

Marxist Bulletin 4



Labour & Eastern Europe

**Tempo & Tactics in the class
struggle Robert Black**

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* The next issue of Marxist Bulletin will contain a preview of the Labour Party Conference.

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EDITORIAL

LABOUR AND EASTERN EUROPE

Twenty years ago this month, the workers of Hungary and Poland spearheaded national revolts against Stalinist oppression. In Poland, the struggle to establish genuine workers' democracy and national independence was contained, and then betrayed, by the Gomulka leadership. In Hungary, where the break from the Kremlin and its Budapest agents went even further, 'order' could only be restored by the direct intervention of Soviet troops, and the arrest and eventual murder of Gomulka's Hungarian counterparts. But in both cases, the Kremlin only managed to stave off disaster because of the tacit - and even open - support of the main imperialist regimes in the west.

Crocodile Tears

Whilst the Kremlin's troops were pounding proletarian Budapest into submission, British and French imperialist forces embarked on their joint invasion of Suez. In Washington, top government officials let it be known that the USA had decided to take no action against the Kremlin's rape of Hungary, that it considered the presence of Soviet troops in East Europe to be justified on the basis of the terms of the recently-established Warsaw Pact.

Potsdam

Thus was sealed, with the blood of Hungarian workers and Egyptian peasants, the counter-revolutionary pact concluded at Potsdam in the summer of 1945, between Stalin and the leaders of the victorious imperialist powers, Britain and the USA. This deal, no less cynical and reactionary than that between Stalin and Hitler in 1939 has cast its shadow over the subsequent thirty years of class struggle, not only in Europe but throughout the entire world. And no wonder, for its purpose was, and remains, to erect an insurmountable barrier to proletarian revolution on both sides of the divide erected across the heart of Europe in the immediate post-war years.

The contours of the Potsdam agreements soon became visible. In the west, the Stalinists upheld the capitalist order, either by entering bourgeois coalitions, or by supporting them from the outside. In the East, the Kremlin was likewise given a free hand by imperialism, to refashion, in its own image, the territories occupied by the Red Army. The result is the political and social map of Europe that we have today.

However, almost from the very beginning, this new 'holy alliance' against the socialist revolution in Europe encountered stubborn and at times explosive resistance. Only with the greatest difficulty were the spontaneous anti-capitalist movements in the west contained and beaten back. In the East too, the workers and indeed almost the entire populations of the Kremlin's 'sphere of influence' rejected Stalin's drive to convert their nations into a system of 'buffer states' subordinated in every way to Moscow.

Beginnings of the Political Revolution

In 1948, the chain ^{almost} broke - and ^{also} broke - at its weakest link - Yugoslavia. Here the revolt against the Kremlin's domination of E. Europe was, however, not only partially expressed through, but also held back by, the Tito leadership. But then, following the death of Stalin in March 1953, the anti-Kremlin tide gathered momentum, first with the revolt of the East German workers (June 1953) and then, in the USSR itself, with the general strike at the Vorkuta slave camp (August). 1953 also saw a renewal of the class struggle in West Europe, with the French general strike in August, and the mass mobilisation of workers in Western

Germany against re-armament and the integration of the Federal Republic into the imperialist military, political and economic set-up. It was for situations such as this that the Potsdam alliance had been founded. In France, the Stalinists broke the general strike, just as two months before, the authorities in West Berlin, supported by the SPD and trade union bureaucracy, had advised restraint and moderation to the workers battling Soviet troops in the Eastern sector.

In 1956, the same pattern of Kremlin-imperialist collusion was reproduced on a yet grander scale, but both have since been dwarfed by the permanently operating alliance against revolution re-activated by the simultaneous eruption of the anti-Stalinist, political revolution in the east (focused in Czechoslovakia) and the anti-capitalist, social revolution in the West, which opened with the French May-June general strike of 1968.

Despite very serious strategic, as well as tactical problems raised by the general (though by no means universal) falling back in the tempo of the class struggle in 1975-1976, the political framework in which we function has been largely shaped by the most powerful upsurge of the class struggle since the early post-war years. For this very reason, those most threatened by it - (imperialism and its bureaucratic agencies within the workers' movement and the Stalinist-ruled states) are being compelled to seek new ways and means of containing and strangling this movement. This is the origin and purpose of Helsinki and so-called 'detente'; this and no other reason.

