamentary, peaceful roads to socialism. One need only recall the words of Radio Moscow of July 1970, to appreciate that the victory in Vietnam is a living indictment of the bureaucracy's treachery. In a broadcast attacking the (then) Chinese opposition to peaceful co-existence the Moscow Stalinists stated: 'Frankly speaking, such a policy has isolated the peoples of small countries. The peoples of

small countries will inevitably be defeated in the anti-imperialist struggle. Their strength is no match for that of imperialism.' (Reported in *Workers Press*, July 29, 1970.)

But Vietnam was not defeated and the liberation was greeted in Moscow in a distinctly muted fashion, the leadership muttering some appropriate Stalinist words about the advance of world peace. Gromyko, the Soviet Foreign Minister, was promptly dispatched to Vienna where he met Kissinger for secret talks.

The events in Vietnam and Cambodia do indeed mark a completely new stage in the world revolution. US imperialism has been defeated and driven out of Indo-China. Its hold on the Far East is threatened. Racked by its own acute economic crisis it is preparing a savage counter-revolutionary offensive against the working class.

The destruction of imperialism is not a smooth process of a greater and greater advance for the working class, and a corresponding weakening of imperialism. On the contrary, every victory for the revolutionary forces produces a new and higher stage of the struggle. Imperialism, led by the United States, is forced to strike back more violently to secure those areas of the world still open to its direct exploitation. It must prepare new annexations to dominate the resources and to extract surplus value from the working class and peasantry. It turns with a vengeance on its own working class in an attempt to make them pay for the crisis of the capitalist system.

Vietnam is therefore no basis for complacency or over-confidence. It must be studied with one aim — to better understand the revolutionary tasks ahead. At the outset a number of questions can be posed. Why was the struggle so long and so bitter? How did it arise that the defeated and discredited French imperialists were able to take back Vietnam after World War II? Why, after their great victory at Dien Bien Phu in 1953, did the liberation forces agree to a division of Vietnam? How did the US manage to get into Vietnam? Why were the North Vietnamese and the National Liberation Front isolated at some of the darkest and bloodiest moments of the struggle? What accounted for the final victory?

These questions lead directly to an examination of the leadership of the Vietnamese struggle and the role of Stalinism both inside and outside Indo-China. Side by side with the heroism and the courage of the workers and peasants of Vietnam were the betrayals of international Stalinism. For the leadership the Vietnamese revolution was a painful and savage affair. Under the vast pressure from the masses and in face of the barbarity of imperialist domination they were forced empirically to break from the maxims of peaceful co-existence and the parliamentary road and carry through a revolution.

The watershed of all the post-war struggles in Vietnam was 1945. Five years earlier the Indo-Chinese Communist Party (ICP) Central Committee had decided to form '... A broad national front uniting not only the workers, the peasants, the petty bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie ... but also a number of patriotic landowners.' This was called the Vietminh. Nationalist, anti-imperialist and 'democratic' in appearance, it was controlled by the ICP and its undisputed leader was Ho Chi Minh. The Party's foremost military guerrilla war expert, Vo Nguyen Giap, had been charged with creating the 'Armed Propaganda Brigades for the Liberation of Vietnam' — the embryo organization that was eventually to become the People's Army of the North.

French collaboration

Ho Chi Minh had been restraining Giap during the final years of the war, when the future general was eager for an uprising and general offensive against the occupying Japanese armies. Ho Chi Minh argued correctly that the time was not yet ripe for such an offensive. But in August 1945 the situation changed dramatically. The Americans dropped atomic bombs on Nagasaki and Hiroshima and the Japanese throughout Asia surrendered unconditionally.

In Vietnam the French *colons* who had collaborated with the Japanese were in jail (in March the Japanese had launched a 'coup' and assumed direct control). The 'free' French back in Paris were in no position to restore the old colonial regime. A power vacuum emerged and almost effortlessly the Vietminh disarmed the Japanese and took over. Liberation committees, nationalist coalitions usually dominated by the ICP and the Vietminh, were formed in many country areas. The Vietminh was strongest in the far North where it had operated from base areas during the war. The hegemony of Ho Chi Minh and the ICP leaders over the anti-imperialist struggle was a distinctive feature of politics in Vietnam. Unlike China, the bourgeois nationalist parties in Vietnam had never played a decisive role or succeeded in building a mass base. This was a result of Vietnam's economic development.

The country possessed very little in the way of a 'national' bourgeoisie and only a small petty bourgeoisie. Much of the industry in Vietnam was extractive — rubber, hardwood, tea, coffee, pepper, shellac and intensive rice production, dominated by the big foreign companies. The commerce of the big towns and cities was monopolized by 700,000 Chinese merchants. The working class was small. Landlordism was the rule and the most oppressed masses of the country were the peasantry — tens of thousands without land, often working on the big estates, and millions of others subsisting on dwarfish plots. Rents, indebtedness (with interest rates often in the region of 600 per cent!) and the savagery of colonial rule, made their lives a living hell.

Unlike the bourgeois nationalist parties and the religious sects, the ICP leaders identified the anti-feudal revolution as the principal feature of the anti-imperialist struggle. Their policy of agrarian reform, land distribution and land re-distribution, enabled them to win the mass base among the peasantry which was indispensable to victory.

Yet the so-called August Revolution was not successful. The French imperialists got back into Vietnam and independence was snatched from the grasp of the Vietnamese people. Why did this happen? The answer is that the Vietnamese people were cynically betrayed by the forces of international Stalinism — principally by the Moscow bureaucracy and the French Communist Party. The approach of the Kremlin bureaucracy and the Stalinist parties in the metropolitan countries to the struggle of the colonial masses was completely counter-revolutionary. They opposed the development of the world revolution, of which the anti-colonial struggle was a vital part.

Counter-revolutionary

At stake were two opposite perspectives: One started from the conception of the world revolution arising from the contradictions of imperialism — the highest and final stage of capitalism. Imperialism as a system had come to dominate the world. It developed the world productive forces in a violent and uneven manner, juxtaposing advanced forms of production (and exploitation) to backward and even feudal forms. The imperialist epoch was one of wars and revolutions, as the capitalist class fought ruthlessly against the development of the world revolution — embodied in the struggle of the working class and the peasantry all over the globe.

The other (counter-revolutionary, Stalinist) perspective abandoned the world revolution as the foundation for all strategy and tactics in the workers' movement. It attempted to compartmentalize the development of the productive forces and the revolution, into separate, national entities, while paying mere lip-service to the 'internationalism' of the class struggle.

The first perspective was the conquest of decades of revolutionary theory and practice by Marxists and particularly by Lenin and the leaders of the Russian Revolution of 1917. The Bolsheviks approached the revolution in the colonies in the following way: the struggle in the colonies assumes an anti-imperialist character; its demands appear to be those of a 'bourgeois democratic revolution' — national self determination, democratic rights, etc. The agrarian problem in any backward country is central, the vast majority of the oppressed masses being peasants who are constantly driven down into misery, without land and often without food. The solving of the agrarian problem is therefore basic to the success of the anti-colonial struggle.

But who is to lead this revolution? The Russian experience demonstrated that in backward countries the bourgeoisie is weak, and more afraid of the mobilization of the masses for the 'bourgeois' revolution, than of its feudal, autocratic or foreign masters. As soon as the masses take to the offensive, the bourgeoisie falls into the arms of reaction — in Russia the semi-feudal Tsarist regime, in the colonies the imperialists. The vanguard role therefore fell to the proletariat, in alliance with the peasantry. This was the mass force capable, under the leadership of the proletarian revolutionary party, of solving the agrarian problem and defeating the imperialist power.

A dictatorship of the proletariat, backed by the peasants, would be the result of this struggle. But such a dictatorship, by its very nature, could not limit itself to the framework of bourgeois property relations. The rule of the proletariat immediately places on the agenda the transformation of the bourgeois into the socialist revolution. This process is rooted in the development of the world economy under imperialism, which produces the economic conditions in the backward and colonial countries for a super-exploited mass, a feeble 'national' bourgeoisie and a savage ruling autocracy or foreign-based caste. But even though liberated, ex-colonial and backward countries remain backward. The construction of socialism demands a high development of the productive forces, it requires an international division of labour, the resources of a planned world economy. The transformation to socialism cannot be achieved in a single highly developed capitalist country, let alone a backward country dragged savagely from feudalism by imperialist domination. The revolutions in backward countries (Russia, China, Vietnam) therefore were seen by the Bolsheviks as a link in the chain of the international proletarian revolution. The victory of the working class in the capitalist countries and the help of the working class was essential to the speedy advance of the young workers' and peasants' states towards socialism. This is the theory of the permanent revolution which was the basic Bolshevik perspective in the Third International immediately after 1917. It was a profoundly internationalist outlook, the advance of the international revolution being the guiding principle of all strategy and tactics.

'Tragic misunderstanding'

The defeats of the working class in Germany, France, Italy and Britain after 1917 led to the emergence of an opposite counter-revolutionary tendency, Stalinism. This developed as a bureaucratic growth in the Soviet Union — a growth which the Russian working class, isolated in a backward country, was unable to check.

The Stalinist bureaucracy was a parasitic caste resting on the nationalized property relations in Russia. It sought to maintain its position through all kinds of alliances with imperialists and capitalist powers. Its role internationally therefore became by the 1930s entirely counter-revolutionary. The Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy became a force which strove continually to hold back, halt and ultimately smash the development of the world proletarian struggle.

In one famous exchange in 1935 with the American journalist Roy Howard, Stalin revealed in the bluntest terms his abandonment of the world working class.

Howard: What about your plans and intentions for world revolution?

Stalin: We have never had such designs.

Howard: But yet . . .

Stalin: It springs from a misunderstanding.

Howard: A tragic misunderstanding?

Stalin: No, a comic misunderstanding.

The rise of Stalinism had profound implications for the struggle in the colonial and semi-colonial countries. No longer was the international revolution the principal concern. The struggle of the colonial masses was utilized as far as possible, by the Stalinist bureaucracy, to stabilize its own position. As Leon Trotsky stated:

'With regard to the USSR, the role of the bureaucracy, as we have said, is dual; on the one hand, it protects, with its own

particular methods, the workers' state, and on the other, it disorganizes and slows down the development of the economy and of culture, repressing the creative activity of the masses. But in contrast to this, in the field of the international labour movement, not a trace of this duality remains; here the Stalinist bureaucracy plays, from the start to finish, a role of disorganization and demoralization, a disastrous role.'

As the bureaucracy developed during the 1920s the Comintern under Stalinist domination took its sections through various lurches to the right, and sometimes to the left, corresponding to the requirements of the bureaucracy and its relations with imperialism. In a rightward lurch, the powerful Chinese Communist Party was told in 1926 to seek a 'bloc of the four classes' — the working class, the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie — and subordinate its independence to an alliance with the latter embodied in the Kuomintang armies of Chiang Kai-shek. The fruits of the policy were reaped when the Kuomintang butchered their proletarian allies. In an even more tragic leftward lurch the German Communist Party was told to declare the Social Democrats 'social-fascists'. The necessity of winning over the millions of workers who supported the social democrats against fascism was ignored. When the fascists took power, it was thought, the Communists would be next. The results of this policy was the murder of millions of Socialists, Communists and Jews during the Nazi holocaust.

In 1945 the Moscow bureaucracy was attempting to maintain its open alliance with the Western imperialist powers of Britain and America which had resulted from the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union. Stalinist 'theory' had divided the imperialist world into two camps, the 'democratic' 'patriotic' imperialists such as Britain, the non-Vichy French etc, and the 'reactionary' imperialists, Japan, Germany and Italy. The 'patriotic' imperialists were not to be challenged. The Moscow bureaucracy made the most cynical deals with the capitalist powers. This background of Stalinist counter-revolution is indispensable to any grasp of the Indo-Chinese revolution and the behaviour of the Vietnamese leadership.

At Potsdam in 1945 Stalin, Attlee and Truman met to carve up the globe. Stalin, in line with the interests of the parasitic bureaucracy he represented, abandoned the interests of the working class and peasantry. Huge areas of the world were earmarked for imperialist re-domination. For concessions in Manchuria and on the Pacific seaboard, Indo-China, the scene of the most heroic struggles, was to be returned to the camp of imperialism.

The leadership of the ICP and the Vietmin were naturally not invited to attend these discussions over the fate of their homeland. While Ho Chi Minh and Giap planned their insurrection, Stalin had already agreed that the Chinese Kuomintang armies would occupy the North and the British the South, in preparation for the return of Vietnam to the French. Thus Stalinism prepared the first partition of Vietnam.

British intervention

The resources of the Stalinists were mobilized to ensure that 'order' was restored and that Vietnam became part of the French Union — the polite new name of the French colonial Empire. Under Moscow's guidance the Vietminh leaders did not oppose the re-occupation of Vietnam. In September 1945 the British army consisting largely of 26,000 Indian and Gurkha soldiers commanded by



Ho Chi Minh (standing) was a founder member of the French Communist Party. He is seen here at its first (founding) Congress at Tours in 1920.

Major-General Douglas D. Gracey moved into the South of Vietnam (Cochin-China).

The Vietminh in the South had established the Provisional Executive Committee, dominated by the ICP leader Tran Van Giau. It welcomed the British. In the wake of the British came the French expeditionary force under General Leclerc who proclaimed, 'We have come to reclaim our inheritance'. (Quoted in *Viet Cong* by Douglas Pike, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1966). Gracey had absolutely no doubts as to his role. 'I was welcomed on arrival by the Vietminh,' he boasted later, '... and promptly kicked them out.' (For the British role in Cochin-China see *The British in Vietnam - How the 25 year war began*, George Rose, Panther, 1970).

There were marches, demonstrations and clashes in cities like Saigon. The British re-armed the Japanese and used them as a police force. The Vietminh protested. On September 22 Gracey launched a coup. The Vietminh headquarters was overrun, sentries shot down and the occupants jailed. One American journalist witnessed the scene and wrote: '... that morning saw the blood flow, saw bound men beaten. They saw French colonial culture being restored to Saigon.'

Despite more bitter fighting the French — aided by the British and the Japanese — clung on to their toe-hold in Vietnam.

Ho Chi Minh and the Vietminh leaders had declared Doc Lap (freedom or independence) in Hanoi and their provisional government attempted to reach a negotiated settlement with the French, who by now were threatening to send their armies into the North. The French idea of independence was a partitioned Vietnam, with native governments, firmly under the thumb of the imperialist administration. These statelets would become part of the proposed Indo-Chinese Federation, which in turn would be a member of the French Union.

The negotiations continued in deadlock. On February 16, 1946, Ho Chi Minh informed Jean Sainteny the chief French negotiator, that he was prepared to talk on the basis of membership of the French Union. He made no mention of the Federation. The French government replied that it was prepared to recognize an autonomous Vietnamese government providing it afforded a welcome to French troops and providing Cochin-China could determine its own future by a referendum. In March Ho Chi Minh informed Sainteny that he would meet the second condition — membership of the Indo-Chinese Federation — but the South (Cochin-China) had to be included in the new state. Deadlock again.

But again it was Ho Chi Minh and the Vietminh who compromised. On March 6, 1946 Sainteny was informed: 'The President is ready to accept your conditions.' The

same day Ho Chi Minh signed the March 6 'independence' agreement. It stated France 'recognizes the Republic of Vietnam as a free state having its own parliament and its own finances, and forming part of the Indo-Chinese Federation and the French Union.' It added: 'With regard to the unification of the three Ky (Nam Ky, or Cochinchina, Trung Ky, or Annam, Bac Ky or Tonkin), the French government undertakes to follow the decisions of the people consulted by a referendum.'

Naval barrage

Ho Chi Minh prepared to go to France to work out the details of the agreement. As he began his journey he learned that the French governor Admiral d'Argenlieu had declared the 'Republic of Cochinchina' as a 'free state' with its own parliament, laws, army, finances. It was to become a part of the Indo-Chinese Federation. The trip

to France revealed even more clearly that the French had no real intention of holding referendums in Cochinchina, especially since the feeling of the overwhelming majority of the people would be for unity with the North. Giap had attended parallel negotiations with the imperialist authorities in Vietnam at Dalat where it had become equally clear that the French had no intention of granting unity or independence to the Vietnamese people.

Hostilities had already begun in the South as sections of the Vietminh refused to be disarmed or regrouped. There were clashes in Haiphong and Hanoi. The French High Commissioner in Saigon ordered the 'evacuation of Vietnamese armed forces from Haiphong'. On November 23 the French opened up a naval barrage against Vietnamese civilians in the port. The six-inch shells tore into the mud huts of the working-class quarter — six thousand were killed. The carnage in Haiphong marked the point of no return. The Vietnamese workers and peasants had paid the terrible price of Stalinist collaboration after the war.

DID THE VIETNAMESE LEADERSHIP BETRAY?

What lay behind the behaviour of the Vietminh leadership and their continuous compromise with imperialism during this crucial period? Lacouture described the reception the masses gave to the March 6 agreement:

'The initial reaction of the people of Hanoi to the Franco-Vietnamese agreement was so cold and suspicious that Vietminh headquarters decided to stake everything on the turn of a card. It invited everyone to assemble the following day, March 7, and hear what the leaders had to say. Whatever one's ultimate view of Ho and his colleagues, it is impossible not to be touched and impressed by this anxiety to explain things to the masses and act in harmony with them. The mixture of conviction and technique makes one think of Lenin. The scene in the huge Place du Théâtre, however, was more reminiscent of *Julius Caesar*. Furious outcries and dark rumours of assassination flew among the enormous, over-excited crowd. One by one, the leaders of the government came out on to the theatre balcony. When Giap, the veteran warrior, appeared and raised his fist in salute, a menacing silence came over the gathering. Borne by the loudspeakers, the voice of the little war leader rolled like thunder: "... We decided to negotiate as a means of creating conditions favourable to the struggle for complete independence. . . . In 1918, Russia signed a treaty at Brest-Litovsk so as to halt the German invasion and gain time, under cover of truce, to strengthen her army and her political power. Did she not become very powerful as a result of that treaty?"'

Two million starved

There is truth in what Giap told the people in Hanoi that night. What was the position of the Vietminh? Their take-over in August 1945 had not been a revolution. They filled a vacuum left by the collapse of the Japanese. It had been a bloodless, though popular coup. They had 2,000 regulars under arms in the North — the most liberated area in 1945. In the South their forces were limited to guerrilla bands. Would the masses have supported a struggle? Undoubtedly — but it would have been a struggle against 200,000 heavily armed and ruthless Kuomintang troops in the North, and the combined force of the British and French armies in the South. In addition

famine had swept the countryside — over two million had starved to death as a result of the Japanese forcing the peasantry to grow jute instead of rice.

In 1945 the ICP and the Vietminh were in no position to fight a full scale People's War — which, as subsequent struggles were to prove, is a long, exceedingly bitter conflict, demanding painstaking political preparations, strong base areas, large regular and guerrilla forces. To risk all on a hasty and ill-prepared uprising, against a large and well-armed enemy, would have thrown away everything. At the time Ho Chi Minh is reputed to have summed up his strategy in one blunt sentence: 'It is better to sniff France's dung for a while than eat China's all our lives.' But what about the Chinese revolution? the 'internationalists' will protest. The Vietnamese leadership were not unaware of this factor either.

Of this period Trun Chinh, the Party theoretician writes: 'It should be remembered that the success of our policy to drive out the Chiang troops from Vietnam was partly due to the widespread expansion of the Chinese people's revolutionary movement, which compelled the Chiang Kia-shek government to withdraw its troops from Indo-China to cope with revolution at home.'

Revolutions do not come to order. The relative weakness of the 'national' bourgeois, among other factors, meant that the Vietnamese revolution rapidly reached a mature stage after 1945. The Chinese masses, under Mao Tse-tung, still had to fight and smash a large, and well-armed bourgeoisie organized in the Kuomintang.

There is little doubt that the Vietminh and ICP leadership fell back on Stalinist explanations for their position. One Vietminh leader, Nguyen Van Toa, offered land seizures with a clear exposition of the Stalinist 'two-stage' theory of the revolution — a total revision of the permanent (uninterrupted) revolution of the Bolsheviks:

'[The Vietminh disapprove] of all actions of provocation and violence among inhabitants of Indo-China of every origin and every race; they will enforce by all means at their disposal the repression of disorder from any source.' (Milton Sacks and Frank N. Trager — *Marxism in South East Asia*, Stanford University Press, 1959).

A Party directive to cadres explaining the policy of agreement with the French states:

'The struggle which our nation is engaged in now is linked with that of the French nation, just as it was previously linked with that of the Chinese nation . . . Our main enemy is the French reactionary element . . . We must collaborate unreservedly with those Frenchmen who are sincerely democratic . . . and achieve, in so far as possible, a Franco-Vietnamese democratic front'. (Philippe Devillers, *Histoire du Vietnam*.)

Trotskyists murdered

The Bolshevik leadership after Brest-Litovsk of course never indulged in such reactionary talk. They told the masses exactly what the treaty was — not a pact with a 'democratic element' in the German ruling class, but a concession to imperialism, given in the knowledge there could be no lasting peace, given to buy time for the workers' republic in anticipation of the German workers' revolution.

The ICP leadership could have said, 'We were caught between the jaws of imperialism and Stalinism. We were forced to make a compromise. We drew back from our goal of independence to avoid being crushed. But have no illusions. This agreement will give us nothing. Prepare now for the struggle.' They were incapable of making such an analysis because they were trained by the Stalinist Comintern. This was a grave weakness since it blunted the understanding and the development of the Party's consciousness and made them less able to lead the masses along the road to revolution. But it did not alter the objective circumstances in which the Vietminh and the ICP found themselves in 1945-1946, or alter the necessity to avoid an immediate confrontation with two imperialist armies.

There was another savage and tragic aspect of the following by the Vietminh and ICP of the Moscow bureaucracy's line — the liquidation of the Trotskyist movements in Saigon. There is no thorough investigation in English into the role of the Trotskyist movement in Vietnam, still less a Marxist analysis. It appears that no Vietnamese Trotskyist has ever written an account of the Saigon events. Most of the available material is in French and an investigation of this would be required before any definitive view could be reached.

It appears in the 1930s the Trotskyist movement split into two factions. One, the International Communist League (also called the October group) was opposed to collaboration with the ICP, the other, the Struggle Group, was for an alliance with the ICP in the South and stood with them on a joint electoral platform for the municipal elections. Two Trotskyists and one ICP member were elected.

In Saigon in 1945 the Trotskyists participated in large demonstrations, held meetings and agitated for an armed struggle against the British and the French. The cadres were attacked by the Vietminh — many were killed, others fled. Their leader Ta Thu Thau was assassinated by a Vietminh cadre. In his biography of Ho Chi Minh, Lacouture records a conversation between the ICP leader and the French anti-colonial and radical Daniel Guerin:

'... the pleasure which I took in paying my respects to him [Ho Chi Minh] and rejoicing with him over the liberation of his country was darkened not only by our ideological disagreements but by the memory of Ta Tu Thau. Some overzealous Stalinist, close to the leader, had recently slain the former municipal councillor of Saigon . . .