Helsinki and 'Peace'

Gathered at Helsinki in the summer of 1975, thirty years almost to the day after the infamous cabal of Stalin, Churchill and Truman, were the leaders of all divided Europe together with those of the USA and Canada. Their agreed aims endorsed in the final declaration, was the preservation of the status quo throughout the continent. All the rest, i. e. 'human rights' etc., is so much window dressing. The representatives of both the Fascist Franco, and the Stalinist Brezhnev, both managed to append their signatures to this document without any qualms. What counts for them is the agreement to preserve the frontiers drawn up and imposed by the Kremlin and imperialism at the end of the last war: frontiers established neither by the actions, nor with the agreement of the workers and peoples of Europe, but over their heads, and against their wishes. Nowhere is this more true than in Germany.

How is the stranglehold of imperialism and the Kremlin on the nations of Europe and above all on its working class, to be broken? The course of the class struggle over the last three decades provides at least some of the answers.

Social Democracy in Eastern Europe

In each case where the workers of Eastern Europe have sought to break free from the Stalinist straitjacket, we have witnessed a spectacular revival of parties or currents linked in some way with social democracy. In 1953, the workers of East Berlin marched against the Kremlin's tanks chanting "Neither with Ulbricht nor Adenauer, but united under Cilenauer." The last named was then leader of the Social Democratic Party in West Germany, the eastern section of which had been forcibly merged with the Stalinist KPD (Communist Party of Germany) in 1946 to form the 'Socialist Unity Party' (SED). In 1956, both in Poland, and even more so in Hungary, old social democrats (whose parties had likewise been absorbed by Stalinist 'mergers' in the mid and late 1940's) became the vehicle of working class opposition to Stalinism. In Hungary, the old social democratic party not only secured legality under the government of Nagy, but entered his coalition as the strongest force in the working class. Meanwhile, the totally discredited 'communist' party had shrivelled up into a wretched bureaucratic

bunk-hole of die-hard Stalinists. When the hermetically sealed lid of Stalinist repression was lifted in Czechoslovakia 12 years later, again the same process took place. Although never legalised as a party, the social democrats were overwhelmed by the flood of working class applicants to join. 180 factory cells were established in the course of the brief 'Prague Spring' of 1968. Many continue to function (illegally of course) to this day.

Sectarian Blinkers

Only the most blinkered sectarian would seek to prove, as indeed the Kremlin did, that this re-activation of social democratic parties is simply a revival of the type of reformist labour parties dominant in the workers' movement in many of the capitalist countries. Indeed, moves are afoot by the leaderships of some of these parties to either weaken or sever altogether the links that the social democratic parties of E. Europe maintain with the Socialist International, a move they have been preparing for 5 years. This is a sure indication that they are regarded by western social democracy as an embarrassment. Those who are seeking trade with Eastern Europe, do not want to be faced with the 'minor' problem of repression of social democratic parties!

When workers, members of an oppressed nation, full of hatred for Stalinism and sensing correctly, that the 'communist' parties of Eastern Europe are incapable of either expressing or defending their interests, turn to social democracy, they do not do so to seek the restoration of capitalism, or from a belief in the efficacy of class collaboration, but because they identify social democracy with democratic rights and democracy rather than a single party state. So it was in Germany in 1953, Poland and Hungary in 1956, and Czechoslovakia in 1968, and so it will be again in the future, wherever the workers of Europe seek a revolutionary road out of the impasse into which Stalinism has forced them.

History has witnessed a previous occasion on which a broad segment of the working class, repelled by the bureaucratic regime and treachery of Stalinism, and at the same time striving to defend their class against the ravages of capitalist crisis, has flowed into social democracy. That period was 1933-1934, when in France, especially, a section of the working class vanguard forced the whole socialist party leftwards in a centrist direction, even to the extent of its leadership being compelled to expel the extreme right wing (the 'Neo Socialists'). Trotsky wrote then that only a formal thinker would equate this given social democratic party with classic reformism. He preferred to designate the SFIO as a centrist party. This process unfolded within a social democratic party, functioning in a capitalist country, where both it and the Stalinist Party enjoyed full bourgeois legality. In Eastern Europe, the various social democratic revivals have in each instance arisen in countries where capitalism has been abolished, and where the Stalinists have enjoyed an almost complete political monopoly. Yet the basic political process is the same. Always, at all times, the working class has sought to advance its struggle by building or rebuilding its traditional mass organisations. But the manner in which this is done is by no means uniform. Often, where a choice of mass organisations is available, not only individual, or advanced workers, but entire layers of the class, will make a conscious choice. But that choice is historically conditioned, and materially limited. So when a worker throws his weight behind votes for, or even joins, one of these two choices presented to him by social democracy and Stalinism, it should not necessarily be construed as an endorsement of the political line or past record of the party of his choice but rather a rejection of one or several aspects of the other. It is in this sense that the revival of social democratic organisations in E. Europe constitutes not only an inevitable stage, but a necessary and healthy step in the destruction of Stalinist political rule by the working class, and the establishment and flowering of workers' democracy. What we as Trotskyists welcome is not the

revival of social democracy, but the political revival of the proletariat which, at this stage, it expressed. Can we exclude, in advance, the centrist evolution of such revived parties and even leaderships? In the light of all that has happened in Eastern Europe since 1953, this would be a terrible mistake; no less serious than the illusion that these formations and leaderships will constitute the forces necessary for the political revolution against Kremlin rule.

Not Simply an Agency

Yes, we know that social democracy, no less than Stalinism, is a counter-revolutionary agency of imperialism within the workers' movement. Yet in Portugal in 1975, the mass of workers fought through its organisation and leadership to bloc the bid of the Armed Forces Movement and its Stalinist allies to liquidate the gains of the revolution of 1974. Has that mobilisation prevented Soares from betraying the mandate given him in two successive elections? By no means. But were those hundreds of thousands of workers and poor farmers and fishermen wrong to exploit the conflict that arose between the Stalinists and the leaders of the PSP over the choice posed by the military rule (decked out with 'revolutionary' rhetoric) or social (in reality, bourgeois) democracy? Many groups claiming the name Trotskyist have already given their answer. They gave it at the time of the 'Republica Affair' when they sided with a Stalinist-Police take-over of a paper of a tendency within the workers' movement. They gave it again later that same year of 1975, when they echoed the Stalinist slander that the PSP was little more than a mask for reviving Portuguese fascism. They further gave it when they greeted the Stalinist-approved plan of the MFA for army-dominated 'popular assemblies' as the beginning of the Portuguese Soviets, whereas in reality it would have, if implemented, led to the liquidation of the independent organisations of the working class - PSP and PCP.

Service to Stalinism

If these sectarians run true to form - and they give us no reason to suppose otherwise - then we can expect them to perform a similar service for the Stalinists in Eastern Europe. We will be told, as we were in Portugal, that of course the Stalinists are bad, but the social democrats are worse. The Stalinists supposedly stand to the left of social democracy, just as the 'Trotskyists' stand to the left of Stalinism. So the social democrats of Eastern Europe are agents of imperialism we will be told, because they are linked to the Second International - which undoubtedly is an agency of imperialism. But so is the Kremlin, and all the parties linked to it. And in the case of the E. European states, it is the Kremlin and its puppet regimes and 'parties', which constitute their chief, in fact sole, imperialist agency. Far from the social democrats performing this service, they are regarded as an embarrassment both to the bureaucrats of the Second International, and imperialism itself.

President Ford, no less, has assured us that the Kremlin does not dominate E. Europe. Even Carter gulped at the brazen cynicism. Under the terms of the Helsinki accords, NATO and Warsaw Pact manoeuvres and exercises are observed by representatives of both alliances. Western newspapers soft pedal stories of oppression in the USSR and E. Europe in order not to disturb the spirit of 'detente'. Yet in the very heart of this divided Europe, in what Ford (no less than Brezhnev) chooses to call 'independent' Poland, the class struggle erupts in defiance of the holy alliance re-enforced at Helsinki. Those workers who by strike and other even more drastic actions, halted not only the Warsaw express, but Gierek's price increases, proved the truth of the proposition contained in the Founding Programme of the Fourth International that 'the laws of history are stronger than the bureaucratic apparatus'.