"He was a great patriot and we mourn him," Ho Chi Minh told me with unfeigned emotion. But a moment later he added with a steady voice. "All those who do not follow the line which I have laid down will be broken."

The murder of the Trotskyists in Vietnam was an outright counter-revolutionary blow delivered by the ICP and the Vietminh. It deprived the masses of the possibility of an understanding of the role of international Stalinism and therefore disarmed them in the face of the parasitic and counter-revolutionary Moscow bureaucracy.

The Trotskyists themselves appear however to have had a grave weakness. They had never been able to build a base among the peasantry and totally underestimated the role of the revolutionary guerrilla war based on the countryside. In the period of the 1930s when the peasants of Nghe-Tinh rose up and liberated large areas of this province to the North of Hué, the Trotskyists attacked the movement as adventurism resulting from the Stalinist 'left turn'.

But this is far too superficial a view. The peasantry in Vietnam were a bitterly exploited majority. Uprisings were a constant feature of the history of the countryside. The so-called 'Nghe-Tinh soviets' were spontaneous and not just a product of 'third period' Stalinism. By participating in this and other peasant struggles the ICP cadres undoubtedly gained valuable lessons — liberated areas of the countryside became the base for the eventually revolutionary struggle — and the victorious People's Army was primarily made up of hundreds of thousands of peasant youth.

The Vietnamese Trotskyists appear instead to have confined much of their political work to the cities, especially Saigon, and the larger towns. They talked for example of transitional demands that would bring the peasant struggles 'under the leadership of the urban proletariat'. But the leadership of the proletariat is not an abstract thing — some kind of struggle in the towns and cities for liberation, followed by an alliance with the peasantry on the basis of land reform and distribution.

Proletarian leadership is expressed through the vanguard role of a party that bases itself on the advances of the working class on a world scale — principally the lessons of the Russian Revolution and the nationalized property relations of the Soviet Union. It is completely idealist to transpose the whole Russian experience where the workers' Soviets in the cities and towns, gave the lead to the peasant countryside — into countries like Vietnam, which had, in 1945, less than a million workers, out of a population of 30 million — mainly oppressed peasants. This is not to say the working class did not play a leading role in the Vietnamese revolution. On the contrary workers left the cities and towns, often taking with them entire factories, assembling them in the jungles, and fighting in the liberation armies. They played a leading role. (See J. Starobin's vivid account: *Viet-Nam fights for Freedom*, Lawrence and Wishart, 1953.)

The Vietminh of course did build an organization in the urban areas that played a crucial and active part (as the Tet Offensive of 1968 was to demonstrate dramatically). But a struggle in the cities and towns could not possibly replace the revolutionary liberation struggle based on the peasant areas in countries occupied by large imperialist armies. The lessons of the Vietnamese and the Chinese revolutions are indisputable on this point.

It was indeed the apparent failure of the Vietnamese Trotskyists to build a base in the countryside (their calls concentrated on demands for constituent assemblies,

national suffrage, eight-hour day, workers' control, opposition to peasant soviets — which in fact were embryo liberated areas) that accounted in part for their inability to withstand the liquidation of their movement. Immediately after the collapse of the Japanese they formed a united front with the non-communist nationalists — including the pro-Kuomintang party — and the religious sects. This was short-lived, the Vietminh quickly asserting their authority in the South. A Trotskyist party with a base in the country areas and with a correct understanding of the course of the Vietnamese revolution — based on a revolutionary *practice*, would have been a powerful force, able to withstand a Stalinist pogrom.

Trotsky's foresight

Trotsky appears to have anticipated many of the fatal mistakes the Vietnamese Trotskyists were to make. In his article 'On the Declaration of the Indo-Chinese Oppositions' he warns Ta Thu Thau and his compatriots of a failure to grasp the peasant question, an underestimation of the progressive role of nationalism and the dangers of sectarianism towards both the working class and the peasantry. In the article (published in the September 1973 issue of the *International Socialist Review*) Trotsky writes:

'It is necessary to speak more clearly, more fully, and more precisely about the agrarian question: The role and significance of the semi-feudal landed proprietors and of those with large land holdings in general; and about how much land the revolution would have at its disposal as a fund for land distribution if it expropriated landed proprietors in the interests of the poorest peasantry. The *peasant question* is left out of the declaration altogether' (original emphasis).

Warning against an abstract and sectarian approach to the struggle in Indo-China Trotsky writes:

'In the second page of the declaration it is said that the masses "believed naively that national independence could free them from poverty; but in the recent period a great many of them have seen their error."

Trotsky continues:

'This is obviously an incorrect formulation. National independence, as can be seen from the declaration itself, is a necessary element of the Indo-Chinese revolution. However, it is hardly likely that the entire Indo-Chinese peasantry has come to understand the necessity for the revolutionary overthrow of French imperialist rule. And it is more doubtful that the Indo-Chinese masses have already understood the inadequacy and illusoriness of a liberation that would solely be national. Here the Communists have before them a vast arena for agitation and propaganda.

'It would be very dangerous to believe that the masses have already understood something which actually remains to be explained to them, which can only be explained to them in the living context of the mass struggle.'

Trotsky criticizes a declaration by the Vietnamese Trotskyists that nationalism has 'at all times been a reactionary ideology' and can 'only forge new chains for the working class'. In opposition to this view Trotsky points out:

'At the present time the nationalism of the most backward Indo-Chinese peasant directed against the French imperialists is a revolutionary element as opposed to the abstract and false cosmopolitanism of the Freemasons and other democratic bourgeois types, or the "internationalism" of the Social Democrat, who rob or help to rob the Indo-Chinese peasant. The declaration states quite correctly that the nationalism of the bourgeoisie is a means for subordinating and deceiving the

masses. But the nationalism of the mass of the people is the elementary form taken by their just and progressive hatred for the most skilful, capable, and ruthless of their oppressors, that is the foreign imperialist.

'The proletariat does not have the right to turn its back on this kind of nationalism. On the contrary, it must demonstrate in practice that it is the most consistent and devoted fighter for the national liberation of Indo-China.'

Summarizing the programme Trotsky writes:

'The slogans with which the declaration closes . . . are in part too abstract and in part incomplete. They should be made more precise and enlarged upon in the light of what we said above [agrarian question, national element, democratic slogans as transitional slogans, eight-hour day, etc.]'

We can see that in this brilliant foresight into the nature of the Indo-Chinese revolution Trotsky's principal concern is to ensure that the Vietnamese Trotskyists appreciate the vital importance of the alliance between the working class and the peasantry, to advance concrete slogans and work to cement this alliance under the Trotskyist Party banner. This involves great attention to the peasant question and the national question, which in colonial countries are inseparable.

Although the Trotskyists did make correct criticisms and struggled against the Indo-Chinese Communist Party during the period of the Popular Front (when opposition to French imperialism was virtually dropped), it would certainly appear that they never assimilated these essential lessons of the Indo-Chinese revolution.

Betrayal

An examination of the betrayal of the Vietnamese revolution cannot pass without exposing the role of the French Communist Party. The intention of the Moscow Stalinists was to sacrifice the revolution to maintain the alliance with Western imperialism. The willing tool of the bureaucracy was the French CP leadership and Maurice Thorez, Party secretary. The French Stalinists had no qualms. They quite openly proclaimed their faithful adherence to the Empire. Their chauvinism was unashamed — as was their contempt for the struggle of the colonial masses. If there was one reason why Ho Chi Minh placed over-reliance in the importance of the treaty with the French to give the Vietminh time to prepare it was his totally misguided faith in French Stalinism. Here the terrible weakness of the failure of the ICP leadership to break with Stalinism is cruelly revealed.

The French Stalinists emerged from World War II with the allegiance of the majority of the working class and large sections of the poor peasantry. They willingly observed Moscow's instruction not to launch a struggle for power (the return of Western Europe to the capitalist class was another facet of the Potsdam-Yalta deals). Thorez and two other Stalinist leaders joined a coalition government with the social democrats and the Gaullists. What did this government of 'democrats' and 'patriots' do about the abominable French colonies? Grant independence? Of course not — that would have advanced the world revolution and disturbed the diplomatic *status quo* between their own capitalist class and the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Thorez and his henchmen betrayed the faith placed in them by the beleaguered Vietnamese masses. Lacouture reports a remark Thorez made to one Vietnamese general — Thorez is said to have remarked he 'ardently hoped to see the French Flag flying high over every territory in the French Union.' He had not the 'slightest intention of

being held responsible for a sell-out of France's positions in Indo-China'. Were these mere words to confuse the capitalist class?

In September 1945 the Stalinist Defence Minister Francois Billoux got the support of his Party to push through a 193 milliard defence budget — 100 milliards for the coming war in Vietnam. In July 1946 when the Socialist Party proposed a reduction in military spending the Stalinists opposed it. In December 1946 — the month of Ho Chi Minh's call for an uprising — the 182 Stalinist deputies congratulated General Leclerc for his fight against the Vietminh. In July 1946, the French Stalinist daily *L'Humanité* lamented the loss of the French empire. 'Are we, after having lost Syria and Lebanon yesterday, to lose Indo-China tomorrow, North Africa the day after?' asked the outraged Stalinist Press. How did the Vietminh leaders feel when they read these words in *L'Humanité*?

In 1920 Ho Chi Minh had attended the Tours Congress where the left of the Socialist Party had voted to form the French Communist Party and affiliate to the Third International. As the delegate from Indo-China he appealed to the French working class. 'I am here,' he said, 'to speak out as a socialist, against the abominable crimes perpetrated in my country of origin . . . In the name of all

mankind, in the name of all Socialists, left wing and right wing alike, we say to you: Comrades rescue us!' He was trained in the Comintern, became a legendary figure, an itinerant revolutionary, wandering the length and breadth of South-East Asia in a relentless struggle to build the movement that would liberate his country. Now he found himself at the centre of a betrayal. But he continued the struggle. One vital and redeeming feature of the Vietminh and the ICP leaders is that they maintained the independence of their Party, it did not become a tool of Moscow. Like Mao Tse-tung, Ho Chi Minh would not relinquish his desire and intention to destroy imperialism.

On December 20, 1946, Ho Chi Minh issued a proclamation:

'Fellow countrymen throughout the land! Impelled by love of peace, we have made concessions. But the more we make, the more the French colonialists take advantage of them in order to trample our rights . . . No! It would be better to sacrifice everything than to forfeit our country and sink back into slavery. Compatriots arise!'

In the North the Vietminh units fought their way back to their mountainous base areas on the China border. In the South they went underground in the countryside. The first Indo-Chinese war had begun.

DIEN BIEN PHU: TRIUMPH AND BETRAYAL

'Officers and troops, the battle of Dien Bien Phu is about to begin . . . it will be an honour to have taken part in this historic battle. Determined to destroy the adversary, keep in mind this motto: "Always attack, always advance." Master fear and pain, overcome obstacles, unite your efforts, fight to the very end, annihilate the enemy at Dien Bien Phu, win a great victory.'

With these words Vo Nguyen Giap, commander of the People's Army of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, launched the assault that put paid to French imperialism in South-East Asia.

After 54 days of fighting under a ferocious artillery barrage the French surrendered the jungle fortress they boasted was 'impregnable'. The American Professor Bernard Fall described this moment in his essay 'Dien Bien Phu — a battle to remember':

'As a French colonel looked out over the battlefield from a slit trench near his command post, a small white flag, probably a handkerchief, appeared on top of a rifle hardly 50 feet away from him, followed by the flat-helmeted head of a Vietminh soldier.

"You're not going to shoot any more?" said the Vietminh in French.

"No, I'm not going to shoot any more," said the colonel.

"C'est fini?" said the Vietminh.

"Oui, c'est fini," said the colonel.'

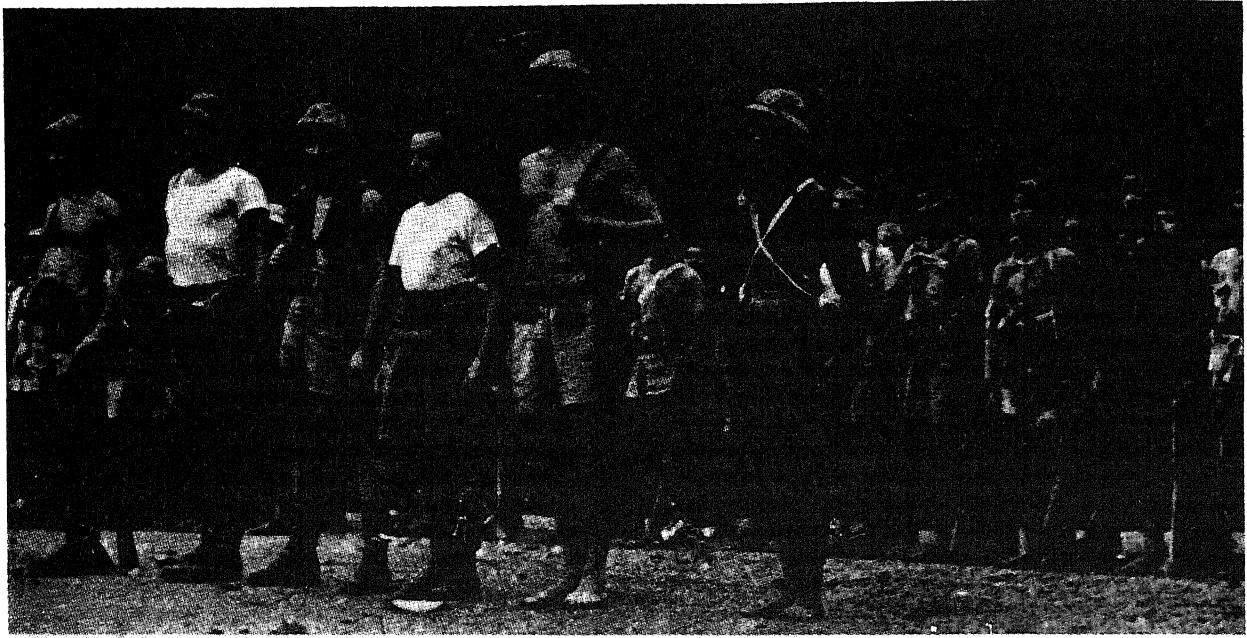
The first Indo-Chinese war had ended in total disaster for the French — they had lost the core of their imperialist army in Indo-China, including the crack troops — killed or captured at Dien Bien Phu. For the Vietnamese it was a triumph. The battle was the climax of a revolutionary war that had begun when the Vietminh ordered a general uprising in December, 1946. The French found themselves unable to contain the insurgents who gradually

pushed down from their liberated areas on the Chinese border and bottled up the French forces in the Red River Delta. In both North and South Vietnam Giap's guerrillas conducted relentless warfare behind the French lines. 'There was no clearly defined front in this war. It was wherever the enemy were. The front was nowhere and everywhere,' wrote Giap later.

People's War

The French had attempted to break out of their increasingly desperate position. They decided to try and establish bases from which they could sally forth and destroy the enemy. With a large concentration of forces they hoped they could draw the elusive enemy into a large confrontation. Dien Bien Phu, near the Laotian border in the North West of Vietnam was selected and tens of thousands of soldiers airlifted in.

Giap and the re-formed Vietnamese Workers Party (Lao Dong Party) had brilliantly analysed the French tactics (see Giap's writings in *The Military Art of People's War*, Monthly Review Press, 1970, particularly 'Dien Bien Phu'). They painstakingly encircled the French, carrying their artillery piece by piece under constant air bombardment and assembled their firepower in skilfully camouflaged emplacements in the hills around the Dien



Ironically it was the American OSS (the embryo of the CIA) that helped the guerilla army of the Indo-Chinese Communist Party to fight the Japanese. Here the Americans turn out with a guerilla unit.

Bien Phu fortress. In contrast the French were so confident of their invincibility that they left their artillery unprotected with the result that their guns were silenced only days after the start of the battle. The Vietminh's military strategy was based on the recognition that the political struggle was primary in the revolutionary war. In his work *The War of Liberation, 1945-1954*, Giap writes:

'At an early stage, our party was able to discern the characteristics of this war: a people's war and a long-lasting war, and it was proceeding from these premises that, during the whole of the hostilities and in particularly difficult conditions, the party solved the problems of resistance.'

He continues:

'... Wherever the Expeditionary Corps [the core of full-time fighters] came, the entire population took part in the fighting; every commune had its fortified village, every district had its regional troops fighting under the command of the local branches of the Party and the people's administration, in liaison with the regular forces in order to wear down and annihilate the enemy forces. Thereafter, with the development of our forces, guerrilla warfare changed into mobile warfare — a form of mobile warfare still strongly marked by guerrilla warfare — which would soon afterward become the essential form of operations on the main front, the northern front. In this process of development of guerrilla warfare, our people's army constantly grew and passed from the stage of combat involving a section or company, to fairly large-scale campaigns bringing into action several divisions. Gradually, its equipment improved, mainly by seizure of arms from the enemy — the *materiel* of the French and American imperialists.'

(The US had agreed to supply the French with military aid and equipment in 1950 as part of the fight against 'international communism'.)

Giap now turns to the political questions raised by such a mobilization:

'Concerning the management of a war economy within the framework of an agriculturally backward country undertaking a long-term resistance, as was the case in Vietnam, the problem of the rear lines arose under the form of building resistance bases in the countryside. The raising of defence production,

and the development of agriculture, were problems of great importance for supplying the front as well as for the progressive movement of the people's living conditions. The question of manufacturing arms was not one that could be set aside... 'In the building of rural bases and the reinforcement of the rear lines for giving impulse to the resistance, the agrarian policy of the Party played a determining role. Therein lay the anti-feudal task of the revolution. In a colony where the national question is essentially the peasant question, the consolidation of the resistance forces was possible only by a solution to the agrarian problem. The August revolution [in 1945 betrayed by Moscow and the French Stalinists] overthrew the feudal state. The reduction of land rents and rates of interests decreed by people's power bestowed on the peasants their first material advantages. Land monopolized by imperialism and traitors was confiscated and shared out...'

Agrarian Problem

Giap says that despite 'errors and blemishes' the reforms were carried out and adds: 'The Vietnamese people's war of liberation brought out the importance of building resistance bases in the countryside and the close and indissoluble relationship between the anti-imperialist revolution and the anti-feudal revolution.'

In his famous '*People's War, People's Army*' he states more succinctly:

'Our resistance was a people's war, because its political aims were to smash the imperialist yoke in order to win back national independence, to overthrow the feudal landlord class in order to solve the two fundamental contradictions of Vietnamese society — the contradiction between nation and imperialism on the one hand and the people, especially between the peasants and the feudal landlord class, on the other — and to pave the socialist path for the Vietnamese revolution.'

Giap here is identifying the principal problem the anti-imperialist struggle must solve in countries like Vietnam if it is to reach the level of a seizure of power. This is the agrarian problem which is the key to the national question in Indo-China and other colonial areas.

In his review of Harold R. Isaacs' book *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution* Trotsky posed the question in the following way:

'Not one of these colonial countries has carried its democratic revolution through to any real extent. Half-way agrarian reforms are absorbed by semi-serf relations, and these are inescapably reproduced in the soil of poverty and oppression. Agrarian barbarism always goes hand in hand with the absence of roads, with isolation of provinces, with "medieval" particularism and absence of national consciousness. The purging of social relations of the remnants of ancient and the encrustations of modern feudalism is the most important task in all these countries.

'The achievement of the agrarian revolution is unthinkable, however, with the preservation of dependence upon foreign imperialism, which with one hand implants capitalist relations while supporting and re-creating with the other all the forms of slavery and serfdom. The struggle for the democratization of the social relations and the creation of a nation state thus uninterruptedly passes into an open uprising against foreign domination.' (*Fourth International*, October 1945.)

This perspective had double application to Vietnam and its people who had suffered the most barbaric and savage form of imperialist rule since the French armies invaded in 1859. In his article 'French Colonization on Trial', Ho Chi Minh recorded the savagery of the French. He quotes this extract from a colonial officer's diary:

'At the time I was there [in Tonkin] not a week passed without our seeing a few heads roll. From these spectacles I have noted but one thing, it is that we are crueller and more barbarous than the pirates themselves. Why these physical tortures, these processions of prisoners through the villages?' (*Ho Chi Minh on Revolution*, Signet Books, 1967.)

This bitterly oppressed peasantry in Vietnam constituted the overwhelming majority of the population. They lived in extreme misery — millions of them landless or subsisting on tiny plots. Debts, interest payments and rent made their lives an economic nightmare. Starvation was commonplace. These conditions made the peasants the most exploited section of Vietnamese society and the agrarian revolution the motor force of the revolution against imperialism. Does this mean that the People's War based on the agrarian revolution invalidates the Marxist principle that the working class is the vanguard of the revolution? Only the most abstract and mechanical methods can produce such a conclusion. The peasantry of itself cannot produce a party capable of launching a revolutionary struggle for power in China, Vietnam or anywhere else. The vanguard role of the working class must be expressed in the People's War by the leadership of the revolutionary workers party.

Stalinist Training

The Vietminh and the Lao Dong leaders were trained in the Third (Communist) International (Comintern). Ho Chi Minh was a founding member of the French Communist Party. He attended the Tours Congress in 1920 as the Indo-Chinese delegate and voted with the left of the Socialist Party to form the Communist Party. They inherited, therefore, the historical and theoretical gains of the world working class embodied in the Russian Revolution and the first workers' dictatorship. Of course these were terribly distorted by Stalinism as it came to dominate the Comintern and the Vietnamese people paid a heavy price for the adherence of the Vietminh leadership to Stalinist perspectives. One could say that the Vietminh leaders

were revolutionary nationalists who wanted to smash imperialism. Through their contact with the early Communist International and their experience in Vietnam they learned that this could only be achieved through a revolution that mobilized the masses for state power, moreover that the masses could be mobilized only by an independent proletarian party. Ho Chi Minh and Giap, like Mao Tse-tung, did *not* follow Stalinist instructions to subordinate the party to the bourgeois nationalists (in Comintern language the 'national' bourgeois). If they had done so there would never have been revolutions in Vietnam and China.

Just as their failure to break totally from Stalinism led to grave weaknesses in Vietnam (1945-1946 and Geneva in 1954), their training, based on the advances of the world working class, gave them the basis to make the empirical adjustments which in turn enabled them to carry through the revolution. Their break from Stalinist policy in 1946 is a case in point. The Vietminh launched the resistance against the French colonial army they had allowed (under Comintern guidance) to return to Vietnam. The argument in 1945 was that the 'progressive', 'national', 'democratic' forces were in power in metropolitan France in the shape of the Stalinist-Social Democratic-Gaullist coalition government. The French imperialist regime was demonstrating (by shooting down peasants and workers, Vietminh and Lao Dong cadres) that the so-called 'independence' awarded in Vietnam was completely illusory. The Vietminh leadership broke from the alliance with the 'national', 'democratic' French imperialists — the 'main enemy' became once more the French ruling class and French imperialism.