What We Can Do

We in Britain can contribute in some considerable way to the advance of this and other struggles against the Kremlin if our actions take into account the need of the workers of Eastern Europe to find political means of expression and struggle that are independent of the Kremlin and its oppressing agencies. Already steps have been taken in both the Labour Party and the trade unions to secure the release of anti-Stalinist militants imprisoned for opposing national and religious oppression, and for seeking to organise the working class independently of the Stalinist bureaucracy. The climax of the first stage of this campaign will be the rally in Central Hall, Westminster, on 27th November, to be addressed by among others, the Soviet dissident and former inmate of a psychiatric prison, Leonid Plyushch. (Prominent British Labour Movement figures will also be on the platform). Now the campaign should be both deepened and widened.

The attempt now afoot (to be discussed at the Socialist International Conference on 26-28 November) either to weaken or sever entirely the organisational links of the East European social democratic parties with the Socialist International, must be firmly opposed. Both in Britain and internationally, it constitutes a key part of the drive spearheaded by some of the larger social democratic parties, to subordinate both the individual member parties and the Socialist International as a whole to the politics of Helsinki. Could it be with this end in view that Labour Party Secretary Ron Hayward recently visited Poland, where he met strike-breaker Eduard Gierak? Could it be for this reason that the leading CPSU member Boris Pomonarev is visiting London to meet his opposite numbers in the Labour Party?

The demand and campaign for the legalisation of all workers' parties (specifically in this context, social democratic parties) strikes at the very nerve centre of not only Stalinism, but the imperialism which it serves, together with its social democratic agencies. Each fears proletarian democracy, and the re-unification of the European working class like the plague.

TEMPO AND TACTICS IN THE CLASS STRUGGLE

by

Robert Black*

'Tempo and Tactics' was adopted at the National Conference of the "Bulletin Group", 24-26 July, 1976.

The evaluation of the present stage of the world class struggle, and consequently our tasks as rebuilders of the Fourth International, can only be approached by placing the present in the framework of the past, and by so doing, project forward into the future on the basis of this juxtaposition. We must therefore, in a historical sense, begin with the dawn of the imperialist epoch, and the opening of the general world crisis of capitalism.

In undertaking this necessary task, one which the British movement has neglected for decades, and more recently has been subverted by a 'national Trotskyist' orientation and perspective, it will be essential not only to distinguish between the broad ebbs and flows of the European and world class struggle, but the inner shifts, the molecular changes, within each ebb and flow - to trace the contrary, subordinate ebbs within the flow, and the flows within the dominant ebb. Only on this basis will it be possible to establish the material relationship between strategy and tactics. For just as the general movement of the classes through history and on a world scale exists only in the specific actions of these classes on historically determined national terrains, so the strategy of Bolshevism only comes to life, can only bring the class struggle of the proletariat to its goal of the social revolution, the establishment of its dictatorship leading to the building of a socialist society without a state, through the tactics necessary to each concrete, materially determined stage, phase and moment of the class struggle in each country. And just as surely, the inverse is also true: just as each oscillation in the class struggle, each eddy either to the left or right, fore or back, can only be grasped in its totality as the concrete expression of the overall movement of the class struggle through history on a world level, so tactics assume their correct relationship with one another, and will only even achieve their immediate purpose, when they are developed consciously as steps towards the achievement of strategic tasks.

As a general rule, we can say that opportunism elevates the particular (the ebb within the flow, tactics as distinct from strategy) into a self-sufficient absolute, whilst sectarianism, its mirror opposite, dissolves away the particular into the general (seeing only flow in a period of upturn and inventing it in a phase of ebb, spurning tactics as liquidationism - entry - and counter-posing to them generalised strategy divorced from the class struggle and the consciousness of the proletariat - 'independent parties').