This empirical adjustment is also apparent in the estimation of the revolution contained in their theoretical writings. In part one we demonstrated how — corresponding to the Stalinist line of an alliance with the 'democratic' powers — the Vietminh put forward a straight two-stage theory of the revolution. First the 'national' bourgeois revolution, which required an alliance with the native bourgeois and would not involve distribution of land to the peasantry, nationalization of property etc. Then — perhaps decades later — after the development of capitalism, the proletarian social revolution. But after the successful conclusion of the first Indo-Chinese war the Vietminh and Lao Dong leadership no longer referred to the two-stage revolution. Giap's conception of the 'anti-feudal' revolution as inseparable from the 'anti-imperialist' revolution, has already been noted. Truong Chinh, the leading party theoretician, is even more explicit on this point. Two extracts from his writings will serve as an illustration:

'... an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution carried out by the people is what we call a *people's national democratic revolution*. It is also a *bourgeois democratic revolution of a new type in a colony, led by the working class*, unlike the bourgeois revolutions of the old type led by the bourgeoisie, such as the French revolution in 1789 and the Turkish revolution in 1925. '... A people's democratic state... created favourable conditions for Vietnam to advance directly to socialism without passing through the stage of capitalist development. The French and the bourgeois revolutions have stopped half way because they were not led by the working class.' (Truong Chinh, *March Ahead under the Party Banner*, Hanoi, 1963, original emphasis.)

'Applying Marxism-Leninism to the concrete situation in Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh saw at a very early stage that the Vietnamese revolution was a *bourgeois-democratic revolution* of a completely new kind... which, as it developed... was bound

to lead to the socialist revolution . . . *the national-democratic popular revolution* . . . carried out by the people, in other words by the working class, the peasantry, the petty bourgeois and the national bourgeoisie, under the leadership of the working class and on the basis of the worker-peasant alliance . . . This was the radical line founded upon the Marxist-Leninist theory of uninterrupted revolution. . . .’ (Truong Chinh: *President Ho Chi Minh, Revered leader of the Vietnamese People*. Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi.)

Maoist formulas

Truong Chinh of course borrows much of his theoretical formulations from Mao Tse-tung who talks of a new type of bourgeois revolution as being a ‘people’s democratic dictatorship’, directed against the ‘landlord class and the reactionary bourgeoisie’. (See especially the ‘Talk on Democratic Centralism’ in Stuart Schram’s *Mao Tse-tung Unrehearsed*, Pelican 1974.) Just what is this bourgeois-democratic revolution of a new type? Truong Chinh and Mao Tse-tung talk of a ‘people’s government’ — a government for the working class and the peasantry, led by the working class, which will institute a dictatorship over the landlords and ‘reactionary’ bourgeoisie.

In his review of Isaacs’ book, Trotsky addresses himself to this precise question. He begins by uncovering the origins of the ‘democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry’ formula:

‘A political bloc of two classes whose interests only partially coincide excludes a dictatorship. Lenin himself emphasized the fundamental limitations of the “dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry” when he openly called it *bourgeois*. By this he meant to say that for the sake of maintaining the alliance with the peasantry the proletariat would, in the coming revolution, have to forgo the direct posing of the socialist task. But this would signify, to be precise, that the proletariat would have to give up the dictatorship. In that event, in whose hands would the revolutionary power be concentrated? In the hands of the peasantry? But it is least capable of such a role. ‘Lenin left these questions unanswered up to his famous Theses of April 4, 1917. Only here did he break for the first time with the traditional understanding of the “bourgeois” revolution and with the formula of the “bourgeois-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry”. He declared the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat to be the sole means of carrying out the agrarian revolution to the end and of securing the freedom of the oppressed nationalities.

‘The regime of the proletarian dictatorship by its very nature, however, could not limit itself to the framework of bourgeois property. The rule of the proletariat automatically placed on the agenda the socialist revolution, which in this case was not separate from the democratic revolution by any historical period, but was uninterruptedly connected with it, or, to put it more accurately, was an organic outgrowth of it.

‘At what tempo the socialist transformation of society would occur and what limits it would attain in the nearest future would depend not only upon internal but on external conditions as well. The Russian Revolution was only a link in the international revolution. Such was, in broad outline, the essence of the conception of the permanent [uninterrupted] revolution’.

Trotsky goes on to describe how under the Stalinist Comintern these perspectives were distorted by the Moscow bureaucracy to halt the development of the world revolution.

‘The Comintern of the epigones began by canonizing for all countries of the Orient the formula of the “democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry” which Lenin, influenced by historical experience, had acknowledged to be without value. As always in history, a formula that had outlived

itself served to cover a political content which was the direct opposite of that which the formula had served in its day. The mass plebeian, revolutionary alliance of the workers and the peasants, sealed through the freely elected Soviets as the direct organs of action, the Comintern replaced by a bureaucratic bloc of party centres. The right to represent the peasantry in this bloc was unexpectedly given to the Kuomintang i.e. a thoroughly bourgeois party vitally interested in the preservation of capitalist property not only in the means of production but in the land.

‘The alliance of the proletariat and peasantry was broadened into a “bloc of four classes”: workers, peasants, urban petty bourgeois, and the so-called “national” bourgeoisie. In other words, the Comintern picked up a formula discarded by Lenin only in order to open the road to the politics of Plekhanov and, moreover, in a masked and therefore more harmful form. [Plekhanov, the Russian Menshevik, argued that the task of the 1917 revolution was not to establish a proletarian dictatorship but a bourgeois democracy which would take Russia through the capitalist stage of development.]

‘To justify the political subordination of the proletariat to the bourgeoisie, the theoreticians of the Comintern [Stalin, Bukharin] adduced the fact of imperialist oppression which supposedly impelled “all the progressive forces in the country” to an alliance. But this was precisely in its day the argument of the Russian Mensheviks, with the difference that in their case the place of imperialism was occupied by Tsarism. In reality the subjection of the Chinese Communist Party to the Kuomintang signified its break with the mass movement and a direct betrayal of its historical interests.’

New Democracy

Clearly the hand of the Comintern still hangs heavy over the theoretical formulations of the Vietnamese leadership. The practice of the Vietnamese and the Chinese parties, however, represents a sharp break with the old comintern policy of blocs and subordination of the revolutionary leadership to the ‘national’ bourgeoisie. In the case of the Chinese revolution, the break with the Stalinist line was forced on Mao Tse-tung by the catastrophe of 1926-1927. After World War II, Mao ignored Stalinist instructions to maintain the alliance with the Kuomintang, headed by Chiang Kai-shek. Under the slogan ‘Down with the civil war’, Mao prepared the basis for the rupture of the Communist Party-Kuomintang alliance and the continuation of the civil war, which had been interrupted by the Japanese occupation.

Of this period Mao Tse-tung says:

‘Stalin felt that he had made mistakes in dealing with the Chinese problems, and they were no small mistakes.’ (*Talks on the Questions of Philosophy*, Schram.)

‘We are a great country of several hundred millions, and he opposed our revolution, seizure of power in the whole country, the whole of the anti-Japanese War which constituted a preparation. This is quite clear if you look at the documents of the Central Committee for that period, including “On New Democracy” That is to say that you *cannot* set up a bourgeois dictatorship, you can only establish New Democracy under the leadership of the proletariat, you can only set up people’s democratic dictatorship led by the proletariat.’ (Our emphasis.)

Another party leader, K’ang Sheng, intervenes in this conversation:

‘*On New Democracy* is of great significance for the world communist movement. I asked Spanish comrades and they said the problem for them was to establish bourgeois democracy, not establish New Democracy. In their country they did not concern themselves with the three points: army, countryside and political power. *They wholly subordinated themselves*

to the exigencies of Soviet foreign policy and achieved nothing at all.' (Our emphasis.)

K'ang Sheng's comments prompt Mao Tse-tung to go further and elaborate on the relations between Stalin and the Chinese CP:

'Even before the dissolution of the Third International we did not obey the orders of the Third International. At the Tsunyi Conference [the conference at which Mao asserted his leadership from the pro-Moscow faction in 1934] we didn't obey. And afterwards, for a period of ten years, including the Rectification Campaign and down to the Seventh Congress when we finally adopted a resolution [Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party], and corrected the errors of "leftism", we didn't obey them at all.'

This method of saying one thing to Stalin and doing the opposite in China, however, contained a grave weakness which has become conspicuously apparent today. The reactionary foreign policy of the Chinese Communist Party in Indonesia, Ceylon, Vietnam and Chile, its open befriending of Nixon, and the cynical support for the Common Market and the strengthening of the German army, is a grim warning that an empirical break with the foreign policy requirements of the Soviet leaders, which is not accompanied by a thorough evaluation of the prospects and motive forces of the world revolution and the historical origins of the Stalinist bureaucracy, can only lead to a rapid political degeneration and a bureaucratic hostility to the world working class. This is the lesson of

China and Yugoslavia, which vindicates fully and indisputably Trotsky's struggle against Stalin and for the Fourth International.

In Vietnam, the Vietminh and the Indo-Chinese Communist Party launched a struggle for power after the 1945 betrayal. In the totally liberated areas — eventually the whole of the North — they smashed the imperialist state and carried through a programme involving large and compulsory reductions in rent and interest rates, expropriation of the large estates and distribution of land to the poorest peasantry. By 1959, 44 per cent of peasant households throughout the north had joined agricultural producers' co-operatives and the figure was as high as 70 or 80 per cent in some provinces. Sixty per cent of small craftsmen were also organized into co-operatives. The largest of the capitalist enterprises were imperialist-owned and therefore expropriated. Smaller capitalist concerns were either nationalized or linked with the state. Truong Chinh reports that by 1959, 68 per cent of the capital registered before the defeat of the French was under joint state-private enterprise control. The state sector wholly controlled 42 per cent of industrial output, 77 per cent of goods traffic and 62.5 per cent of retail turnover.

Total expropriation of the means of production and the land was not possible in a backward area like North Vietnam, devastated by war. The Vietnamese leadership, like the Bolsheviks, allowed a section of the economy to remain under capitalist methods of production — with the



The foundation of the National Liberation Front, the organization led by the Peoples Revolutionary Party that mobilized the masses in South Vietnam against the US war machine.

proviso that all enterprises worked under the direction of the state. But it was made clear that the alliance between the 'people' and the 'national' bourgeoisie could not be a lasting feature of North Vietnam. Truong Chinh describes how, after 1959, the advances towards socialism required a struggle to 'resolutely transform the national bourgeois and the rich peasants into non-exploiting and working people'. This, of course, can only be achieved by depriving them of their remaining private property. He adds this warning: 'Any bourgeois who opposes peaceful transformation and acts against the people's power automatically puts himself under dictatorship.'

No distinct theory

With their concept of 'New Democracy' the Chinese and Vietnamese leaderships were grappling with their experience made in the course of the revolution. They breached the 'alliance' with the 'national' bourgeoisie, they took state power. They carried through the agrarian revolution, they mobilized the masses — the working class and the peasantry — in the anti-imperialist struggle and in the transformation of the means of production. 'New Democracy' was nothing less than the birth of workers' states — although deformed workers' states, isolated by imperialism and Stalinism within the national boundaries of two backward countries.

Despite this development, the break with Stalinist Popular Frontism and its implications were not systematized into a distinct theory, nor was there any attempt to analyse critically the theory of socialism in a single country. Truong Chinh's 'uninterrupted' revolution should not be confused with the Bolshevik conception of permanent revolution. The Bolsheviks saw the Russian Revolution as part of the world revolution arising from the

world development of the productive forces under imperialism. They approached the revolution in the advanced capitalist countries and the anti-colonialist revolution from this same perspective.

For the Bolsheviks the international character of the revolution did not result from some idealized bond between the oppressed of the world, it arose from the acute contradictions of imperialism itself which flung the working class internationally into conflict, revolution and war with the bourgeoisie. The revolution in Russia, or any country, was an integral part of the world revolution, the task of socialist transformation could not be achieved without the victory of the world revolution. (Lenin's profound internationalism is illustrated by his declaration that he was prepared to sacrifice the Russian Revolution to guarantee the German Revolution — since the victory of the powerful German working class would have been a giant step forward for the world revolution.)

Often in the course of their strident polemics with the Russian Stalinists, the Chinese would refer to the world revolution. At the height of the savage US bombing offensive, the Vietnamese also raised the issue of internationalism as a criticism of Chinese and Russian collaboration with imperialism. But neither leadership has ever reached a true understanding of the permanent revolution — to do so would require a total break from Stalinism and a struggle to build a new International to replace the remnants of the Third International. This the Chinese and the Vietnamese have never attempted. An empirical break from Stalinism is, by its very nature, episodic. By their failure to reach a dialectical materialist understanding of the counter-revolutionary role of the bureaucracy, the Vietnamese leadership always risked disarming their own masses at critical periods. This happened at Geneva in 1954. As the People's Army was winning its great victory in the jungles of North Vietnam, the forces of betrayal were already gathering round the conference table.

GENEVA: THE INTERVENTION OF US IMPERIALISM

The spectacular success of the revolutionary forces in Vietnam had alarmed both US imperialism and the Moscow bureaucracy. But the Stalinists were undoubtedly the most concerned over the turmoil spreading across the whole of Indo-China. They met at Geneva on May 8. The conference was overshadowed by the surrender of the Dien Bien Phu garrison the day before and the immediacy of an offensive which would drive the French out of the North entirely. The secret advice compiled by US presidential advisers in the 'Pentagon Papers' fairly sums up the events at Geneva:

'It is fair to state that the immediate implications of the Accords did not reflect (even according to CIA reports) Vietminh strength and controls in Vietnam at the time of the conference; it is equally important to understand why.'

The analysis continued:

'Vietminh ambitions were thwarted, not so much by western resistance or treachery, as by Sino-Soviet pressures on them to co-operate . . . Together and separately Moscow and Peking pressed concessions on the Vietminh. Invariably, the two principal communist delegates, Chou En-lai and Molotov

played major roles in breaking deadlocks with conciliatory initiatives. "Peaceful co-existence" was the hall-mark of their diplomacy. The Chinese, in particular, were interested in border security with bases in the region, and reconstruction at home. The two powers did not hesitate in asserting the paramountcy of their interests over those of the Vietminh.'

At the conference the demand of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam for a free, unified and independent Vietnam was whittled away as the two bureaucracies traded concessions with the US, French and British imperialists.

The policy of peaceful co-existence itself was constructed by Moscow in the post-war period. The outbreak of the cold war — which shattered the 'alliance' built up between 1941-1945 — had caused considerable panic within the bureaucracy. There had been a rapid revision of diplomatic perspectives. The international class struggle was definitively replaced by the struggle between the two blocs — the 'socialist' and the imperialist. The objective of foreign policy became to convince the 'realistic' capitalist powers that it was in the interests of all to maintain 'world

peace'. More precisely the Moscow Stalinists continually sought to maintain the international *status quo*, while at the same time attempting to extract what concessions (trade, cultural, military) it could from individual capitalist powers. This strategy necessarily has at its centre the counter-revolutionary aim of driving back the development of the world revolution, since this was the principal disrupter of the international *status quo*. At the same time the offensive of the masses was cynically used, wherever possible, as a bargaining counter in the diplomatic game with imperialism. This policy is not just a matter of choice, it is an objective requirement of Stalinism. The bureaucracy is a parasitic formation which rests upon the working class and the nationalized property relations within the Soviet Union and eastern Europe. It has to stabilize its own position against its own working class. This involves opposition to the world revolution and a search for concessions with imperialism in exchange. Since the cold war at least, this counter-revolutionary policy comes under the umbrella of 'peaceful co-existence'.

In 1954, the Soviet bureaucracy was facing a rebellious working class demanding drastic improvements in living conditions, wages and basic rights. A reduction in arms expenditure and trade with the West, a break-up of the cold war bloc, were the means by which the bureaucracy was hoping to safeguard its position. Obviously such a goal was impossible with a revolutionary war spreading throughout South East Asia, the US threatening direct intervention, raising the prospect of war with China, and World War III itself. In China too, where the leadership had adopted the theory of socialism in one country, rejecting an internationalist approach to the struggle, the bureaucratic tendencies were already marked. The leadership wanted some bulwark against imperialism in order to tackle the acute problems they faced in the early days of the deformed Chinese workers' state. The last thing the Chinese bureaucracy wanted was to have to join in a revolutionary war already raging on its South East Asian borders.

At Geneva these two bureaucracies combined against the Vietnamese revolution. On issue after issue the representatives of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam were forced to relent. The British Foreign Minister and co-chairman, Anthony Eden, gained the agreement of the Stalinist leaders to waive their insistence that the Cambodian and Laotian liberation fighters should be represented. In June, after a trip to Moscow, the chief Soviet representative, Molotov, persuaded the Vietminh to halt their offensive against the remaining French forces in the North. The Moscow Stalinists were trading for a European security conference aimed against the development of a Western Alliance embodied in the European Defence Community. In secret, Molotov was pressuring the French to withdraw from the EDC. The Chinese were happy to see a buffer state of North Vietnam on their borders but did not want a continuation of hostilities in Cambodia, Laos or South Vietnam at this stage.

The US move in

On July 20, 1954 the Geneva accords were signed between France and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. They established a cease-fire, the partition of Vietnam just north of the city of Hué and the regroupment of French and Vietminh forces in their respective zones. The 'Final Declaration' of the conference called for free, democratic

elections in the South in July 1956, to decide the issue of re-unification. Within a year consultations between the authorities in the two zones would start with a view to organizing the election. All the parties save one, declared they agreed with the declaration. The odd voice out was that of the United States which merely 'noted' its contents, adding it 'would continue to seek unity through free elections'. The Americans, of course, had no intention of allowing free elections, for one simple reason — as all their own observers reported — the result would be an overwhelming vote for Vietminh and unity.

Leo Cherne, an operative for a CIA front organization, was one of the many US political advisers who went to South Vietnam to sponsor the puppet dictator Ngo Dinh Diem. A cable sent back to his organization in America reads:

'Political and financial instability . . . unless Vietnamese government can organize important forces and the US continues pouring in substantial help and money . . . If free election held today . . . all agreed privately Communists would win . . . situation not hopeless . . . (See Robert Scheer's essay in *Vietnam*, Penguin Special, 1965.)

A month before Geneva the US vice-president Richard Nixon had announced that the administration was prepared to send troops into Vietnam. 'The United States as a leader of the free world cannot afford a further retreat in Asia. It is hoped the United States will not have to send troops there, but if this government cannot avoid it, the Administration must face up to the situation and despatch forces,' he said. The US Admiral Radford was more explicit. 'If peace is restored in Indo-China,' he warned, 'and the Indo-Chinese people win independence, that could imperil the whole of South-East Asia . . . important raw materials and markets in this vast region would be denied to us.' This was the true voice of US imperialism. Already the rabidly anti-communist US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles had come within a hairsbreadth of initiating a US air force attack on the Vietminh army around Dien Bien Phu. This would have brought the US immediately into the war and totally wrecked Geneva. Eden, for the British, backed away from the scheme, as did large sections of the American military. For the present the American war effort was 'covert'. While they were wheeling and dealing in the secret cabals of Geneva, the Russian and Chinese Stalinists were aware of these US preparations for war. But the exigencies of 'peaceful co-existence' (not peaceful for the Vietnamese) cancelled out all other considerations. The Geneva Agreement is one of the clearest examples of Stalinist counter-revolution in history.

The DRV and Vietminh representatives signed reluctantly. Donald Lancaster, a former British official in Saigon, reports the 'suppressed fury' of Pham Van Dong, the chief DRV negotiator, when he learned that Chou En-lai had betrayed the Laotians by dropping the demand for an autonomous Pathet Lao regime in the North. (See *Vietnam* Penguin special.) Immediately after the signing, Pham Van Dong was asked by a Vietnamese associate who would win the election. The DRV's vice-Premier replied: 'You know as well as I do that there won't be any elections.' This proved to be precisely the case. The French diplomatically pulled out just before the election deadline. Instead the puppet Diem government, which from the start had denounced Geneva, consolidated its dictatorship over the South with US support. The weakness which resulted from the DRV leaders' failure to understand or break from Stalinism had once more been cruelly demonstrated. They kept to the agreement. Vietminh fighters

were withdrawn from the South, many settling in the southern-most province of the Democratic Republic. Many Lao Dong cadres remained but they were told not to conduct open activities. The DRV leaders appeared to be relying on diplomatic pressure to enforce the Geneva agreement. As the French historian of Vietnam, Philippe Devillers, notes, it was a 'long road of rebuffs and disappointments'.

The Diem dictatorship

North Vietnam asked for pre-electoral consultations to start in June 1956, July 1957, March 1959, July 1959 and July 1960. Every overture was arrogantly rejected by Diem. Devillers remarks that 'each time the Soviet and Chinese support was restricted to kind words, warm gestures of solidarity and propaganda campaigns'. The Russian Stalinists were the co-chairmen with Britain of the conference. Not only did they ignore their 'duties' (even in terms of bourgeois diplomacy), to ensure the terms of the agreement were carried out, they demonstrated their utter contempt for the Vietnamese people and their leaders. At the beginning of 1957 the Moscow Stalinists went so far as to propose that the political *fiction* of South Vietnam be admitted to the United Nations!

The failure of Hanoi to conduct a relentless exposure of the iniquitous Geneva agreement and call on the world working class to disrupt it was a serious mistake. Under the domination of the Moscow and Chinese Stalinists, the Democratic Republic presented a 'peace-loving' face to the world, denied all revolutionary aims in the South, and indeed carried through no organized struggle against Diem in the early years. The South of course had not been the Vietminh's strongest area. In the 1946-1954 war large areas had been under their control, but their hold was by no means as firm or widespread, as in the North. It is unlikely they could have fought on alone, isolated by the Russian and Chinese leadership, against the French and ever greater numbers of US military 'advisers' — as well as carry through essential reconstruction in the war-devastated North. This said, it is quite clear that the withdrawal of the Vietminh units and the continued appeals to world opinion did not advance the revolution. This policy flowed directly from the link with Stalinism. Events in the South, however, impelled the Lao Dong leadership into action. The Diem regime became ever more oppressive. Around him he gathered his immediate family and ruled as a clique. Oppositionists were packed into concentration camps. The mildest protest invited savage repression. Buddhists, nationalists and, of course,

the Lao Dong cadres were mercilessly hunted down by the US-equipped 400,000-strong militia. The notorious law 10/59 gave the state the power to execute virtually anyone caught engaging in political opposition — the direction in which the US-backed regime was heading was obviously towards a military-fascist dictatorship. Diem became a living embodiment of the only possible alternative to reunification. By the late 1950s the Lao Dong leaders and the remaining Vietminh cadres found themselves involved in spontaneous guerrilla actions against the hated Diem regime.