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We begin by making explicit this conception and method, and will seek to apply them throughout, because each deviation from Marxist theory and activity in the history of the international revolutionary movement originated, not in the heads of Kautsky, Stalin, Pablo or Healy (to believe this would be to concede the essential correctness of WRP 'philosophy'), but from fundamental changes in the relations between the class on a world scale; changes that, because of political weaknesses in the vanguard, brought about an increasingly false or distorted balance between the strategy and tactics of the revolutionary movement.

Harmony

In turn, this disruption of the necessary harmony between tactics and strategy (the expression at the level of revolutionary politics of the material, and therefore contradictory, terrain and movement of the class struggle itself) eventually comes up hard against programme, that which is the most concentrated expression of the sum total of Marxist theory and activity, and of the world experiences of the proletariat in its struggle for self-emancipation.

Thus the degeneration of the Second and Third Internationals, and the crisis of the Fourth, are each located in the course of the world class struggle, and in the failure, to different degrees and in different settings to carry out the tasks imposed upon them by the history of mankind. And this, in its turn, is but another form of the problem with which we began - the life-and-death necessity of grasping the movement of the class-struggle in all its dialectical richness, and from this understanding, of being able to project not only a general strategic orientation, but to devise all the necessary steps, through tactics, towards its fulfilment.

In the epoch of imperialist crisis which opened in 1914 with the outbreak of the First World War, the collapse of the Second International, and the decay of the Third into a counter-revolutionary instrument of Kremlin foreign policy, passed through preparatory stages of a period when an ever wider gulf opened up between tactics and strategy, and at a different, though associated, level, between the estimation made by the leadership of the inner relationship of the ebbs and flows of the class struggle, and the realities of the class struggle itself. The Second International, with at its heart, the SPD, imperceptibly adjusted to the peaceful rhythm of the class struggle generated by the economic boom of the two decades that preceded the First World War. When the sharp turn came in 1914, the parliamentary tactic proved itself to have been, in the hands of its leading practitioners, a substitute for a strategy. The leaders of the Second International (with the obvious exceptions of the Bolsheviks and the SPD Lefts) had elevated the ebb into an absolute, and projected it forward indefinitely into the future, likewise postponing in practice, if not in theory, the revolutionary seizure of power. From this flowed their opportunist distortion of the relationship between revolutionary tactics and strategy.

The same is true of the degeneration of the Third Communist International, even though, at its first four Congresses, it raised to unprecedented levels the science of revolutionary tactics and strategy. Each downward step in the decay of the Comintern was marked by an internal crisis in which the leading apparatus elements aligned the parties of the International, not with the basic movement of the class, but the requirements of the factional struggle in the

USSR and, increasingly in its later stages, the dictates of Stalinist foreign policy.

These stages will be enumerated in the course of this document, showing how the shattering of the inner connections between tactics and strategy derived, at each turn, from a false appreciation of the nature of the precise stage reached by the class struggle at a world level, and within each country.

Restore

One of the most pressing tasks of the Bulletin Group, as the British Section of the CCRFI, will necessarily be to restore what we hold to be the Bolshevik conception of tactics and strategy, perverted and nearly destroyed in the British movement by the Healy leadership. In doing so, we will be re-enforcing a continuity that originates with the founding document of the communist movement. In the Communist Manifesto, Marx and Engels began the section 'Proletarians and Communists' with a statement of principles on the relationship between the communist vanguard and the proletariat as a whole:

"The Communists do not form a separate party opposed to other working class parties. They have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole. They do not set up any sectarian principles of their own by which to shape and mould the proletarian movement ..."

The theoretical foundations of these principles is made explicit a little further on:

"The theoretical conclusions of the Communists are in no way based on ideas or principles that have been invented, or discovered, by this or that would-be reformer. They merely express, in general terms, actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, from a historical movement going on under our very eyes."