Again the point had been reached when the Vietnamese leadership had to make a break with Stalinist policy, or renounce the struggle in the South for good and possibly witness a split in their party between North and South. The 1960 Congress in Hanoi was dominated by the controversy now raging in the movement. The Soviet delegate Mukhitdinov stressed 'peaceful co-existence was the only line which was in complete accord with the ultimate aim of Communism'. The Chinese delegate, Li Fu-ch'un, reminded the delegates of Lenin's teaching on imperialism — the impossibility of avoiding war and revolutionary struggle so long as imperialism existed (splits within the Chinese leadership — a reflection of the pressure of the masses — were already breaking up the 'alliance' with Moscow).

Ho Chi Minh demanded 'greater efforts' over reunification and Le Duan, a former southern guerrilla leader, was elected Party secretary. On December 20, 1960, the National Liberation Front was formed. (In Vietnamese the *Mat Tran Dan Toc Giai Phong Mien Nam Viet Nam* — literally the Front [of] [Mat Tran] Radical Nationals [for] [Dan Toc] Liberation [of] [Giai Phong] Region [in] South [Mein Nam] Vietnam [Viei Nam] — dubbed the 'Viet Cong' by the US imperialists.

So far the resistance against Diem had been sporadic — principally because of the DRV policy. Now the Vietnamese leaders were to demonstrate again their capacity for mobilizing the masses in a revolutionary struggle — this time against the mightiest enemy of all. Five years after the formation of the NLF, over half a million US troops were required to hold down the People's War raging in the South. It was then that US president Lyndon Baines Johnson made his famous boast in a speech at the Johns Hopkins University: 'We will not be defeated. We will not grow tired. We will not withdraw, either openly or under the cloak of a meaningless agreement.' Giap said: 'War against the United States takes time. They'll be beaten with time, worn out. And to wear them out we have to go on to endure. When a whole people rises up, nothing can be done. No money can stop them.'

THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL AFTER LENIN



BY LEON TROTSKY — whose role in the founding of the Communist International was second only to Lenin's, was also the principal fighter against its degeneration. After Lenin's death he battled to reverse the disastrous course on which it was being directed by Stalin and Bukharin, with their theory of 'socialism in one country'. Trotsky's devastating criticism of this theory and the policies flowing from it, written for the Sixth Congress of the Comintern, forms the main part of this book. More than just a defence of the principles of Bolshevik internationalism and the lessons of the first four Congresses of the Comintern, it is an important and independent contribution to Marxism. Trotsky examines every aspect of the activities of the Comintern in the four years after Lenin's death: its programme, strategy and tactics, organization, and the internal life of the Soviet Communist Party itself. Included in this new edition — for the first time in English since 1929 — is an article giving brief character-sketches of the leading Comintern functionaries. 320 pp. Price £1.50 Post and packing 25p.

STATEMENT BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Behind Wohlforth's resignation

Tim Wohlforth, who resigned from the Workers League of the United States on September 29, 1974, has joined hands with the most virulent opponents of Trotskyism and the International Committee of the Fourth International. He resigned from the Workers League, the fraternal section of the International Committee in the US, one month after he was removed as national secretary of the Workers League.

The decision to replace him as national secretary was taken on August 31, 1974, by the unanimous decision of the League's Central Committee, *including Wohlforth's own vote*. The vote for his own removal as national secretary expressed Wohlforth's complete agreement with all the other members of the League's Central Committee that an urgent and drastic change was necessary in the leadership of the Workers League. The unanimous decision to replace Wohlforth turned on fundamental principles of the theory and practice of building revolutionary leadership in the working class.

The situation came to a head at the end of August 1974 when information was given to the Workers League Central Committee that Wohlforth's lieutenant in the League, a certain Nancy Fields, had previous family connections with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The revelations about Fields' previous family connection with the CIA came as a complete surprise to the League's Central Committee and also to the International Committee delegates.

There was some alarm as well. During an important international meeting in London in May 1974, the Workers League delegation had included Wohlforth and Fields. Neither at the meeting nor before it did Wohlforth ask for a security clearance for Fields. To obtain such a clearance is a rudimentary principle of the Marxist movement. To have got a clearance for Fields was of crucial importance since she was a completely unknown political quantity to the IC. In such cases, the IC relies on the revolutionary responsibility of the leaders of its member sections to raise the security considerations of the IC. Wohlforth didn't. He kept absolutely silent about the fact that she had family connections with the CIA. He concealed this information from the IC because of his personal relations with her. He put these personal relations above the political interests of his own section and the security considerations of the IC.

At a meeting in London on August 18, 1974, Wohlforth was specifically asked whether Fields had any CIA connections and he replied, 'No'. When the facts were related to the Workers League Central Committee 13 days later, Wohlforth changed his position. Now he admitted knowing of her family connections with the CIA. But he said

he did not mention them because he did not consider them important. The League's Central Committee thought otherwise. And, so, on reflection, did Wohlforth. The committee voted unanimously to implement three decisions:

- To remove Wohlforth as national secretary and replace him with Comrade Fred Mazelis.
- To set up a commission of inquiry to investigate the security questions involved.
- To suspend from membership Nancy Fields pending the outcome of the inquiry.

On September 29, 1974, only one month after voting for these decisions, Wohlforth resigned from the Workers League. In his resignation letter he completely repudiated the decisions he had voted for. He wrote:

'I am completely and utterly opposed to the proceedings and decisions of the Central Committee meeting held on August 31 at our camp at the request of and in conjunction with the International Committee comrades.

'I believe this meeting represented a serious setback in the construction of the revolutionary party in the United States and in the construction of the Fourth International on a world-wide basis.'

If it was a 'serious setback', no one has noticed. His desertion did not inspire a mass walk-out by other members of the Workers League. When he left, he took only one person with him — Nancy Fields — to whom he is perfectly entitled as a political accomplice. In the months prior to their departure, the Wohlforth-Fields leadership had taken an extremely destructive turn resulting in more than 100 members leaving the League's New York branches as well as the decimation of forces in some interstate areas. Work in the trade unions was non-existent, youth work was reduced to community social work and philanthropic barbecues, and 'trail-blazing' (paper sales drives) became a frenzied substitute for recruiting and training a revolutionary cadre in the working class.

This situation has now been changed. The removal of Wohlforth and Fields has considerably strengthened the Workers League, a fact which is fully recognized throughout the International Committee. Nor, despite Wohlforth's claim, has the 'serious setback' been noted internationally. In all sections of the International Committee the lessons of the Wohlforth experience are being taken into the theory and practice of building revolutionary parties in the working class.

Only an individual of astonishing conceit could claim to be bigger than the IC or any of its member sections. Wohlforth is such a person. He brought Fields to an

important international meeting in May 1974 under conditions which completely overrode the security considerations of the IC. This demonstrated the most feckless middle-class attitude to the security of the IC, his own section and its whole membership. Yet in his resignation letter (September 29, 1974) Wohlforth wrote:

'I oppose the decision of the Central Committee, taken only because of the intervention of the International Committee comrades, to suspend Nancy Fields from membership on the basis of the unsubstantiated, ludicrous and absurd charge that she may be an agent of the CIA.'

It is a complete lie that the decision was taken 'only because of the IC's intervention.' It was taken by the Workers League Central Committee — unanimously, with the support of both Wohlforth and Fields. Secondly, there was no 'unsubstantiated, ludicrous and absurd charge' made against Fields. The question was asked — Why hadn't Wohlforth informed the IC and the leadership of his own organization that Fields had family connections with the CIA?

Her connections were certainly 'substantiated' by the inquiry commission. In its report, dated November 9, 1974, the two-man inquiry stated:

'The inquiry established that from the age of 12 until the completion of her university education, Nancy Fields was brought up, educated and financially supported by her aunt and uncle, Albert and Gigs Morris. Albert Morris is head of the CIA's IBM computer operation in Washington as well as being a large stockholder in IBM. He was a member of the OSS, forerunner of the CIA, and worked in Poland as an agent of imperialism. During the 1960s a frequent house guest at their home in Maine was Richard Helms, ex-director of the CIA and now US ambassador in Iran.'

It can now be added that the CIA's computer section was not only collecting world-wide data on the left for its counter-revolutionary conspiracies, coups and assassinations, but it was also building up a computerized bank on American citizens. These revelations were published in the *New York Times* on December 22, 1974, by reporter Seymour Hersh who said that mail tampering, electronic surveillance and the use of informants against US dissidents had been conducted for at least ten years — 'all completely illegal'.

In a follow-up article on January 19, 1975, Hersh wrote that 'former high-level members' of the CIA told him that 'there were a number of CIA-directed wiretaps and break-ins in the United States in the last ten years aimed at radicals and other dissident groups. Some of these activities, they said, were conducted by outside "contract" operatives who were paid in cash and provided with no records or papers to indicate that they were working on behalf of the CIA.'

Was it 'ludicrous' and 'absurd' for the Workers League Central Committee, whose members had been deliberately kept in the dark about Fields' previous family history, to ask for her suspension until the commission of inquiry had investigated the matter? Wohlforth now thinks so. In fact, he is enraged by it. '*The procedure in this matter is monstrous*,' he says in his resignation letter. If he, Wohlforth, is satisfied that Fields is not a security risk, then that should satisfy the whole of the Workers League and the IC. And if anyone questions his divine right to arbitrate on such matters, he, Wohlforth, will resign and go howling into the revisionist Press. And this is what the pair of them did.

The timing of their joint walk-out was curious. It followed only days on the heels of a letter sent to Wohlforth

by the IC which stated that the inquiry commission was on its way to conduct its work with a view to clearing the air as quickly as possible. Wohlforth's reply came in the form of his resignation letter. Fields never bothered to write at all.

When the commission began its work in New York on October 24, 1974, Wohlforth refused to collaborate with it, although he voted to set it up. As an ex-member he was invited to submit verbal or written evidence, but he declined to do so. So did Fields. Between October 24 and November 2, 1974, the commission took statements from a total of 22 members and ex-members of the Workers League. Apart from establishing her hitherto hushed-up family connections with the CIA, the inquiry uncovered her history of political activity, all of which has little in common with the struggle for Marxism.

She was associated with the SDS during the Columbia sit-in in New York in 1968 and later flirted with the Maoist-influenced Peace and Freedom Party in Boston. One witness said that Fields had once claimed that she knew 'all the big guys in the Panthers'. It was clear from the witnesses' statements that although Fields talked recklessly about her alleged activities in left-wing circles, she was less forthcoming about her uncle, Albert Morris, her 'foster father'. In one of his bulletins, Wohlforth remarks:

'They [members of the IC] had "discovered" what had been common knowledge in the movement for years — Comrade Fields' uncle had worked for the CIA until 1961.'

This is a brazen lie. The inquiry established quite the contrary position — the membership of the Workers League did not know, members of the Central Committee and Political Committee did not know and nor did anyone on the International Committee.

While censuring Wohlforth for failing to get a security clearance for Fields, the commission of inquiry stated:

'After interviewing and investigating all the available material, there is no evidence to suggest that Nancy Fields or Tim Wohlforth is in any way connected with the work of the CIA or any other government agency.'

'We recommend that Tim Wohlforth, once he withdraws his resignation from the Workers League, returns to the leading committees and to his work on the *Bulletin* and has the right to be nominated in any position, including that of national secretary, at the forthcoming National Conference early in 1975.'

'We recommend the immediate lifting of the suspension of Nancy Fields, with the condition that she is not permitted to hold any office in the Workers League for two years.'

The commission of inquiry conducted its work meticulously and in the most responsible way. There was absolutely no panic associated with it. It was a principled task that had to be carried out and perhaps will have to be carried out again in the future. Without this sense of responsibility there can be no training of a revolutionary leadership in the working class to take the power. All leaders in our movement bear tremendous responsibilities in this respect. Wohlforth could not have been an exception. To have allowed him to be, would have been to weaken and miseducate the revolutionary cadre.

The findings of the commission of inquiry were related to him early in November. He rejected them out of hand. An individual with such contempt for party organization and discipline cannot be a leader in the International Committee. That is why he was replaced by the Workers League Central Committee on a unanimous vote, Wohlforth's included.

The CIA is not an incidental question for our movement, but a question of indispensable tasks flowing from the principles of the construction of revolutionary parties

of the International Committee of the Fourth International. Only someone who fails to take at all seriously the building of the world party of socialist revolution can dismiss the question of security against the CIA, the international centre of the counter-revolutionary plans of the imperialists. Wohlforth is just such a person. He is now howling in protest against having been removed by the Central Committee of the Workers League from the position of secretary. But it is surely absolutely ludicrous to suppose that, having refused to accept responsibility for a basic question of security clearance against CIA connections, he could continue in a position of national leadership.

The IC and the Workers League have never and will never under any circumstances knowingly permit within their ranks anyone with CIA connections, just as we expose the CIA ruthlessly outside our movement. We insist on immediate and rigorous inquiry into any such connection. It is the future of the revolution that is at stake. It should come as no surprise that Wohlforth is defended and embraced on these questions by the bitterest opponents of Trotskyism, the Socialist Workers Party and Robertson, who reject the perspectives of world revolution.

It has now been publicly revealed that the CIA infiltrated the SWP over a period of years. Despite this, and despite the fact that the CIA is responsible for the physical destruction of thousands of workers and youth considered

enemies of US imperialism, and will plan a similar fate for the sections of the International Committee, Wohlforth and these revisionists come together in unity against the elementary and principled measures taken by the Workers League.

The anti-internationalism of the politics of Wohlforth, and of those who support him, the SWP and Robertson, is all of a piece with Wohlforth's placing of personal judgments and considerations higher than the fundamental and elementary requirements of the revolutionary movement.

In the commission of inquiry report, Wohlforth was warned that unless he corrected his position immediately, he must find himself outside the revolutionary movement and subject to the pressure of the most reactionary forces. This is precisely what has happened. He is a temporary celebrity in revisionist circles because he is churning out slanders and lies about the IC, the Workers Revolutionary Party and the Workers League.

Let him. It does not intimidate the International Committee or any of its sections. On the contrary, Wohlforth's line up with the revisionists is most important for the political education of the whole IC. Having abandoned completely the fight for Marxism and his responsibilities as a leader in the revolutionary movement, Wohlforth has found the friends he deserves.

March 22, 1975.



TERRORISM AND COMMUNISM

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REMAINS A CRUCIAL PART OF THE FIGHT TO BRING THE LESSONS OF THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION TO THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING CLASS

STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

The activities of Joseph Hansen

The International Committee of the Fourth International has taken action to repudiate completely the lies and slanders of Joseph Hansen, of the Pabloite revisionist Socialist Workers Party of the United States. Hansen is the notorious specialist in slandering the International Committee of the Fourth International.

He has created a legend about himself because he was one of Trotsky's secretaries. This dubious man has been the centre of weaving lies and distortions to prevent the historical continuity of the struggle for Trotskyism as carried forward by the International Committee of the Fourth International.

The Sixth International Congress of the ICFI (May 19-24, 1975) unanimously voted to continue the investigation into 'Security and the Fourth International'. Congress also decided to allocate a special fund to clean the slate of history of the lies and suppressions which Messrs Hansen and company have used to besmirch the principles and traditions of Trotsky and the Fourth International.

On May 16, 1975, the Sixth World Congress of the International took the decision to address an urgent proposal for action to the so-called 'United Secretariat' and the Socialist Workers Party of the United States.

The International Committee has profound differences with the United Secretariat, which is composed of elements in various countries who split from Trotskyism along with Michel Pablo, the secretary of the Fourth International, in 1953.

These Pabloites still claim to represent the Fourth International. In fact they have remained in existence only by attracting certain of the middle-class radical protesters who flourished during the capitalist boom of the 1960s.

The proposals of the International Committee were directed at investigating all the circumstances surrounding a number of slanderous allegations made by Joseph Hansen of the Socialist Workers Party (the SWP openly announced its political agreement with the Pabloites in 1963).

Hansen, writing in *Intercontinental Press* of April 7, 1975, has asserted that the Workers Revolutionary Party (British section of the International Committee) was politically led by police agents.

The IC proposed that immediately a commission be set up, composed of three nominees from the IC and three from the United Secretariat, to investigate fully these charges, and at the same time to consider evidence on all questions of security and provocations since 1966.

Behind these proposals was the conviction of the International Committee Congress that the objectively favourable conditions for the building of revolutionary parties

and winning working class leadership in the struggle for power make it possible and necessary to begin to settle the question of falsification, slander, provocations and security which have endangered our movement since its very origins.

The middle-class radical groups now led by the Pabloites in the USA, Britain, Australia and other countries have become the spearhead of the slanders and provocations which were once the speciality of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

This is not of course to say that the Stalinists have given up their attacks, but it does mean that the Pabloites, having long ago given up their fight against Stalinism, now provide the Stalinist bureaucracy with direct assistance against the continuators of Trotskyism, the International Committee.

Joseph Hansen has come forward as the inspirer of these attacks. Trading on the legend built up around the fact that he once worked as one of Trotsky's secretaries, he has worked might and main to divert the cadres of the Fourth International from the principled struggle to develop Marxism and build independent revolutionary parties.

His cynical rejection of the IC's proposals (see Hansen's letter of June 5, 1975, below) is only the latest of these consistent anti-Marxist actions. In 1962-1963 it was Hansen who conspired with S.T. Peng and Pierre Frank to prevent any political discussion on the political and theoretical questions facing the world Trotskyist movement.

At the very point where such a discussion had begun in 1963, on the proposals of the IC, Hansen manoeuvred for the creation of the spurious 'United Secretariat' in 1963. All discussion of the disputed questions was banned on the pretext that it would obstruct 'reunification'.

The political reality behind Hansen's decision to avoid discussion at all costs was tragically shown in the case of Ceylon. There, the leadership of the LSSP (Section of the Pabloite movement) in 1963 was unmistakably and rapidly going to the right.

Those who attempted, within the Pabloite movement, to seek a discussion on this danger, were prevented from doing so on the grounds that such a discussion would be 'divisive' when the question of unity was the order of the day.

Thus the Pabloite international leadership, with Hansen in the forefront, provided the essential political cover for Perera and the LSSP leadership to proceed, unimpeded, to become ministers in the bourgeois coalition government of Mrs Bandaranaike and the Ceylon capitalists.

This was only the first and most spectacular of the

political disasters perpetrated by the newly 'unified' Pabloite International.

In 1968, the Pabloite sections in all countries, and Hansen's SWP in the United States, were turned exclusively to the middle-class protest movement on Vietnam. The myth of 'student power' particularly after the May-June 1968 struggles in France, was cultivated, along with the Vietnam protest movement, to build up middle-class organizations as an alternative to the revolutionary parties of the International Committee.

In Britain, the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign led by the Pabloites and the state capitalist International Socialists declared openly that it was basing itself on the historical precedent of the Stalinist Popular Fronts of the 1930s.

At the VSC's founding meeting in London members of the Socialist Labour League (predecessor of the Workers Revolutionary Party), were prevented from speaking after national secretary Gerry Healy warned the meeting against Stalinism and its role in relation to the Vietnamese revolution.

Those who carried through this unprincipled campaign, to create at all costs a middle-class radical alternative to the Socialist Labour League, to Trotskyism, were the chosen representatives of Joseph Hansen and the SWP leadership.

A special emissary was sent to give political leadership to the campaign, a Canadian Pabloite named Ernest Tate. Not content with the anti-Trotskyist political declarations of the VSC, Tate made himself the centre of a direct physical provocation against the SLL.

Having deliberately provoked a physical fight by obstructing the entrance to an SLL meeting, Tate, with Hansen's and the SWP's loud support, tried furiously to mobilize radical, centrist and reformist 'public opinion' for a public 'tribunal' to pass judgement on the SLL. Every petty-bourgeois prejudice against Bolshevism was whipped up in order to try to isolate and destroy the SLL.

Why cannot Hansen, the SWP and the United Secretariat accept the proposal of the International Committee to open the inquiry into security and provocations, and produce Ernest Tate to give evidence?

How is it to be explained that Hansen and his political associates worked furiously to subject the Socialist Labour League to the 'court' of petty-bourgeois radical opinion, yet they reject the proposal for the Trotskyist movement itself to undertake this investigation as an essential part of the political education of the cadres of the revolution?

Every militant who fights for the Fourth International will draw his conclusions from Hansen's conduct.

But we must also speak of the United Secretariat itself. Why are they silent? Why does not Mandel for example work for a response from the United Secretariat to the IC's proposal?

Mandel knows that in 1962 he participated in the organization of the international written discussion, on the basis proposed by the International Committee and that he also, along with Kolpe of the Indian Pabloite movement, attended the SLL Summer Camp of that year and engaged in a full discussion.

He knows also that Hansen came direct to Europe to tell the Pabloite Secretariat that the 'reunification' would not go ahead unless the discussion ceased.

Mandel and Frank, and the whole Pabloite leadership know full well that the phoney 'reunification', carried out on the basis of a ban on discussion, soon produced a situation where a profound split emerged in their own movement.

Hansen has actually organized splits and separate organizations (in Portugal, in Australia and in other countries) from those of the Unified Secretariat, even though the SWP claims political solidarity with the United Secretariat, and participates in its work as far as the reactionary laws of the USA permit.

It is completely unprincipled of them to ignore the political lessons of this experience, in particular to remain silent on Hansen's repetition today of his ban on discussion and information in 1963.

But Hansen has now of course gone much further, as the correspondence here published makes clear. Having supported the International Marxist Group (IMG) of Britain in its defence of Lawless, who had collaborated with the police, he has now turned on the Workers Revolutionary Party and accused it of being manipulated by police.

He has resorted deliberately to the worst kind of character assassination against Gerry Healy, secretary of the WRP. Once again it is necessary to refer directly to Mandel, Frank and the United Secretariat in Paris.

Their own organization in France, then the Ligue Communiste, was bitterly denounced by Hansen as having engaged in a dangerous adventure and walked into a police trap in 1973. This adventure had led to the illegalization and the imprisonment of Ligue Communiste leaders. Yet Hansen finds it possible to defend the IMG after an almost identical adventure in Red Lion Square in 1974!

Furthermore the IMG refused to inform other workers' organizations of the identity of one of their leading members who had collaborated with the bourgeois judicial tribunal. In response to these events Hansen denounced as police agents the leaders of the Workers Revolutionary Party.

What game is Hansen playing? When he is pursuing his own factional policy in the United Secretariat, he denounces this type of adventure. When he is engaged in slandering a section of the International Committee he immediately stands on his head!

And when he is called to order, with a principled proposal for a comprehensive investigation by the Trotskyist movement, he responds with a shabby attempt to discuss the whole offer as a flippant joke, and rejects the allegations!

The matter cannot rest here! The Stalinist bureaucracy has, since the birth of the Trotskyist movement, denounced us as 'fascist agents' and 'police spies'. They worked to isolate the Fourth International and, where they could, to butcher its cadres.

We are no longer in the period of great working-class defeats upon which Stalinism battered. Neither Hansen nor anyone else will be permitted to abuse the heritage of Trotsky to revive the Stalinist slander and butchery.

We are publishing the correspondence so that the whole international movement can see how Hansen and the revisionists are being exposed more and more.

The decision of the Sixth World Congress of the International Committee in May 1975, to continue the investigation into security in the Fourth International will be carried through to the very end. It is an essential part of the preparation of the struggle for workers' power.

International Committee of the Fourth International

August 8, 1975

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE AND THE UNITED SECRETARIAT

Thursday May 29, 1975

To: Unified Secretariat/SWP

Dear Comrades,

On April 7, 1975, Joseph Hansen, one of the leaders of the SWP (USA) wrote an article in his weekly magazine *Inter-continental Press* entitled 'Red Lion Square — where were the heroes of the WRP?' The following allegations were made against leading members of the Workers Revolutionary Party, British section of the International Committee of the Fourth International:

'Didn't this advice fit in with what the WRP admits — that "manipulation of the left played an important role in police preparations for June 15"? What are the names of those members who gave advice that played into the hands of the police and the capitalist state? Who are these "shadowy figures"? Why does the WRP remain silent on this? Why doesn't it name those involved in this "sinister affair"? What is the WRP trying to cover up? Still another question must be asked. Is it possible that agents provocateurs like these are responsible for the campaign undertaken by the Workers Press of trying to follow up Scarman's work, of even improving on Scarman in attacking the IMG?'

The London Area Committee of the Workers Revolutionary Party, acting under the decisions of the Central Committee of the WRP, with G. Healy as general secretary taking the main responsibility, took the decision (not 'advice' or 'suggestion') not to participate in the Red Lion Square demonstration; the same comrades were responsible for decisions not to participate in earlier, similar demonstrations, and also for the decisions not to par-

ticipate in the 1968 Grosvenor Square demonstrations on Vietnam.

Joseph Hansen says, 'These questions, we insist, must be cleared up.' We entirely agree.

Acting on the decisions of the Sixth Congress of the International Committee of the Fourth International, held in May 1975, the IC proposes to the Unified Secretariat the immediate setting up of a parity control commission (say three members from each committee) to conduct this investigation.

Any comrade from either side could be called as witnesses, or could if they felt it necessary give evidence. G. Healy will present himself for questioning before the joint committee if Joseph Hansen will do so as well. They would have the right to question each other and be expected to answer questions from members of the commission.

The Parity Commission should also declare itself ready to receive all evidence from members of the sections of the International Committee and of the Unified Secretariat concerning provocations, not only in relation to Red Lion Square, but on the whole period since and including the so-called 'Tate Affair' of 1966. While recognizing that Joseph Hansen and the SWP are not affiliated to the Unified Secretariat for legal reasons, he is in political sympathy and we trust that he can be prevailed upon to co-operate.

Yours fraternally,

C. Slaughter

(for the International Committee of the Fourth International).

June 5, 1975

C. Slaughter

186a Clapham High Street
London SW4 7UG

Dear Comrade Slaughter,

Your letter of May 29 has been referred to me for reply.

I would note, first, that the letterhead of the 'International Committee of the Fourth International' is typewritten. Of course, this rump body may be so moribund as not to require a regular letterhead, it being sufficient for the comrade in charge to type one up on the rare occasions when he needs it. On the other hand, it may be an indication that the letter is not *bona fide*.

Secondly, the author exhibits rather surprising ignorance. He addresses the letter to the 'Unified Secretariat' and not to the United Secretariat. How is this to be accounted for?

Thirdly, the signature of the author is an indecipherable hieroglyph. It could be a forgery.

These are small items. However, I am sure that your Central Committee, in view of its expertise in such mat-

ters, will acknowledge the necessity to be alert to seemingly insignificant clues like these. They can lead to identifying an agent planted in the organization by the police or the CIA. Just in case the letter is a fake, I am enclosing a photocopy of it. Perhaps it will help you locate the police agent if it was written by one.

Unfortunately, the political line of the letter speaks for the conclusion that it is genuine. It coincides, for example, with the content and tone of recent articles in the 'Workers Press'. Thus, taking the letter in that context, I would offer the following observations:

The sentences quoted from the article 'Red Lion Square — Where Were the Heroes of the WRP?' were intended to illustrate the logical conclusions that follow from using the Healyite method of thinking, which is tainted with 'subjective idealism'.

You used that method in attacking the International Marxist Group, the British section of the Fourth International, for participating in the demonstration against the fascists at Red Lion Square. Your method led you to conclude that in all likelihood police agents played a role in working out the policies of the IMG. However, if precisely the same method is used in weighing the WRP's refusal to

join in demonstrating against the fascists, equivalent results are obtained concerning the shaping of its policies. I thought I had provided a good illustration of this.

It is disappointing that you, as the leading methodologist of the WRP, did not recognize the point I was making. I am sure that almost everyone else in the left saw it, although I admit that there are always some for whom it would be helpful to have a special typographical sign, such as a pointing finger, to indicate *irony*.

I recognize the honesty of your explanation that the WRP's decision to abstain from the demonstration against the fascists was made by the top committees of the WRP 'with G. Healy as general secretary taking the main responsibility'. However, in this explanation you proceed as an empiricist, disregarding what you would have found had you been searching for signs of 'subjective idealism' in your top committees and in your general secretary.

Of course, I have no real quarrel with your empiricism in this instance. It is a fact — G. Healy's decision was a consequence of his ultraleft sectarian line, as is universally recognized outside of the WRP and its sister organization in the USA, the Workers League.

In light of this, it is clear that the 'Parity Commission' you call for could only ascertain (1) whether the top leader of the WRP is still on an ultraleft binge, as Comrade Cannon correctly called it, and (2) whether the sentences I wrote — and the charges you levelled against the IMG — constitute examples of the kind of conclusions to be expected from succumbing to 'subjective idealism'.

Under these circumstances, it is superfluous — and ridiculous — to set up a 'Parity Commission'. The evi-

dence is already public knowledge, open to inspection by the entire working-class audience.

I note your indication that you are willing to reconsider the stand you took in the beating of Ernest Tate by stewards of the Socialist Labour League in 1966. If you mean this in good faith, you could hardly do better than to begin by making a public self-criticism, particularly over having followed up the beating by taking legal action in the bourgeois courts against the victim.

An additional indication of good faith would be restitution of the money that you wrung from the *Socialist Leader* and *Peace News* in retaliation for their having printed correspondence from Comrade Tate protesting the beating he had received.

Another welcome move would be a public apology for the violation of proletarian morality involved in using the bourgeois courts to penalize working-class publications in such a matter.

On one question, I think an inquiry might prove fruitful; namely, the circumstances of your general secretary's hunt for CIA agents in the Workers League and his disruption of the leadership of that organization.

As to the practical side of such an inquiry, the difficulties of selecting an impartial and competent commission might prove insuperable. However, if you would like me to become involved in trying to overcome these difficulties, I am sure I could be prevailed upon to co-operate.

Fraternally yours,
Joseph Hansen

CC: United Secretariat Enc.

June 21st 1975

To the Secretary
United Secretariat/SWP

Dear Comrades,

The International Committee rejects completely the reply by Joseph Hansen (dated June 5th 1975) to the proposals contained in our letter of May 29 1975. Behind the lame excuses about 'irony' and the facetious jokes is a cowardly and unprincipled evasion of the vital issues involved.

The purpose of Hansen's reply is to resist at all costs an inquiry into the urgent questions of provocations and security in the Fourth International which inevitably come to the fore because of the rapid development of the revolutionary crisis. Instead of accepting a procedure well known in the traditions of our movement, in order to create the conditions in which the cadres can be educated and trained in an objective manner, Hansen's reply seeks above all to make it possible to keep on living in the swamp of unsubstantiated slander and innuendo. Indeed his letter simply repeats the allegations he has made in the past. Here once more is the accusation by Hansen, published in *Intercontinental Press* June 16th 1975:

'Has the WRP been infiltrated by agents of the Special Branch? What are the identities of those in the WRP who suggested that the best course was to have nothing to do with the demonstration against fascism in Red Lion Square?

'Didn't this advice fit in with what the WRP admits — that "manipulation of the left played an important role in police preparations for June 15"? What are the names of those members who gave advice that played into the hands of the police

and the capitalist state? Who are these "shadowy figures"? Why does the WRP remain silent on this? Why doesn't it name those involved in this "sinister affair"? What is the WRP trying to cover up? Still another question must be asked. Is it possible that agents provocateurs like these are responsible for the campaign undertaken by the *Workers Press* of trying to follow up Scarman's work, of even improving on Scarman in attacking the IMG?'

Hansen's talk of irony is deception and evasion, to allow him to continue with more of the same kind of thing. How can any comrade in the Trotskyist movement permit such allegations to have currency, and not be checked and examined, under conditions where, for example, the Australian section of the United Secretariat was infiltrated, to the top leadership, by the police agent Wechsler, and where the SWP has been subjected for many years to large-scale and intensive FBI surveillance?

Hansen's allegations arose immediately out of security questions raised by sections of the IC, and particularly the WRP, as a result of the Scarman tribunal on the Red Lion Square demonstration. The IC is proposing that all the implications for security of the Red Lion Square demonstration are investigated.

Central to this particular investigation is the conduct of Hansen himself. He not only invented the slander of police infiltration of the WRP, in order to cover up the collaboration with the capitalist judiciary of a leading IMG member, he also chose to defend the conduct of the IMG, even though for his own factional purposes he had severely criticized the Ligue Communiste (French Section of the United Secretariat) one year earlier, for walking into a similar police trap. Hansen has not replied in his press on

this matter. It is urgent that the whole of this question be examined with complete objectivity by the whole movement.

The position of the IC on the 'Tate affair', resurrected by Hansen in his reply, is the same as on Hansen's new accusations. He repeats these lies and slanders, knowing them to be such, only for the purpose of escaping the responsibility of an answer on the questions we have raised. The 'Tate affair' was set up and utilized in a campaign of provocation and character-assassination directed especially at Comrade G. Healy. As we have already stated, we are for the whole of this affair being investigated by the parity commission, with the right of any comrade in the movement to submit material and for those principally involved to be able to question each other.

The question of security in the Fourth International, not only at this moment but in our past history, now assumes great importance, and for this reason we of the International Committee, along with the Workers League (USA), who are in political solidarity with us, will bring before a parity commission all material relevant to the

security inquiry set up in relation to Wohlforth and Fields.

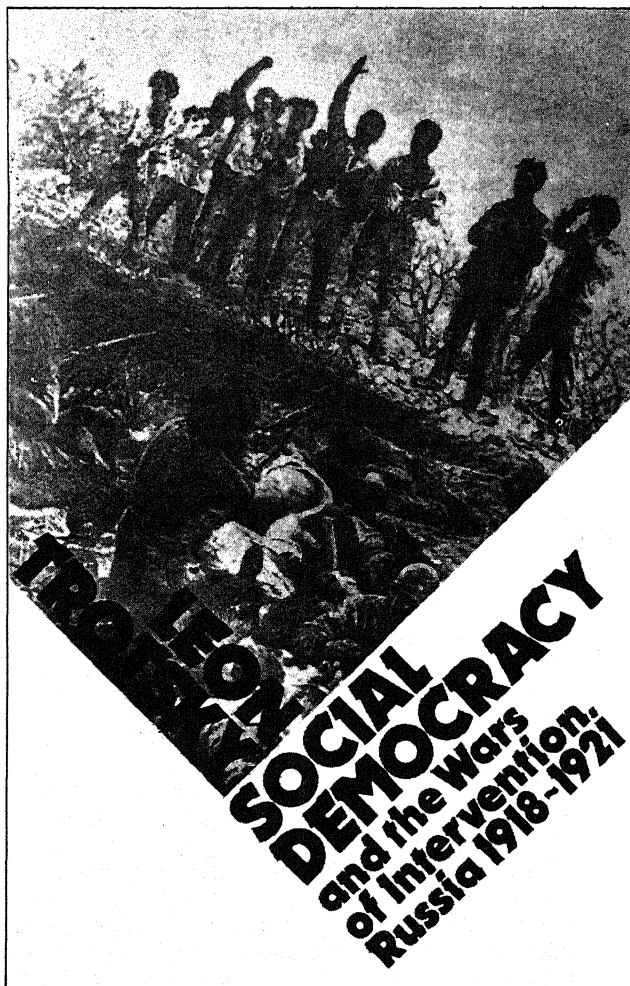
To continue with the methods exemplified by Hansen's reply is to deliberately perpetuate a situation in which clarification of urgent political questions by the revolutionary cadres is obstructed, and this is the very worst kind of historical irresponsibility to which anyone claiming to give leadership in the revolutionary movement can descend.

To persist in this method is to create the conditions in which the forces of the bourgeois state would be able to sabotage and attempt to break up the Trotskyist movement. We urge the United Secretariat and the SWP, and the Trotskyists everywhere to come forward immediately and support the IC proposals for a parity committee of three comrades from each side to begin work as soon as possible, and for all comrades in the movement to have access to this commission on all questions concerning provocations and security in the Fourth International.

Yours fraternally,
C. Slaughter

(for the IC of the Fourth International)

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WORKERS LEAGUE POLITICAL COMMITTEE STATEMENT

New Slander from an Old Liar

The Central Committee of the Workers League removed Tim Wohlforth as its National Secretary on August 31, 1974 by unanimous vote, including that of Wohlforth himself. On September 29, 1974, Wohlforth resigned from the Workers League itself. In the period since then, he has publicly attacked the Workers League, the International Committee, and the Workers Revolutionary Party.

In particular, he has sought, in collaboration with Joseph Hansen of the Socialist Workers Party, to build up a farrago of lies and slander about Comrade G. Healy, Secretary of the Workers Revolutionary Party. Latest of his attempts is a letter sent by him to another renegade from the Trotskyist movement, Irving Hall. Hall was expelled from the Workers League in May 1974 for conduct detrimental to the League and for failure to carry out Central Committee decisions. He is now concerned only to attack politically the Workers League and the International Committee.

In a letter to Hall of May 1, 1975, Wohlforth writes:

'I wish to set the record straight on your expulsion. There was no discussion prior to the Montreal meeting of expelling you. No one — including myself — had such an action in mind at that time and I doubt very much if any action would have been taken without the intervention of Gerry Healy. It was Healy who initiated a discussion at the meeting on police agents, insisting that the current difficulties he was having "with a handful of purported Blick supporters" (he made no mention of any differences with Thornett at this meeting nor at the camp in August — at least in front of me). He insisted it was the work of cops. He also made the same suggestion in regards to you, urged your expulsion as well as a "tightening up" of our Constitution — a process he was also preparing. He then left for a plane with full knowledge that the plenum was to expel you. We then proceeded to do so and also the next week acted against Zeltzer in the Bay Area.

'I, of course, went fully along with this action and must bear responsibility for it today. I believe it was completely unjustified, as the political discussion was what needed to take place. But it was not some independent action of Wohlforth and Fields (who played no role at all in these events) to force people out of the movement. It was an action initiated and encouraged by Healy as part of his frenzy over cops. . . I never really believed you were a cop and the action was not taken on that basis. You are of course free to use this portion of my letter as you see fit.' (From letter to Hall received May 1, 1975.)

The Workers League Central Committee declares that this is a complete falsification of its own decisions, of Wohlforth's own role, and of the positions of Comrade Healy (and by implication, of the International Committee, with which the Workers League is in political solidarity). The facts are these:

At its May 1974 Plenum (May 18, 1974), the Central Committee of the Workers League discussed the experience of the recent National Youth Conference in New York. It was reported that a very serious incident had occurred in the car carrying home the West Coast delegation. A leading Workers League comrade was violently

assaulted by youth who had been brought to the conference. This comrade suffered severe physical damage (of which he is still suffering the effects) and it was necessary to call in the police, without which his life would certainly have been in danger. This step was taken after consultation with the Political Committee, and the Central Committee fully endorsed the action of the comrades.

However, it was reported that Irving Hall, who had not been present at the time of the assault, had later attacked the comrades, denouncing their action as reliance on the forces of the class enemy and the state. Such a position was regarded by the Central Committee as hostile and detrimental to the revolutionary party, and a decision was taken by the Central Committee that Hall be expelled. The only part played in this particular matter by Comrade Healy, who arrived as an observer after the decision had been taken on Wohlforth's initiative, was to propose that, even though Hall's action warranted summary expulsion, there should be prepared charges, and his action in this respect should be explained in connection with his failure to carry out CC decisions.

There is not now, nor was there then, any charge or accusation that Hall was or is a police agent. As Wohlforth well knows, the charges against Hall were political and were raised as such in the party. It was said, and must certainly be re-emphasized, that Hall was and is an incurable subjectivist and unprincipled factionalist, characteristics which make him very dangerous to the revolutionary movement.

Comrade Healy, as well as other comrades, made this point at the May plenum of the Central Committee, as well as on earlier and later occasions.

Hall (together with his companion Judy Hughes and others who would not accept and act on the party's decisions) next appealed to the International Committee of the Fourth International against their expulsion from the Workers League. Even though the IC has no jurisdiction in the matter (the Workers League is prevented by the reactionary Voorhis Act from having any international political affiliation), the IC did agree to hear this appeal. Hall and the others were duly notified, and on September 1, 1974, Hall, Cagle, and Zeltzer were met in Montreal by comrades of the International Committee, including Comrade Healy. (A preliminary meeting took place the day before between the appellants and Comrade Slaughtert, secretary of the IC).

At this meeting, the IC proposed certain conditions which, if accepted, would be the basis of the IC's recommending to the Workers League their readmission to membership. The conditions are appended to this statement. It should be noted that although the IC states its position on the correctness of Hall's expulsion, it does not demand that Hall himself accept this opinion — which would in any case be ridiculous.

Hall, however, was quite unable to overcome his subjectivism and accept this principled basis for re-entering

the movement and engaging in political discussion up to and including the next convention. He and Zeltzer rejected the terms, which were then immediately withdrawn. So far as the IC was concerned, Hall's and Zeltzer's rejection was itself a complete indication of their political and organizational opposition to Trotskyism.

Wohlforth had violently opposed the initiative of the IC on this appeal, a fact which he deliberately suppresses in his letter. He did not want Hall back in the Workers League. It was in fact the IC, including Comrade Healy, which sought in every way to ensure conditions for the most complete political discussion, which could, if it had been accepted by Hall, Zeltzer, and company provide a principled basis for their membership of the Workers League.

Wohlforth distorts the real history into its opposite. With a passing acknowledgement that he 'mistakenly' went along with Hall's expulsion in May, he seeks to rewrite the story in order to provide support for the lie that he himself was thrown out of the movement as a result of an 'anti-cop' mania on the part of Comrade Healy. In truth, Wohlforth's hostile relations with Hall did not begin with the 1974 plenum.

The documents published here establish beyond any doubt that it was an outright lie for Wohlforth to suggest that disciplinary action against Hall in May 1974 occurred only because of intervention by the IC or Comrade Healy. It is clear that Hall's indiscipline had been acted on at previous meetings, and that Wohlforth was instrumental in raising these matters.

The first item in this documentary history are from the 'Minutes of the Expanded Political Committee of the Workers League, November 11, 1973.'

'2. Cde. Hall. Motion presented by TW (Tim Wohlforth):

It has come to our attention that Comrade Irving Hall claims that there was no vote on the perspectives resolution at the recent National Conference of the Workers League. On this basis, Comrade Hall has conducted his union and party work independently of the discipline of the Central Committee. We wish to make the record clear:

1. After a thorough discussion over two days, during which Comrade Hall was given extended time to speak and express his differences, in the presence of representatives of the international movement, a motion was put forward in support of the perspectives resolution. On this basis, it was proposed that a discussion would continue on the Central Committee to improve the resolution.
2. The motion was carried unanimously with Hall's own vote.
3. A special constitutional amendment was proposed, and carried unanimously with Hall's vote to change the National Committee to the Central Committee, because the new situation required a centralized leadership which would fight through to implement the perspectives document.
4. A Central Committee was proposed, which included Comrade Hall as a full member, and was voted for unanimously with Hall's vote. It was specifically instructed to carry out concretely the perspectives document.
5. The Central Committee met, electing a Political Committee, Tim Wohlforth as National Secretary and Lucy St. John, Editor. The committee specifically committed itself to carry out perspectives.
6. At no time since the National Conference has Comrade Hall communicated in any way with the Political Committee or National Officers on any union or party work.
7. Comrade Hall's branch has refused to pay one penny of October's regional dues to support the West Coast section of the *Bulletin*, even though that was a national decision.
8. Comrade Hall attended an AFT convention in the Bay Area, without consulting other CC members in the LA area, without collaborating with the Bay Area comrades, or informing the National Officers or Political Committee.

We serve notice on Comrade Hall that we insist that Central Committee members fight under the discipline of this committee for the party's perspectives.

We refer this matter to the Central Committee meeting in January.'

In his capacity as National Secretary, Wohlforth sent the following communication, dated December 24, 1973, to all CC members:

'... The CC meeting will also consider the 10th Anniversary *Bulletin* Fund Drives and related campaigns in preparation for the daily. Also on the agenda will be the Young Socialists work and the recently launched unemployment campaign. There will be a special point on the TUALP and our trade union work. Finally, the Political Committee is referring to the CC the motion passed at its November 11th meeting on Comrade Hall. It notes that it has received no communication on the matters referred to in the motion in the period since November 11.

Yours fraternally,
Tim Wohlforth
National Secretary.'

On December 31, 1973, Wohlforth wrote to Hall:

'Dear Comrade Hall,
We are contacting every branch in the country and informing them that we will only seat CC members who have seen to it that all money owed to the NO as of December 31 is paid. In your particular case, this problem is exacerbated by the fact that you made an agreement with the National Secretary, in the presence of a representative of the IC, to pay up your back literature bills within three weeks of the camp. You still owe \$355.24 on that agreement, plus \$108.50 on new literature. We are informing you that unless this money is paid, you will not be permitted to attend the CC meeting. We are hereby instructing Comrade — to give you your ticket only under the condition that you give her \$463.74.

Fraternally,
Tim Wohlforth
National Secretary.'

The 'Minutes of the CC meeting of the Workers League, January 5 and 6, 1974,' record that Wohlforth made the following report on Hall:

'A. NO has received no communication from Cde. Hall by phone since August; nothing written except letter of past week.

B. Cde. Hall committed himself to paying \$400 debt to the NO by three weeks after August National Conference, in presence of representative of IC. That amount received only last night.

C. Cde. Hall as CC member must work in day to day collaboration with other CC members, and keep in touch with NO, especially if it is a matter of political disagreements. This was not done. Reply from Cde. Hall based on "Reply to November 11, 1973. Political Committee statement" received at NO during past week.

Proposed by TW that Cde. Hall have 10 minutes to make his reply.

Unanimously passed. A five minute extension also granted.

Discussion.

Proposed by TW that:

CC censure Cde. Hall, specifically under Point 8 of motion passed at November 11, 1973 expanded PC meeting.

Unanimously passed.'

The only recorded example of any reference to other than political and organizational criticisms of Hall are from the pen of Wohlforth himself. Immediately following the CC meeting, Wohlforth wrote to G. Healy a letter dated June 7, 1974 containing the following damning characterization of Irving Hall:

'Hall in the end came up with the money and came to the conference. He is definitely persistent! At the conference, he had not one word to say on perspectives or a single amendment

to the document! Instead, he tried to make some factional points on what he felt was a neglect of proper attention to trade union work. When the trade union discussion opened up, he did not even speak a word. The discussion clearly was beyond his factional level anyway. In the end, we censured him for his past indiscipline and set up the situation for a very close watch and struggle with him from NYC. The situation in LA did not allow us yet to really go beyond this, though I have my suspicions as to exactly what he is.'

It must be stressed that this letter was written five months before the May plenum, where, according to Wohlforth, Comrade Healy raised a scare about 'cops'. But this naked lie is exposed by the fact that it was Wohlforth and no one else who planted suspicions by asking 'exactly what he is' the preceding January. He even goes so far as to say that he desisted from expulsion in January 1974 only because of 'the situation in Los Angeles'!

After Hall's expulsion, Wohlforth wrote as follows to G. Healy on May 29, 1974.

'... What I thought was particularly good was the development of — and — from LA. They were the ones involved in that beating up business. There seems to be a beginning of a break with liberalism, a certain hardening up of some of the comrades, combined with a new interest in theory. There was a good reaction to the expulsion of Hall. We tossed Judy out as well. I believe at least some of the comrades are beginning to grasp what it is we will be able to do in the next period, to grasp the nature of the period they are living in.'

What was the political reality behind Wohlforth's attitude to Hall in the period after Hall was elected to the Workers League Central Committee in September 1973? Hall's own written admissions, before he came to accept Wohlforth's allegations that he (Hall) was expelled because of some 'police' obsession are very revealing. They expose Hall's own position, and the implied accusation by Wohlforth that he wanted political clarification, but was frustrated in this by Comrade Healy's pursuit of Hall.

In a document of December 10, 1974, Hall and a handful of supporters published their most complete 'platform' of opposition to the IC. On page 16 of this document, Hall is telling the story of his perspectives document of the year before in the Workers League. He is very brief and to the point:

'Instead of provoking a sharp discussion and laying the basis for the necessary turn, the Hall/Hughes document was organizationally suppressed.'

Furthermore:

'Only weeks after the end of the camp (1973), the discussion on the Central Committee was terminated, before it even began, by Comrade Wohlforth, so he could prepare, all by himself, a new final draft of his perspectives document which, as he bragged in January, he wrote, "without any help from Comrade Hall or his document".'

Within two months, Comrade Hall was presented with entirely trumped up charges, and then threatened with expulsion for trying to participate in the perspectives discussion at the January Central Committee meeting.'

The gist of Hall's case is that Wohlforth suppressed political differences by abusing organizational powers. Yet today, Hall wishes to use Wohlforth's lying version of history: 'There was no discussion prior to the Montreal meeting (May 1974) of expelling you. No one, including myself, had such an action in mind at that time and I doubt very much if any action would have been taken without the intervention of Gerry Healy'. Such is the objectivity of these renegades!

And just in case Hall and Wohlforth today want to put

all of Wohlforth's conduct at the door of the IC, let us again listen to Hall. Wohlforth says that Hall's expulsion 'was completely unjustified, as the political discussion was what needed to take place.' But, as we have seen, Hall accuses Wohlforth of suppressing such a discussion. And he adds: 'Clearly only at the IC's initiative, Cde. Hall was included on the new Central Committee. . . .' (December 10 Document by Hall, p. 16.)

This was indeed the position. The IC fights always to extract the political essence of all divisions and oppositions. Wohlforth played the strong man against Hall, and avoided political discussion, because he wanted the conditions in the Workers League which left him free to work out his very own political perspectives, to break from the International Committee, to establish the position he now holds.

The Workers League warns once again that in order to conceal their political bankruptcy, and in response to the pressure from the capitalist class as the crisis deepens, Wohlforth, Hall and all such renegades are trying to build up a smokescreen of lies, provocations, and character assassinations with the aim of weakening the revolutionary movement.

We shall continue to expose every one of their fabrications and to provide for every comrade the real record of the struggle, in order that there shall be the greatest vigilance against Hansen, Wohlforth, and the renegades from Trotskyism.

We append the recommended conditions of the IC for readmission to the Workers League. This is the statement which Hall and Zeltzer refused to sign.

'The International Committee, meeting on August 31 to September 1 considered the letter signed by Comrades S. Zeltzer, Ernest Yacapin, Tom Cagle, Irving Hall, Judy Hughes (no date) and declares:

1. That the Workers League Central Committee was correct to expel summarily I. Hall, for his position on the events on the return from the YS National Conference, a position which endangered the party.
2. That S. Zeltzer and J. Hughes were expelled without notice of charges and thus in breach of the Workers League Constitution.
3. That T. Cagle resigned in July 1974.
4. Important political questions and unresolved problems of the Workers League's perspectives and work cannot be separated from these events, which must not be allowed to obstruct the necessary clarification and changes.

We propose therefore:

1. A national convention of the Workers League must be held, with a period of two months preconference discussion and a perspectives resolution. A period of determined party building is immediately necessary, and all comrades must participate in it. The preconference discussion will begin on November 1, 1974.
2. Any comrades restored to membership must accept fully the discipline of the Central Committee and of their party branches and area executives.
3. All members will participate completely equally in the preconference discussion, and no factional activity or splits will be engaged in between now and the conference.
4. Any breach of these conditions will be referred to the International Committee, whose ruling will be final.
5. Comrades Cagle, Zeltzer, Judy Hughes, and Irving Hall are restored to full membership provided they accept these proposals unconditionally.

We the undersigned accept unconditionally the above proposals of the International Committee dated September 1.

September 1, 1974

Reprinted from the *Bulletin*, Newspaper of the Workers League, USA.

STATEMENT BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Defend democratic rights in Portugal! *Expose Stalinist treachery!*

THE International Committee of the Fourth International condemns the mass arrests in Portugal of members of the Movement for the Reorganization of the Proletarian Party (MRPP) and calls for their immediate release and an end to the ban on their party. At the same time, the ICFI condemns the Stalinists' attempts to prevent Socialist Party views being expressed in the newspaper *Republica*.

Not a shred of evidence has been produced to back the accusations by the Armed Forces Movement and the Stalinist Communist Party that the MRPP is a 'counter-revolutionary agency'. On the contrary, Maoist groups organize among workers in many countries with similar policies to those pursued by the MRPP in Portugal.

Although the International Committee of the Fourth International is unalterably hostile to the confused petty-bourgeois politics of 'Maoism', it unconditionally defends the right of the Maoist groups to fight for their views within the workers' movement. The MRPP in Portugal has done no more than other political groups have done in being critical of the policies of the Stalinist Communist Party and opposed to military dictatorship by the AFM.

The Maoist tactic of incorrectly calling the Stalinists 'social fascists' and 'social imperialists', which splits the working class and makes the victory of Bonapartism more rather than less likely, must be fought against politically within the workers' movement. This Maoist tactic, condemned by the CP as 'counter-revolutionary', is in fact a direct echo of the identical criminally mistaken 'social fascist' slogan applied by the Stalinist German Communist Party (and the Communist International) to the Social Democrats in Germany in the 'Third Period' immediately preceding Hitler's accession to power in 1933. It was this policy and its consequences which established the definitely counter-revolutionary role of Stalinism, from which the Portuguese Communist Party and Cunhal have not broken to this day.

The Stalinist strategy of peaceful coexistence and parliamentary roads to socialism is the consistent and disastrous expression of this counter-revolutionary role. To deny the workers movement the right to learn from experience in a struggle between the conflicting views put forward by different political groups and to use the capitalist judicial code to suppress legitimate political dissension is to threaten the working class with the worst counter-revolutionary blow of all. Keeping the Socialist Party's opinions out of *Republica* represents the same threat to workers' democratic rights. By encouraging the military Bonapartists in Portugal to smash the MRPP, the Stalinists are opening the door to counter-revolution as blatantly as in any of the historic betrayals of the working class perpetrated by Stalinism.

Still worse, the Stalinists are actively assisting the Gestapo-type round-up of the Maoists with 'denunciations' to the authorities and arresting MRPP members themselves until the military arrive to throw them into prison. The Stalinists have led raids on MRPP headquarters to break up the offices and get more Maoists arrested. There is considerable evidence that Stalinists working at the former secret police (PIDE) archives have used infor-

mation from the fascists' files against their own opponents.

The MRPP has alleged, for example, that on the night of the great round-up of 600 Maoists on May 29, COPCON security forces went to some addresses where Maoists had lived only before the April 25 coup in 1974, addresses which could only have come from PIDE files. Non-Stalinist workers at the archives have resigned in a group in protest at the information being used against current political opponents of the Stalinists.

Once in jail, the Maoists have received the most brutal treatment. Commander Joao Xavier, Head of Military Prisons, admitted at a Press conference that the MRPP members had been beaten about the head and drenched with hoses in their cells. They were in the very cells in the notorious Caxias Prison outside Lisbon where the PIDE subjected its opponents to similar torture in floodable cells.

Despite these admissions, not a word of protest has come from the international Stalinist movement. The British Stalinist newspaper *Morning Star* reported Xavier's admissions without comment — and reported them at the bottom of a story devoted to more COPCON allegations against the Maoists.

These allegations, without offering a shred of evidence, repeated stale lies about the MRPP 'plotting' to assassinate the leaders of the military Junta and torturing soldiers they had 'captured' to get information. Not a single court case has been brought. Not a single 'torture victim' has been presented for cross-examination. Not a single detail of the so-called 'assassination plots' has been explained, nor proof offered to back it up. Yet the Stalinists reproduce these slanders without any hesitation.

This takes the Stalinist leaders beyond the treachery of merely getting the Maoists banned politically, which they achieved in Portugal some time ago. It now means that the reactionary coalition between the military Bonapartists and the Stalinists has moved towards the physical liquidation of their Maoist opponents. The Stalinist bureaucracy is back on the same degenerate road of murdering the opposition within the workers' movement that it trod in the Soviet Union, in Spain, and, through the activities of the KGB, in countless other countries.

It is doing this in the interests of both the Portuguese capitalists and the Kremlin Stalinist bureaucracy who are implacably opposed to a socialist revolution which would disrupt *detente* and the status quo in Europe. But this time, there is not even the pretence of killing opponents in order to seize or keep political power — not even for a 'popular front' government as in Spain in the 1930s.

In Portugal, the Stalinist bureaucracy has taken a new turn towards reaction. Opponents are being herded into prisons and driven towards physical liquidation in the name of an open military dictatorship. Stalinist leader Cunhal has signed a pact with the Bonapartist leaders of the Armed Forces Movement which hands them the power in what amounts to perpetuity. The fiction of '5 years' rule' fools no one.

The Stalinist policy is to help cement the complete

dictatorship of the military Junta. The Stalinists are the unpaid informers and strike-breakers for the military, turning Maoists and other 'extremists' over to the army for imprisonment, and acting as scabs and blacklegs in industrial disputes. Within the trade union movement and the working class generally, the Stalinists have become the full-time propagandists for corporatism, urging workers to drop pay claims, abandon factory and farm occupations, and to work harder 'in the national interest'.

This means working harder to prop up the capitalist state machine which the AFM has taken over and now runs enthusiastically. No worker must be fooled by the demagogy of the Stalinists and the Armed Forces Movement about 'nationalization' and the programme for the 'socialist revolution' in Portugal.

The military officers remain the same bourgeois caste they were before the April 25 seizure of power. Under the 50-year rule of Salazar and Caetano, right up until April 1974, they propped up the fascist state and fought a long colonial war in three countries in Africa. Many of the present leaders of the AFM, like the president Costa Gomes, were important military officers under fascism.

Their unalterably bourgeois outlook was typified by the former AFM president, General Spínola, who tried twice to stage a right wing counter-revolution after fascism was overthrown, and has now been allowed to flee to Brazil to join the most reactionary Portuguese capitalist emigre circles who are plotting endlessly to re-establish direct control by imperialism and put an end to the situation where the working class is undefeated and capable of socialist revolution.

The AFM is conducting a demagogic Bonapartist policy in Portugal, pouring out endless propaganda in favour of the corporate state in nationwide campaigns which go under the phoney title of 'cultural dynamization'. The *Morning Star* reprints propaganda photographs of this demagogy with full approval.

The 'nationalization' measures were forced on the AFM by the bankruptcy and imminent collapse of Portuguese capitalism under the two hammer blows of loss of empire and the worldwide capitalist slump and inflationary crisis. The Bonapartist gestures of a national minimum wage, upper limits to salaries, 'workers' participation' in the management of taken-over firms and factories, have nothing in common with socialism and are designed to distract workers from a real struggle for workers' power and a planned economy.

The real test of the Stalinist-Bonapartist coalition is on the question of state power. The vital problems of workers' democracy, the direction of the economy, and Portugal's international relations, depend upon the solution of this question.

The reactionary policies of the AFM are unmistakable. The capitalist state remains entirely intact in Portugal. The hundreds of thousands of fascists who ran the civil service, the police, the army, and big business, are either still in their old jobs or worming their way back into the system somewhere else. A tiny handful of the biggest monopolists and generals have fled the country. But the fascist state machine stays put.

Workers, although they have spontaneously launched an enormous offensive to 'purge' fascists from the schools, universities, factories, and farms, have no organs of power. The Constituent Assembly was castrated by the AFM before it was even elected. The military decreed it should have no power — and the Stalinist and Social Democratic leaders signed a pact accepting this. Local government

and the trade union bureaucracy are in the hands of the Stalinists. Protected by the military, the Stalinists plan to keep control and eliminate workers' democratic rights in these spheres.

Only in the poor tenants' committees, some factory and farm occupations or committees, and in the various left-wing political parties, have workers spontaneously built up their own organizations. But they are nowhere near enough yet to challenge the Bonapartist regime for control of the economy. It remains firmly capitalist-oriented and controlled (as best it is able) by the military government and their civil service advisers.

The turn towards the Common Market for aid, deliberate refusal to nationalize foreign monopolies working in Portugal, the encouragement of further foreign capital, and the 'austerity' measures now being imposed on the working class — all prove how capitalist Portugal remains. The latest 30 per cent surcharge on all imports will drive the cost of living up once again, put still more people out of work, and send living standards crashing to a new low. Meanwhile no social services are built; even the rudimentary medical and other services which already existed are in decay, and pressing problems like appalling housing remain unsolved.

Internationally, the Portuguese regime supports the counter-revolutionary NATO alliance, and maintains good relations with its fascist neighbour Spain. It is in support of this reactionary regime that the Stalinists are sending the Maoists into prison. Other opponents of the military dictatorship could soon follow them. Once having eliminated the left and the most revolutionary elements in the working class, the military would turn on the Stalinists themselves.

The Trotskyists in Portugal demand no support for the AFM and, to complete the exposure of the leaders of the Stalinist and Social Democratic workers' parties, call on them to use their majority in the Constituent Assembly to legislate a programme for socialism, the freeing of political prisoners (except for the fascists and counter-revolutionaries) and the protection of democratic rights for all workers' organizations.

At the same time, it is vital for the workers of Portugal to build with all possible speed a nationwide organization of soviets of workers', peasants' and soldiers' deputies to demand and carry out the implementation of these socialist measures. Only by uniting the existing tenants' committees, factory and farm committees, and other genuine working class bodies into workers' and peasants' soviets, can the workers in Portugal advance to the taking of power and the smashing of the capitalist state once and for all.

Having overthrown Fascism, the Portuguese working class is now threatened with the gravest dangers as a result of the betrayals of the Stalinists. Only a party founded on the struggle of the Trotskyist movement, the Fourth International, against counter-revolutionary Stalinism, can lead the working class out of these dangers and along the road to its own power.

The overriding and immediate task facing the most advanced workers, youth and intellectuals in Portugal is the construction of such a revolutionary party. The League for the Construction of the Revolutionary Party (LCPR), section of the International Committee of the Fourth International, is the instrument for accomplishing this task.

Reprinted from *Workers Press*, July 17, 1975.

STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Only Soviet power can defeat the counter-revolution in Portugal

The military regime in Portugal is in crisis over its attempts to push back the working masses from the gains made since the fall of fascism and restore some order to the economy. The campaign by the Armed Forces Movement first to break the influence of the Socialist Party, then to smash the Stalinists before finally bringing the working class and farm labourers under control, is foundering.

The splits in the AFM bourgeois officer caste result from the difficulties the military regime is having in carrying out its counter-revolution. None of the plans emanating from rival sections of the AFM have won sufficient support among the working masses of the soldiery to look like succeeding at present. The refusal by some military units to back coup plots aimed at overthrowing the liberal Goncalves, plus the continued revolutionary movement in the working class and the farm labourers, has so far frustrated the different candidates for bonapartist dictator — Otelo Carvalho, Melo Antunes, Costa Gomes, and Carlos Fabiao. Other military leaders will try their hand at becoming the 'strongman' of Portugal for as long as the leaders of the workers parties allow the political and economic crisis to continue. Such a bonapartist regime comes into being when the ruling class, the bourgeoisie, does not have the strength and control to subordinate the petty bourgeoisie and the working class politically and ideologically, and when at the same time the working class, through the treachery of its leadership, is not unified and mobilized to take power.

On several occasions since the overthrow of Caetano, and particularly in defeating the reactionary coups d'etat of September 1974 and March 1975, the working class has thrown itself into massive mobilizations which signify the transition from a pre-revolutionary to a revolutionary situation. But each time, the Stalinist and social democratic leaders of the working class worked only to bring the mass movement under the control of the bourgeoisie represented on the one hand by the ruling military junta and the Armed Forces Movement, and on the other by the important Constituent Assembly determined at all costs to preserve the capitalist state against the working class. Still the strength of the working class remains unbroken. But the problems of the Portuguese economy, in the midst of the world crisis whose pressure brought the fall of Caetano, have deteriorated still further; and the bourgeoisie's interests demand the defeat of the working class, the destruction and not merely the restraining of its revolutionary potential.

Inflation in Portugal is certainly higher than anywhere else in Europe, including Britain and Italy. Even official figures say 35 per cent. Unemployment is worsening rapidly as many frightened capitalists stop investing and foreign firms withdraw. All this is in addition to the effects

of the international slump. Portugal's reserves are on the brink of total exhaustion. The remaining colonies are in a state of civil war, yet the economic resources for maintaining the army do not exist. Backward Portuguese agriculture, its structure inherited from the reactionary past, needs the link with advanced industry and cannot supply the necessary goods. Factory closures, especially in textiles and other consumer export industries, are rampant.

The struggles of the workers on these issues, including factory occupations, continue on the ascendant. All the strike-breaking of the state, the Stalinists and the 'Inter-sindical' (trade union federation) has failed to arrest the wave of strikes and massive demonstrations. It is this deepening of the crisis and the continued rise of the working class which have provoked the recent frenzied attempt by the right-wing officers and parties to rally the petty bourgeois and those elements of the masses still influenced by the Catholic Church against the working class, particularly in the backward north of the country, which they seek to make the base for reaction.

It is the outright betrayal by the Stalinists and reformists, their lickspittle subordination to the Armed Forces Movement (AFM) and the bourgeois state, which has made this reactionary mobilization possible. The Stalinists, revisionists, centrists and reformists in Portugal bear a colossal responsibility for laying the masses open to the counter-revolutionary danger now facing them. The AFM's commitment to maintaining bourgeois order and the capitalist state was always inevitable. In his *History of the Russian Revolution* Trotsky wrote:

'The commanding staff of the army and fleet soon divided into two groups. One group tried to stay in their places, tuning in on the revolution, registering as Social Revolutionaries. Later a part of them even tried to crawl into the Bolshevik camp . . .

'In the long run the majority of the old command were pushed out or suppressed, and only a small part re-educated and assimilated. In a more dramatic form the officers shared the fate of those classes from which they were recruited. An army is always a copy of the society it serves — with this difference, that it gives social relations a concentrated character, carrying both their positive and negative features to an extreme . . .

'To be sure, not only feudal, but also bourgeois and democratic Russia had its representatives in the officers' corps. The war poured into the ranks of the army tens of thousands of petty bourgeois youths in the capacity of officers, military clerks, doctors, engineers.

'These circles, standing almost solid for war to complete victory, felt the necessity of some broad measures of reform, but submitted on the long run to the reactionary command. Under the Tsar they submitted through fear, and after the revolution through conviction — just as the democracy in the rear submitted to the bourgeoisie. The conciliatory wing of the officers shared subsequently the unhappy fate of the conciliatory par-

ties — with this difference, that at the front the situation developed a thousand times more sharply. In the Executive Committee you could hold on for a long time with ambiguities; in the face of the soldiers it was not so easy.'

And again, in an article written on July 30, 1936 on the situation in Spain, Trotsky wrote:

'It is naive to complain that the Spanish republicans or the Socialists or the communists foresaw nothing, let something slip. It is not at all a question of the perspicacity of this or that minister or leader, but of the general direction of the policy. 'The workers' party that enters into a political alliance with the radical bourgeoisie by that fact alone renounces the struggle against capitalist militarism. Bourgeois domination, that is to say, the maintenance of private property in the means of production, is inconceivable without the support of the armed forces for the exploiters.

'The officers' corps represents the guard of capital. Without this guard, the bourgeoisie could not maintain itself for a single day. The selection of the individuals, their education and training, make the officers as a distinctive group uncompromising enemies of socialism. Isolated exceptions change nothing. That is how things stand in all bourgeois countries. The danger lies not in the military braggarts and demagogues who openly appear as fascists; incomparably more menacing is the fact that at the approach of the proletarian revolution the officers' corps becomes the executioner of the proletariat.

'To eliminate four or five hundred reactionary agitators from the army means to leave everything basically as it was before. The officers' corps, in which is concentrated the centuries-old tradition of enslaving the people, must be dissolved, broken, crushed in its entirety, root and branch. The troops in the barracks commanded by the officers' caste must be replaced by the *people's militia*, that is, the democratic organization of the armed workers and peasants. There is no other solution.

'But such an army is incompatible with the domination of exploiters big and small. Can the republicans agree to such a measure? Not at all. The Popular Front government, that is to say, the government of the coalition of the workers with the bourgeoisie, is in its very essence a government of capitulation to the bureaucracy and the officers. Such is the great lesson of the events in Spain, now being paid for with thousands of human lives.

' "But we've got to have an army," repeat the Socialist and communist leaders, "Because we must defend our democracy and with it the Soviet Union against Hitler!" After the lesson of Spain, it is not difficult to foresee the consequences of this policy for democracy as well as for the Soviet Union. Once they have found a favourable moment, the officers' corps, hand in hand with the dissolved fascist leagues, will assume the offensive against the working masses, and if victorious, will crush the miserable remnants of bourgeois democracy and extend their hands to Hitler for a common struggle against the USSR'.

But in addition to the guidance from Marxist theory, which is indispensable in conducting a revolution, the clear evidence available in Portugal left no doubt as to the nature of the Armed Forces Movement and where it was heading. On the one hand, the AFM has shown a frequent deliberate paralysis when it has wished to turn a blind eye to what is going on, such as the two right-wing coup attempts of September 28 and March 11, the fascist pogroms against left-wing organizations in the north over the past month, the non-prosecution of hundreds of thousands of former fascist officials, and the letting out of jail even of the hated PIDE secret police officers put behind bars by the working class. On the other hand, the AFM has intervened when it suited its general counter-revolutionary strategy, such as deciding to stay in NATO, to re-open the stock exchange, to prevent wholesale occupation and confiscation of landed estates and capitalist property, and to frustrate the building of soviets, the

taking of power, and the drawing up of a nationwide socialist economic plan.

But throughout these 16 months of obstructing the revolutionary process, the bourgeois officer caste has been protected by the left cover provided for them by the Stalinists, the revisionists, the centrists and the reformists who all claimed that the 'progressive' wing of the Armed Forces Movement would create the 'socialist revolution'. These middle-class elements clutched at this fictional short cut to socialism out of their own reactionary middle-class prejudices of 'leading' the workers to a new order of things, out of their deep-down contempt for, and fear of, the proletarian masses.

The Stalinists, revisionists, centrists and reformists have gone like willing petty bourgeois lambs to the slaughter, going trustingly along behind the 'progressive' AFM leader of their choice, seeing nothing. Despite being virtually thrown to the fascist mobs in the north to be burned down and done to death, the Communist Party Stalinists even at this late stage persist in covering up for the Armed Forces Movement.

All this took place in a situation where many workers were trying to set up their own organs of control in industry and public services to protect jobs, organize production, purge the old fascist personnel, and establish links with the lower ranks of the Army. But the workers did this, in the towns and on the great landed estates, with political leadership which continually worked to strengthen the bourgeois state against them. Especially the militancy of the working class in defeating the September and March coups, culminating in the expulsion of Spínola, pushed the Stalinists and reformists further along the road of reaction.

Internationally, the historic victory of the workers and peasants in Vietnam and Cambodia, the rising tide of the struggle in Spain, and the popular risings in Angola and Timor, are driving the Portuguese bourgeoisie to desperation. The same struggles confirm the counter-revolutionary role of the Stalinist bureaucracy, which seeks above all to protect itself from the world revolution, Portugal included, by working more intimately with the bourgeoisie. The elections to the Constituent Assembly, giving a massive majority to the parties of the working class, testified once again to the will of the masses for power and a socialist solution. This is the great historic question behind the present crisis and the emergence of the Bonapartist threat, it is the latest desperate answer of the bourgeoisie to the objective fact that there is no solution to Portugal's crisis except the proletarian revolution and workers' power, as one of the first steps in the world revolution.

The 'triumvirate' of military men, Gonçalves, Costa Gomes and Carvalho, is the sixth government of the Portuguese capitalist state in only 16 months. Virtually every combination has been tried, to provide a political legitimization for the consolidation of the bourgeois state after Fascism. At all times, the AFM has effectively controlled the state power. The Social Democrats, now shouting about parliamentary democracy, were no less prominent than the Stalinists in supporting the rule of the AFM and accepting government office under it. They both saw and still see the AFM as the most reliable bulwark against revolution. They both supported the 'institutionalization' of the Armed Forces Movement as the best guarantee against the revolutionization of the ranks of the Army. They both connived at the illegalization of smaller left parties, particularly the MRPP.

The Socialist leaders' later protests about the persecution of the MRPP only arose because of their own difficulties over the *Republica* newspaper affair. But they have never dropped their support for the AFM to continue to play the leading and dominating role in the government and the state. They both willingly signed the 'Pact' with the AFM before the elections to the Constituent Assembly, which actually agreed to absolute power of the military. They are guilty of gross betrayal, in a situation where only leadership, the subjective factor, stood between the working class and power. They ignored the bitter lessons of Chile. They repeated the assurance which Allende and the Chilean Stalinists, backed by Moscow, had given to the Chilean workers: a peaceful, democratic road to socialism is possible and necessary and can be achieved with the loyal support (in this case under the direction!) of the army.

What was actually at stake, and is now the burning, immediate necessity, is the *smashing* of the bourgeois state by the working class organized behind revolutionary leadership. This means a political movement *against* the AFM, who are the backbone of the capitalist state in Portugal. It means a revolutionary party of the Fourth International combatting Stalinism and reformism all along the line, able to build an independent leadership and at the same time offer successfully the united front to all the workers who still support the Stalinists and Social Democrats.

Stalinist propaganda for more than a year has concentrated on the 'unity of army and people'. This means in reality subordination of the working class to the army command, main instrument of the bourgeois state. All the revisionists equivocate on this question of the Armed Forces Movement. The so-called 'United Secretariat' in Paris goes so far as to declare, 'The institutionalization, imposed against the coup d'état, took an objectively contradictory character.' In this way they obscure the essence of the 'institutionalization': the consolidation of military dictatorship with the support of the Stalinists and reformists.

The bourgeoisie could not have remained in power without the Stalinists and their helpers the reformists and centrists. The bourgeois parties proper had lost all support. For the capitalists, everything depended on the army officers and the essential political support of the traditional workers' parties. It was they who turned the workers away from the battle for power and towards 'the battle for production', while they helped the bourgeois to consolidate state power. The Stalinists are still committed to preserving the capitalist order.

In the August 1975 issue of the International Stalinist 'theoretical' organ *World Marxist Review*, a central committee member of the Portuguese CP, Carlos Costa, writes as follows:

'The distinctive aspect of our revolution, as compared with the Chilean, is that the army itself plays the key role, and this is accompanied by the revolutionary movement within the army. The essence of the evolution within the Armed Forces Movement is that the progressive officers prevailed when the reactionary and conservative elements had sought to hold back democratization, prevent economic and social reforms, when these elements opposed the revolutionary process and sought to strike at the revolutionary movement of the armed forces, the working-class movement and the Communist Party. The rout of these elements and defeats of the reactionary attempts of September 28, 1974, and March 11 of this year opened up new opportunities before the Armed Forces Movement and enabled it to take more radical measures.'

The International Socialist centrists in the *Socialist*

Worker of August 23, 1975, attempted to disarm the working class precisely at the moment when Generals Otelio Carvalho and Carlos Fabiao were travelling round the military bases trying to drum up support for a coup attempt. The paper called Carvalho's demagogic COPCON document for reorganizing Portugal under his personal dictatorship 'a much needed rallying point against the right'. At that moment, in fact, Carvalho's document was being 'merged' with the openly counter-revolutionary document of the Melo Antunes group, which is pushing Fabiao forward as the Bonaparte.

To confirm that their hopes and trust lie in finding a 'progressive' officer clique to lead them to the socialist revolution, the middle-class International Socialism group added for good measure: 'The working class, though massively strong, is not yet ready to reach out for power.'

Yet the revisionists, as ever, defend the Stalinists and reformists. Blackburn, representing the 'Mandel' wing of the United Secretariat, organized in the LCI, wrote that: 'In European countries ideological references to an "anti-monopoly strategy" [the Stalinist line] have a sharper edge than elsewhere in Europe.' And the pro-Hansen, pro-SWP wing, the PRT, in the first week in July 1975, produced a leaflet calling for an alliance of workers and the Armed Forces Movement. Their spokesman Foley, of the Socialist Workers Party (USA), not to be outdone by Blackburn, wrote on August 4 last:

'In his news conference on leaving the government, Soares offered a Social-Democratic argument, which while conservative enough in the larger context, had contradictory implications in a poor country like Portugal.' (*Intercontinental Press*, August 4, p. 1109.)

The revisionists of the Pabloite 'Fourth International', while warning against the military dictatorship, erect equally dangerous illusions about progress through the Constituent Assembly. It is clear from their statements on both questions that, as with the Stalinists and the centrists, what is left out of their 'analysis' is the independent revolutionary role of the working class.

On the Carvalho document calling for the abolition of workers parties and their replacement by a combination of the AFM and 'grass-roots democracy', the *Militant* of July 25 writes:

'The move in reality represents an escalation of the offensive by the military to roll back the democratic freedoms won by the masses following the overturn of the Cactano government. It is a scheme to impose tight controls over the entire mass movement. It would convert the mass organizations into brakes upon further development of the revolutionary process. The plan was adopted under the pressure of a deepening economic crisis and the advance of a new wave of strikes, in nationalized industry in particular.'

The analysis leaves out the class's own movement and development. Imposition of the Carvalho plan would sharpen the revolutionary crisis and lead to an all-out struggle for power between the working class and the military officers, requiring the urgent building of a new revolutionary leadership and the taking of power by the working class.

The Militant has another perspective:

'If the CP (i.e. Stalinists) had been interested in establishing a government representative of the workers, it had only to base itself on the Constituent Assembly and call on the delegates there to act in accordance with the clear mandate given them by the voters.'

It would not have been incorrect to insist that the

Stalinist and Socialist leaders carry out the socialist policies on which they were elected. But before a government representative of the workers and carrying out their mandate appears in Portugal, revolutionary soviets will have to be fought for and won. The position of the SWP is that of Kautsky who made an abstraction and a fetish out of 'democracy'. Lenin replied to Kautsky by quoting from Lenin's own December 1917 theses:

'While demanding the convocation of a Constituent Assembly, revolutionary Social-Democracy has from the very beginning of the Revolution of 1917 repeatedly emphasised that a republic of Soviets is a higher form of democracy than the ordinary bourgeois republic with a Constituent Assembly.'

Trotsky replied to Kautsky as follows:

'If the parliamentary regime, even in the period of "peaceful", stable development, was a rather crude method of discovering the opinion of the country, and in the epoch of revolutionary storm completely lost its capacity to follow the course of the struggle and the development of revolutionary consciousness, the Soviet regime, which is more closely, straightly, honestly bound up with the toiling majority of the people, does achieve meaning, not in statically reflecting a majority, but in dynamically creating it. Having taken its stand on the path of revolutionary dictatorship, the working class of Russia has thereby declared that it builds its policy in the period of transition, not on the shadowy art of rivalry with chameleoned parties in the chase for peasant votes, but on the actual attraction of the peasant masses, side by side with the proletariat, into the work of ruling the country in the real interests of the labouring masses. Such democracy goes a little deeper down than parliamentarism.' (*Terrorism and Communism*. Chapter 3)

What the statements of the revisionists amount to is the complete abandonment of Marxism, of Trotskyism. These revisionists are saying that while 'in general' Stalinism and Social Democracy are reactionary, in any particular circumstances they can turn out to be contradictory, even revolutionary in their 'implications'! In this way the vanguard workers and youth are turned away from the *primary* task of constructing the revolutionary, Trotskyist alternative to the Stalinists and reformists.

That is the task to which the LCPR (League for the Construction of the Revolutionary Party, section of the International Committee) is devoted.

After their long months of collaboration with the social-democrats under the wing of the bourgeois and ex-fascists around Spinola and Costa Gomes, the Stalinists then played the dangerous game of politically disorienting the mass of workers who still supported the reformists, as shown in the Constituent Assembly elections. First the Stalinists peddled the illusion that a Popular Front with even right-wing bourgeois could assure the future of the Portuguese revolution. Then came a decisive turning-point. It was clear that the April elections could only stake out the battlefield between the political parties and the underlying class forces. The Stalinists now staked everything on the army itself.

The Socialist Party leaders offered no socialist, revolutionary solution, turning instead to anti-

communism and an alliance with reactionaries who temporarily embraced 'democracy' for their own purposes. A revolutionary party would have made proposals, breaking from the bourgeois parties and the AFM, for defence of democratic rights, jobs and living standards through transitional demands such as workers' control, leading up to the struggle for workers' power, as the basis of a *united front* of workers' parties, who had shown they had a majority in the elections! Such a proposal would have united the working class and isolated Soares and the right wing in the course of the struggle.

But Stalinism could not take such a course, the revolutionary implications of which are the negation of the policies of the bureaucracy and its 'European security pact'. Instead, the Stalinists ran beneath the cover of the budding Bonapartes in the AFM, so that today they stand forward as accomplices in the growth of reaction, which if it proves successful, will then turn harshly against the Communist Party itself, as in Chile, and as is already happening in the north.

The understanding of this role of Stalinism, and the training and education of a Trotskyist cadre, able to apply all these great lessons from the history of the revolutionary movement, is the first prerequisite of the urgent transformations which are now historically necessary in Portugal. The objective basis for these charges is the unwavering strength in battle of the Portuguese workers and the world struggle of the working class. The bourgeoisie cannot assure its rule without a return to fascism; but the working class will not permit this without a struggle to the death. It remains absolutely necessary to pose to the Communist Party and the Socialist Party that they break immediately with the bourgeois parties, the state machine, and the Armed Forces Movement.

The united working class must be mobilized to support a programme carried forward by the majority elected last April: immediate release of all left wing political prisoners and repeal of all repressive legislation against the organization and expression of opinion of working class parties; nationalization under workers' control of all large concerns and the land; operation of the great landed estates as collectives; dissolution of the standing army and formation of workers' and peasants' militias, linked to the factory committees; immediate support for the liberation force in Angola and Timor, and unconditional independence; a foreign policy of break from NATO and support to workers' struggles everywhere, particularly in Spain; the creation of workers', peasants' and soldiers' soviets in opposition to the AFM and the bogus Constituent Assembly.

The International Committee of the Fourth International calls upon its sections in all countries to work for actions of international solidarity with the Portuguese working class against all attempts from the side of reaction, and against all intervention from Spain and the NATO powers!

Workers Press August 30 1975

No way forward but revolutionary road!

DECLARATION OF THE LIGA OBRERA COMUNISTA (LOC), SPANISH SECTION OF THE ICFI, ON THE CRISIS IN THE MOTOR INDUSTRY AND THE STRUGGLE OF SEAT WORKERS

- *General Strike now until Franco is brought down!*
- *Nationalization without compensation, under workers' control of SEAT and of the whole motor industry!*

THE SEAT workers, through their strike of now more than two months duration, are giving a profound rebuff to the miserly wage rise granted by the 'arbitration' of the agreement and similarly are giving their response to the wage-cut which is involved in the plans for regulating work which cuts out 31 work days. Also the workers of FASA-Renault, of Authi, etc., have recently gone on strike against their miserable agreements. But what causes more concern is *job security*, the prospect that in a short time many workers in the industry face the sack as this crisis in the motor industry continues.

The powerful reply given by the workers however lacks a leadership worthy of them. In the fascist CNS (the official state trade union), the workers have been faced with leaders who, far from defending their interests, approve of the plan for regulating work in SEAT or Renault and who have the cheek to propose the buying of Authi by General Motors so as to save jobs! From the Stalinists in the leadership of the illegal Workers' Commissions at SEAT (who, at the same time, figure amongst the representatives of the fascist CNS), the workers have only had words. The Stalinist actions are designed to *hold back the struggle and to convince workers of how little can be done*. Crass lies, like denying the profound crisis in SEAT and the whole motor industry, are told. From the centrist groups, SEAT workers have merely had 'revolutionary phrases' which resolve not one of their problems.

It is the lack of a really revolutionary leadership in SEAT which prevents the tremendous struggle of the workers from being crowned with success. The LOC, pledged to build this new revolutionary leadership, presents to you, SEAT workers, the only way to take the struggle to victory. That the LOC can do this is by no means a question of chance. As the Spanish section of the International Committee of the Fourth International, the LOC can today put forward the only way to victory because it embodies all the advances, from Marx and Engels up to the present Marxists. The most scrupulous analysis and struggle in all the experiences of the international working class, for the defence of the true interests of the entire working class, are the starting point. These

interests, which distinguish the working class from all other classes, and which make it the only revolutionary class in society, are those of socialism.

The crisis within the motor industry is world-wide as is the general crisis of capitalism. What is at its base is the accumulation of large quantities of fictitious capital throughout the period of the post-war boom. The collapse of the stock-exchanges throughout the world expresses precisely this: that the vast quantities of accumulated capital cannot obtain sufficient profit to stay in business. But the crisis is emerging first of all in the motor industry — and also in building, textiles and the hotel and tourist trade — because of the reduction of demand for cars. If we have in mind that last year, in Spain, real wages only increased by approximately 2 per cent we will have an explanation of why it is that the products which are closest to the consumer are those which go into crisis first.

In all capitalist crises it has been the case that, on the one hand, thousands of workers are jobless and, on the other, a vast amount of commodities are unsold and are destroyed and finally, vast quantities of capital are destroyed. But the present crisis is much more profound than previous capitalist crises, precisely because they have never managed to accumulate such quantities of fictitious capital. The destruction of capital necessary to bring back a minimum of stability to the system — so that all capital can command a sufficient rate of profit — is enormous. And enormous too is the unemployment and destruction of commodities which the capitalists are preparing so as to bring the system back into equilibrium.

The crisis in the motor industry then is merely the beginning of the general crisis of capitalism. While the system remains which regulates its production on the basis of the greatest profit and not on that of the fulfilment of social needs, there will be no solution to the crisis. Thus, as far as it concerns the motor industry, the organization of production so as to obtain the maximum profit has brought about a situation where cars are being produced in a greater quantity than the consumers can buy. For example, in Spain, from January to September 1974, SEAT raised production by 12 per cent whilst its sales rose only 2 per cent. Chrysler reduced its production by 5 per cent whilst its sales dropped by 10 per cent. Authi reduced its production by 14 per cent whilst its sales dropped by 33 per cent. But the same is happening in all countries. Thus in Italy, Fiat, after cutting 20 work-days in December,

now says that it will cut its production to only a million vehicles this year, that is almost half its productive capacity. In the US from an annual production of 10 million vehicles they have gone to 7.6 million vehicles, and already more than 10 per cent of the 700,000 workers in the industry have been sacked. Chrysler is the most affected and is in a critical financial state. In Britain Ford has already sacked almost 2,000 white-collar workers which gives warning of the coming sacking of manual workers. British-Leyland, with losses for 1974 of 3,000 million pesetas, is on the edge of collapse and its chairman has said that he can now no longer guarantee work for the 160,000 workers in the firm. In France only the loan of 6,000 million pesetas by the government has saved Citroen from bankruptcy. And so on. . .

In this situation the workers of SEAT, FASA-Renault, Chrysler, Authi, etc., must not believe that the problems are going to be overcome by means of a simple plan to regulate work which cuts out a few work-days. The crisis is going to get worse as, one after another, all sections of industry are affected. Massive lay-offs are in store this year of 1975 for the motor workers and for many others.

The profound two-month struggle of the SEAT workers has not had the leadership it deserves. The Stalinists who lead the Workers' Commissions in SEAT, far from condemning the fascist CNS for accepting short-time-working, have worked closely with the official union. If representatives have resigned (60 of the 110 representatives resigned because the CNS refused to allow a mass meeting of SEAT workers) it has merely been so as to channel the strong anti-CNS feelings of the workers into electing the 'best ones' in the coming May trade union elections. In this way the alliance which the Stalinists are maintaining with the CNS so as to destroy and defeat all the struggles, is made stronger. What is more, by limiting the struggle to the economic demands of the agreement and not decisively opposing the short-time working, the Stalinists are trying to bind SEAT workers hand and foot in the face of the imminent threat of massive sackings. (Already on the pretext of punishment for striking, 400 workers have been sacked.)

The SEAT workers, under Stalinist leadership, have lost ground through the loss of 30 work-days (with the consequent cut in wages). Don't let them come with stories that the wages are not going to drop! The ridiculous wage increase of 35,000 pesetas a year doesn't even restore the buying power of wages eroded by the 18-per-cent rise in prices in 1974 (18 per cent in 'official' figures). To win this struggle, the SEAT workers will have to bring *politics* into the struggle. This struggle cannot be won by being limited to mere economic demands.

The only policy the Stalinists can put forward is that of the pact with the capitalists, the Pact for Freedom and the Democratic Junta and the Assembly of Catalonia. Can the SEAT workers resolve their problems by sitting round the table with the same capitalists who are attacking them? The first thing to do is to reject the fascist CNS by electing a committee in each workshop with a central committee elected for all of SEAT to really speak for the workers and to lead the struggle. This elected committee, as well as all the claims put forward for the agreement (6,000 pesetas, 40-hour week, 30 days' holidays), must demand a monthly sliding scale of wages so that wages do not lose their buying power.

Secondly this elected committee must call on all workers in Spain to support the SEAT struggle with a General Strike with the political aim of bringing Franco down in

the course of it and winning back the trade unions that Franco robbed us of in 1939 and which we now vitally need to defend ourselves from capitalist attacks.

Thirdly, since the firm neither wants nor can meet the demands of the workers nor even guarantee their jobs, it is necessary to demand the nationalization of SEAT without compensation.

Fourthly, they must demand workers' control of the accounts and production plans of SEAT once it is nationalized.

Fifthly the SEAT workers, together with those of Authi, FASA-Renault, Chrysler, etc., who are also threatened with massive lay-offs, must demand the nationalization without compensation of the whole motor industry to be placed under workers' control so as to finish with the anarchy which brings about the situation where each privately-owned firm producing for its own profit produces more cars than they can sell as a whole with the consequence of an imminent threat of massive sackings.

However, it is obvious that Franco's government will allow neither nationalization nor workers' control of the whole motor industry. Will the bourgeois provisional government proposed by the Stalinists allow it? No. Only a workers' government prepared to carry out a socialist programme which can nationalize the motor industry and place it under workers' control. The nationalization of SEAT and of the whole motor industry under workers' control, which is the only solution to the present crisis of the industry, demands a government prepared to apply a socialist programme. Under capitalism, this nationalization under workers' control will not be allowed: the banks, private property, would refuse the necessary credits; the capitalist state would refuse the aid which it now gives hand over fist to all the capitalists in crisis; the other private firms would deny the necessary raw materials for production, etc. Thus, together with nationalization under workers' control of the motor industry, the nationalization of all the banks and all the big firms in the country, so as to establish a planned economy in line with social needs and not based on private profit for the few, is necessary.

What the crisis of the motor industry and the SEAT struggle pose then is none other than the question of power. If the capitalists, in order to continue existing, must sack massively, cut the wages, destroy commodities and machines, etc., they must be replaced in government by workers who, through a planned socialist society, will guarantee full employment and the satisfaction of the just demand of maintaining and increasing the buying power of wages. The SEAT workers and those of the whole motor industry must demand of their leadership in the workers' commissions that they put right in front a General Strike to bring Franco down and the socialist programme necessary to deal with the crisis in the industry and the general crisis of capitalism.

The Stalinists who lead the SEAT workers' commissions refuse to do so because of their pact with the bourgeoisie and the fascist CNS, and because of their defence of private property and their defence of capitalist profits. The LOC, committed to the struggle to build a new revolutionary leadership to bring about a socialist programme, is the only organization to point out the way to defend the right to work and a living wage.

Workers: to defend your wages and employment join the Workers Communist League (Liga Obrera Comunista)!

January 10, 1975

Peruvian Trotskyist deported!

Since this statement was published we have learnt that Comrade Barrio has been exiled to Venezuela by the Peruvian authorities as a result of protests made by friends and relatives about his illegal imprisonment. If he had been kept in jail his life would have been in danger.

In a recent letter Comrade Barrio describes tersely the methods adopted by this Stalinist-supported regime against militant workers and Trotskyists:

'It seems that the order to leave the country arrived just in time to prevent the tortures from getting worse. I was blindfolded and with my arms tied behind my back, suffered severe fist blows in my back and stomach, was dragged by my hair round the floor, and suffered some kicks etc. during maybe two or three hours approximately ...

'The days before I had directly witnessed tortures, particularly every night against common and political prisoners. I must say I've made some recruits for the cause in the *calabazo* [a freezing jail] no more than 5 x 6 yards wide where 51 workers, students and slum dwellers were being held.'

As the Liga Comunista statement makes clear the principal reason for the brutal repression of the working

class by the Velasco dictatorship is the continued support which the Peruvian capitalists receive from Peruvian and international Stalinism.

As in Portugal the more the Stalinist leaders follow the Moscow line and obediently prostrate themselves before the so-called 'progressive militarists' the more they encourage the arrogance and bestiality of the military and police, strengthen the capitalist state and open the door to bloody military coup.

The deportation of Comrade Barrio if left unchallenged will constitute a sinister threat to the basic rights of Peruvian workers and an incitement to the *gorilas* of the military to execute a Chilean-type coup. The fight to prevent such a prospect is inseparable from the campaign to lift his deportation, release all left-wing political prisoners and build the revolutionary leadership in Peru.

The International Committee of the Fourth International therefore calls on all workers and Communist Party members to demand that Comrade Sergio Barrio's deportation be lifted unconditionally and that the Peruvian Communist Party leaders immediately cease their political connivance with the reactionary anti-working class dictatorship of Velasco.

Statement by the Political Committee of the Liga Comunista, Peru

ON FRIDAY July 18, as he was walking down a street in the town of Pescador, where poor fishermen had just carried out housing occupations, the thugs of the dictatorship violently seized on Comrade Sergio Barrio, leading member of the Liga Comunista.

The life of Comrade Sergio Barrio is in grave danger. All the military dictatorship's hatred of the working class and of our party will undoubtedly be unleashed against him.

We affirm before the labour movement that the arrest of our comrade is not just one more act of repression. The serious political and economic conditions in which his arrest has taken place are not the same as those in which previous arrests of workers' leaders and members of our party took place.

Today, the country is practically going under in one of the worst economic bankruptcies in its history. The fantastic foreign debt has put Velasco's Bonapartist government totally at the mercy of the decisions of imperialism: it is the end of seven years of Bonapartist demagoguery carried out on the basis of a fantastic foreign debt and the subsidy of imports of almost all basic products, as well as subsidies to industry.

The possibility of the dictatorship increasing or even maintaining exports (copper, sugar, cotton, fishmeal, oil

etc.) to resist the crisis has ended abruptly today with the fall in raw material prices, resulting from the world depression.

The dictatorship's recent economic measures — price increases and wage control — are dramatic evidence of its servility towards the directives of the World Bank, and its readiness to throw the population into mass starvation.

In these conditions, decisive turns in the class struggle in the country will, in the coming weeks and months, bring about the greatest uprising of workers and peasants ever known.

The Velasco government is totally unprepared to meet the fury of the masses. The working class, the peasantry and the youth are not at all willing to be plunged into the mass starvation which is the perspective of the military dictatorship and imperialism.

The determination of the working class to struggle today is clearly shown in the general strike carried out by the workers of Arequipa. The Arequipa events are the prelude to the national General Strike which will bring down the Velasco dictatorship.

Relations between the classes have already undergone a definitive break which cannot be salvaged by reformism. Economic conditions now give not the least ground for

reformism and conciliation. The country is marching inexorably towards civil war.

What is on the agenda is to prepare the struggle for power by the working class. This is why Stalinism and the reactionary military have launched a struggle to the death to smash the revolutionary process now under way.

The only reason for the 'air display' over Chorrillos beach on Sunday July 20 was to put fear into the population. Watched by thousands of local people, the Peruvian Air Force planes gave an exhibition of their capacity for massacre. So that there should be no doubt about the aim of this demonstration and the preparations it implied, the reactionary minister Gilardi announced to journalists that the 'aims' of the demonstration were:

'To entertain the public and acquaint them with the power of their Air Force . . . They will get to know certain aspects of it, of what it is capable of doing, domestically as well as abroad, to suppress any problem which may arise.' (*Expresso*, July 21, 1975.)

Only pacifist reformists who have sold out to the bourgeoisie can hide the reactionary preparations of the military from the working class. The reactionary military are carefully preparing for another Chile. But to travel this road it is indispensable for them to reorganize the Armed Forces, which are now divided. It is necessary for the military to paralyze the working class for long enough to take control of the situation, which today is uncontrollable.

This criminal task will be left entirely in the hands of the Stalinist leaders, the revisionists and the centrist groups. They will be mainly charged with preventing the workers and peasants from facing the approaching struggle as a struggle for power.

As at the time of February 5 [the strike of the Civil Guard in Lima initially suppressed by the Army and the Stalinists], they will place themselves on the side of the generals and accuse any working-class offensive threatening the stability of the bourgeoisie of being an APRA-CIA provocation.

The counter-revolutionary apparatus of the Soviet bureaucracy is today playing all its cards for the counter-revolution on an international scale. The reactionary forces of international Stalinism are prepared to play the role of accessories to the police and to the blackest dictatorships. As the International Committee of the Fourth International has shown (see *Comunismo*, No. 137), in Portugal the Stalinists have played an active role alongside the police, in the jailing and torturing of the Maoist groups opposed to the dictatorship, and the repression of the Socialist press.

This degenerate practice of the international Stalinist movement is not new. It was the same in Spain in the 1930s, where the work of the KGB culminated in the murder of Andres Nin, leader of the centrist POUM, and of other oppositionist workers' leaders.

Today, the opponents of Stalinism in Portugal and Peru face the threat of physical liquidation, and it is done not on the 'pretext' of defending the dictatorship of the proletariat, but on behalf of a reactionary military dictatorship. The Stalinists have made themselves the unpaid informers and strike breakers for the military dictatorships of Portugal and Peru.

But as in Chile, once the left is eliminated and the revolutionary leaders are assassinated, the military dictatorship will turn against those who act as its servants: the Stalinists. The Stalinist leadership of the PCP and the CGTP [the Stalinist-dominated trade union federation],

has publicly declared its unequivocal support for the starvation measures by the dictatorship. The Stalinist leaders, conscious of the absolutely reactionary nature of these measures and of the absolute hostility with which workers will receive them, have already begun the filthy work of trying to smash the workers.

In the first place, they have begun a campaign to divide and destroy the independent trade unions and union democracy. In FETIMP [the metal workers' union], the Stalinist leader Jose Chavez threatened to divide the union, stating: 'We are proposing to restructure the FETIMP and of course to carry out an ardent struggle to liquidate all the various brands of ultra-lefts once and for all.' (*Unidad*, May 23, 1975, p. 15.)

In the civil construction union they have proceeded in the most cynical manner to divide the Balnearios section, where workers' opposition is concentrated.

In Marcona, in the most cowardly fashion, they gave the keys of the union offices up to the police!

On Thursday July 17 the Stalinist traitors Saavedra and Raminrez in a meeting of the South Balnearios committee, 'denounced' the class front (the centrists' trade union front) as 'an agency of APRA and the CIA'.

This conscious, premeditated campaign by the Stalinists reached its highest point with the July 18 number of their paper *Unidad* (Unity), which renews the campaign against the Liga Comunista, accusing it of being 'an agent of the CIA'. On the same day, comrade Sergio Barrio was arrested by the police. A coincidence?

We are completely sure that the Stalinists are now playing the role of police informers and collaborators in Portugal, and in the repression of our party in Peru. On March 15, 1973, after a long slander campaign against our party, in *Unidad* No. 426 the Stalinist agent Pompeyo Mares (a well-known leader of the Peruvian Communist Party) denounced comrade Sergio Barrio by name.

Was it coincidence that just 48 days later comrade Barrio was arrested by the thugs of State Security, tortured, jailed and hauled before a military tribunal together with other comrades? We are sure that it was not.

But the informing done by these Kremlin agents does not end there. A year later, in February 1974, in the Bulletin of the Lima Regional Committee of the Peruvian Communist Party, the police fingering recurred:

'The Liga Comunista is tied to the group of the Englishman Healy, leader of the SLL, a section of the International Committee of the Fourth International. It is led by, among others, Sergio Barrio.'

This slander campaign was consciously supported by the POMR — connected with the OCI — in its paper, *Revolucion Proletaria* No. 12, where they take on themselves the role of slanderers and servants of the police, saying on page 18:

'This functionary of the bourgeoisie [Barrio was working for the Velasco government on projects to develop . . . the productive forces!] is the caudillo of the Liga.'

The fact that Comrade Sergio Barrio's arrest has exposed the plans of the ruling class and their Stalinist and centrist servants, is no coincidence. It is a resounding demonstration that what lies at the centre of the situation is the question of power, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the urgency of building the revolutionary party: the Liga Comunista.

The Stalinists will oppose the proletarian revolution to the death. If anyone doubts that the Kremlin bureaucracy is preparing for counter-revolution in Peru, they should read

Expresso for July 18, where they will find the following information:

'Fernandez Maldonado and Arias Graziani are seeing Kosygin today in Moscow.'

Should we be so ingenuous as to believe that they are only discussing 'trade agreements'? NO. They are preparing the COUNTER-REVOLUTION. After the economic measures the dictatorship has definitely no political future; no trade agreement could save it. What kind of agreement can F. Maldonado (the 'leftist' in the dictatorship) be making in Moscow?

With Stalinism the bourgeoisie will play its last card in the stakes for survival, as it did in Chile. Our position has been clear throughout and has gone to the heart of the political problems which face the working class today: the struggle for power, the building of the Party, the Liga Comunista and the Juventud Socialista (YS) for this decisive struggle, and the training of our cadre in these basic problems.

By contrast, the Pabloite revisionists of the FIR, in their latest broadsheet (*El Combatiente*, July 3, 1975) show the most conscious, contemptible reformism:

'The working class must be prepared to challenge for power, in the struggle for a Workers and Peasants Government, the struggle for socialism, but [!!!] in a more concrete and immediate sense, the struggle for democratic rights: freedom of assembly, of expression, the restoration of the political rights of the people, etc., etc.'

At a moment in which the bourgeoisie is foundering in a brutal economic crisis there is nothing more criminal and deadly than to foment illusions in the working class about the bourgeoisie's ability to grant 'democratic rights'. The crisis does not make the bourgeoisie hand out concessions to the working class, but prepare its destruction as in the case of Chile.

The task of the moment is not to prepare the working class to receive 'rights' from the bourgeoisie, but to struggle for a Workers and Peasants Government, building the Liga Comunista for the seizure of power. This is arming the working class! The reformist revisers of Trotskyism are completely unable to defeat Stalinism and dictatorship.

The struggle to defend the trade unions, workers' democracy and the political bodies of the working class against the plans of the dictatorship and Stalinism can only be carried out, from now on, by building the party, the Liga Comunista, a revolutionary Trotskyist leadership.

This struggle cannot be confined within the limits of syndicalism. It is impossible to defeat Stalinism and dictatorship if we do not carry forward a political struggle for power, for the dictatorship of the proletariat. Stalinism will try to liquidate the political independence of the trade unions, integrating them in corporatist forms into the

apparatus of the bourgeois state. This is the central point of our struggle against Stalinism.

Any bourgeois liberal will be prepared to recognize the class struggle, but only Marxists extend the concept of the class struggle to the need for the dictatorship of the proletariat, for the expropriation of the bourgeoisie. The struggle to defend the working class against Stalinism and dictatorship is already under attack from the revisionists and centrists in the name of recognizing 'the interests of the workers', 'democratic rights', by so-called 'class fronts'. This is pure bourgeois syndicalism, pure liberal reformism.

The struggle against Stalinism will be possible only through building the Party in the trade unions, politically training cadres, relating the demands of the workers to the need for building the revolutionary party to struggle for power, the dictatorship of the proletariat and the expropriation of the bourgeoisie.

The Political Committee of the Liga Comunista makes an urgent call to the party membership, sympathizers and friends of the party to redouble the struggle for the overthrow of the military dictatorship and a Workers' and Peasants' Government, to redouble the struggle for the recruitment of cadres, to increase the circulation of *Comunismo* and the party funds.

The Political Committee of the Liga Comunista calls on the working class and the youth to undertake the defence of the life of comrade Sergio Barrio, today threatened by the dictatorship, issuing public communiques and statements in every union, every committee, every branch, to denounce the dictatorship's murderous intentions, and the collaborationist, informing work the Stalinist leaders of the PCP and CGTP are carrying out for the police.

We call for a General Strike to overthrow the dictatorship, and for a Workers' and Peasants' Government.

We call on all genuine Communist Party militants to expel the filthy Stalinist cabal from their party — the del Prados, Espinozas, Gamarras, etc. — the real enemies of the working class and the revolution.

We call on all those workers, youth, students and peasants who are ready to carry out this campaign to join the Liga Comunista and build the only revolutionary alternative capable of defeating Stalinism and the bourgeoisie and taking power.

- Free Sergio Barrio now!
- General Strike to bring down the dictatorship!
- For a Workers' and Peasants' Government!
- Build the Liga Comunista!
- Build the Young Socialists!

Lima, July 21, 1975

Reprinted from *Workers Press* 19 August 1975.

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WHITHER THORNETT?

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A call to action! Defend basic rights!

STATEMENT OF THE WORKERS LEAGUE CENTRAL COMMITTEE, SEPTEMBER 9, 1975

THE full strength of the working class must now be mobilized in mass struggles to smash the attacks of the bankers and their government on trade unions, living standards and basic rights.

The wildcat of coal miners, the strike movement in San Francisco, the wave of teacher strikes and the preparations by New York City teachers for a shut-down of the school system represent a new stage in the class struggle.

Millions of workers will now be forced into strikes, factory occupations and direct battles with the capitalist state. What will be posed to workers in all these struggles — over wages, working conditions and fundamental principles of trade unionism — will be the historic necessity of conducting a political struggle for working class power.

This development is dictated by the economic crisis. What is now happening in New York City — the imminent default on billions of dollars in outstanding debts — is the sharpest expression within the United States and internationally of the collapse of the post-war inflationary credit system and the plunge into economic slump.

New York City faces an operating deficit of \$886 million during the month of September alone. Within the next 10 months, the city must repay close to \$4 billion to the banks in maturing short-term debts. These figures total up to economic catastrophe. The Wall Street bankers have refused point-blank to advance new loans which they know the city will not be able to repay.

Wall Street is demanding that the price for this massive bankruptcy be paid by the working class. With the bankers of 'Big MAC' calling the shots, thousands of workers in virtually every city agency have been thrown into the streets. More than a quarter-million city jobs have been lost in the last year.

The mass layoffs of hospital workers, welfare workers, firemen and sanitationmen mean the destruction of the most essential social services. As far as the bankers are concerned, workers and the middle-class population must accept unanswered fire alarms, garbage-infested streets, the breakdown of emergency health services and the further deterioration of the already overcrowded and inadequate school system.

A 50-cent transit fare has been added to the crushing weight of inflation. Youth, who can find no jobs, are being told that they will have to pay tuition to get a college education.

But this is not all. In order to break the strength of the working class, the banks and their political hacks in the Democratic and Republican parties are out to smash the unions. Just three weeks ago, Mayor Beame of New York signed into law a bill which will give him the power to

withhold from city workers salary increments, cost-of-living increases and salary increases which were to go into effect last July 1.

He has said that he will impose these cutbacks unless unions 'voluntarily' accept reductions worked out with District Council 37 President Victor Gotbaum and other union bureaucrats.

This law marks a turning point. It aims to put an end to the most basic right of the trade unions: to freely negotiate a contract. The passage of the law was dictated by the Ford government and Wall Street which has repeatedly declared that the city must 'restore investor confidence' by proving that it is capable of driving the working class back.

The city is now threatening to use this law against New York teachers, whose contract expires September 9 and who have refused to accept a wage freeze. Albert Shanker, president of the United Federation of Teachers, spelled out the impact of this law when he wrote that: 'the New York City law doesn't merely weaken — it *totally destroys* the process of collective bargaining by asserting that one of the signatories to a contract has the right to break it.'

Shanker adds: 'Can there be any doubt that, all across the United States, other cities, school districts, state agencies and counties will argue that if it is legal and proper to abrogate contracts in a "labour town" like New York City, it is legal and proper everywhere else.'

These attacks reveal the revolutionary content of the struggles now facing workers. If the unions cannot negotiate wages and conditions for members, then they are no longer unions. In their place, workers are threatened with the direct intervention of the state, acting in the interests of finance capital, seeking to abolish the independence of workers' organizations.

This means that every struggle is essentially a political fight against the capitalist state. This fight immediately draws the working class into a struggle for power. The myth of 'freedom of choice' and the two-party system has been completely shattered by this crisis. The social and economic foundations for bourgeois democracy have been absolutely undermined.

Every New York worker can now plainly see that it is the bankers who make the decisions and the Democrats and Republicans who carry them out. The bankers have pushed Beame aside and have moved to take direct control over the administration of the city. No worker ever voted for the Chase Manhattan and Felix Rohatyn the banker to run the city. But they are the ones giving orders. They are discarding the mask of democracy and preparing the road to dictatorship.

It is the capitalists' weakness which drives them to turn

toward dictatorship. The same ruling class which is seeking to drive back workers here has suffered massive defeats at the hands of the Indochinese working class and peasantry. This was a victory for all workers. The American imperialists are now trying to prepare counter-revolution in Portugal, throughout Europe, Africa and in Latin America.

With the trade unions under attack, with the bankers openly dictating the policies of the capitalist parties, how can the working class defend itself properly without building its own party — a labor party based on the trade unions?

A solution to this crisis cannot be found by voting for any of the capitalist parties. What is now at issue is a decisive break with the Democrats and Republicans and the building of a labor party to unleash against the capitalists the unbroken strength of the working class. The broadest and most militant struggles uniting every section of the labor movement must be conducted to defend jobs, living standards and basic rights.

We call on all workers to take the offensive against the wild inflation being inflicted by the capitalists by driving ahead with their just wage demands. All the hypocritical appeals for working class sacrifice and patriotism deserve nothing but contempt. While they tell workers to 'bite the bullet,' the bankers collect exorbitant interest rates and bleed New York City white.

The teachers are now in the forefront of this struggle. A teachers strike will disrupt the bankers' plans to strangle New York City. Every worker must support the demands of the United Federation of Teachers for a 25 per cent wage increase and defense of union conditions in the schools.

The teachers strike must be the rallying point for mobilizing maximum unity and support within the labor movement for a fight against the 'Big MAC' dictatorship. Albert Shanker must be forced to carry out his pledge to shut the schools when the contract expires and not to compromise on the contract demands. He must be called upon as a member of the AFL-CIO Executive Council to rally the full support of the national trade union movement.

At the same time, teachers can place no confidence in him to carry out this struggle. This is because Shanker, like the rest of the trade union bureaucracy, is an enthusiastic advocate of the reactionary alliance with the Democratic Party. In no essentials is Shanker different from the traitor Victor Gotbaum who accepted a wage freeze and who has consistently opposed any defense of city workers' wages and jobs. They will not lead a political struggle by the working class to bring down the capitalist government.

The working class is now coming into collision with this bureaucracy that serves as the agent of the capitalists. Workers will not allow their fight to defend hard-won gains to be sabotaged by the Gotbaums, Meanys, and all the bureaucratic friends of the Democratic Party.

This was proven on April 26 in Washington when 70,000 New York City workers drove Hubert Humphrey, Victor Gotbaum and other assembled politicians and bankers off the speakers' platform in RFK Stadium.

What is required is a new revolutionary leadership in the trade unions that is prepared to go all the way in the fight to construct a labor party, implement socialist policies and prepare for power. *This leadership is the Workers League and its industrial arm, the Trade Union Alliance for a Labor Party.*

The 1976 elections are rapidly approaching. The ruling class choice between the mass unemployment of Ford or the racist anti-labor policies of a Wallace or Jerry Brown is no choice at all. Labor must mobilize for the calling of an emergency Congress of Labor to launch a labor party and run a slate of workers candidates against the capitalist politicians in 1976. Workers must fight for this alternative and for socialist policies to meet the crisis in every trade union.

Workers will not accept mass unemployment, destruction of social services and savage reductions in their living standards.

We demand:

Jobs for all! Establish a 30 hour week at 40 hours pay to provide millions of jobs to the unemployed and youth.

Stop the layoffs! Occupy all factories and job sites threatening to close down.

Elect factory committees to organize the defense of occupied plants and job sites and to fight for the widest support throughout the trade union movement.

Forward with the wage offensive! Workers must defend and improve their living standards. Inflation has already eaten up the gains of more than a decade of struggle. The responsibility for inflation rests entirely with the capitalists, who are using skyrocketing prices to drive back living standards and weaken the working class. Contracts must be reopened for immediate wage increases. Living standards must be protected with a 100 percent cost-of-living escalator clause.

Defend the unions! Repeal all anti-union laws. This can be achieved only through the full industrial and political mobilization of the working class against the government.

Billions for social services! Expenditures for public services must be increased, not slashed. New housing, schools and hospitals must be built. Workers are entitled to free and efficient rapid transit service.

Make the capitalists pay for this crisis! The banks and big business have become leeches on society. The bankers are feeding on massive interest payments while destroying workers' living standards and driving the middle class to ruin.

Nationalize basic industry, big monopolies and the banks and finance institutions with no compensation and under workers' control! Repudiate the interest payments and debt to the banks!

All-out support for a teachers' strike! The fullest support must be built up in every trade union to back the struggle of the teachers. The Young Socialists will rally the youth in support of the teachers in order to unite the struggle of the employed and unemployed against the capitalists.

Down with Beamé! The fight against the puppet of the banks must become the spearhead for an all-out struggle by the entire working class against the Ford-Rockefeller government, the Democrats and the Republicans.

Call a Congress of Labor! Build a Labor Party! Arm the working class with socialist policies!

The fight for these policies is inseparable from the building of a revolutionary leadership. There must be an all-out drive to recruit thousands into the Workers League. Thousands of youth must be mobilized to give revolutionary leadership by building the Young Socialists. We call on all youth to attend the International Youth Assembly in London from November 15 to 22 to build this revolutionary leadership.

We call on all workers, housewives, and youth to join the Workers League.

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