Marxism, both in its theoretical aspects, and its application as the practical science of proletarian revolution, is a social movement, a 'material force' which 'has gripped the minds of men'. It is this same conception of the relationship between Marxist theory and the class struggle that Trotsky elaborated in his last struggle, that against the Burnham-Schachtman opposition in the SWP:

"Scientific Socialism (Marxism) is the conscious expression of the unconscious historical process; namely, the instinctive and elemental drive of the proletariat to reconstruct society on communist beginnings."

(In Defence of Marxism)

There is therefore a theoretical as well as historical unity between the method of the first Communist programme, drafted by Marx and Engels (even though it was conceived in, and written for, the pre-imperialist stage of capitalism) and the founding programme of our own movement, the Fourth International, which takes as its starting point also, the real movement of the masses, 'going on under our eyes':

"The orientation of the masses is determined first by the objective conditions of decaying capitalism, and second, by the treacherous politics of the old workers' organisations. Of these factors, the first of course is the decisive one! the laws of

his history are stronger than the bureaucratic apparatus ... The strategic task of the next period ... consists in overcoming the contradiction between the maturity of the objective revolutionary conditions and the immaturity of the proletariat and its vanguard ... It is necessary to help the masses in the process of the daily struggle to find the bridge between the present demands and the socialist programme of the revolution. This bridge should include a system of transitional demands, stemming from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion; the conquest of power by the proletariat."

This is the method of the Transitional Programme, the method that brings to life strategy, enables it to live through the development and application of tactics that open up the road to breaking the grip of the apparatus and winning the mass of the working class to the programme of the social revolution. This conception was pioneered by Marx and Engels in the Manifesto, then nearly obliterated in the period of the opportunist decline of the Second International, being kept alive only by Lenin in the Bolshevik faction, Trotsky with his theory and programme of Permanent Revolution, in the SPD, by Rosa Luxemburg, and by James Connolly in Ireland; to be restored at a higher level in the work of the Third and Fourth Congresses of the Communist International. Under the twin scourges of Stalinist reaction in the USSR, and imperialist reaction in Europe, the defence of the programme and its method resided in the hands of a tiny band of Left Oppositionists, and then, after 1933, Fourth Internationalists. The post-war epoch found their decimated ranks unable to apply fully these conceptions in what was objectively a favourable situation, and one for which Trotsky had founded the Fourth International in 1938. Nearly all of our present political difficulties derive from this combination of the objective factor (which is paramount) and subjective weakness (in its turn objectively determined) and not from the situation that prevails today in the world class struggle. But we will most certainly augment our problems if we once again, repeat the errors of the past by failing to discern in that world political situation all the nuances, eddies, ebbs as well as flows, and develop the political answers which they demand.

The historic stages of the proletarian class struggle

The era of the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie opens in 1848, when in France and Britain, these two classes confront each other for the first time in historic trials of strength. Both under the bourgeois monarchy in England, and the bourgeois republic in France, the intermediary and residual classes (pre-capitalist petty-bourgeoisie, aristocracy) cease to carry any decisive historic weight. The June days in Paris, and the last mobilisation of the Chartists in England finds the two basic, antagonistic classes of capitalist society discovering each other as the main enemy.

/rocked

In Germany and the other European nations by the revolutionary wave of 1848, the alignment of class forces follows a different pattern, one moulded by the earlier failure of the bourgeoisie to accomplish the democratic tasks achieved, to one degree or another, in England, and to the greatest extent, in France. The process of the permanent revolution is already visible in each of these democratic revolutions. But the feebleness of the bourgeoisie is not compensated (due mainly to the insufficient maturity of the productive forces) by the independent power of the proletariat. The bourgeoisie takes fright at

the forces its own revolution has set in motion, and everywhere, makes its peace with the old order.

The basic tasks of the democratic revolution - national unification, the republic, freedom of conscience, separation of church and state, adult suffrage, land reform, freedom of the press, speech, assembly and organisation - are either aborted or carried out only partially. The result is the bequeathing to the proletariat entire historic tasks that in the earlier period of capitalism, had been at least attempted, and in the case of France especially, largely solved by the bourgeoisie. In 1848 casts its shadow not only over the rest of the 19th century, but over the entire epoch of the modern workers' movement, right to this day.

But the results of this period are not entirely negative. The revolutionary wave of 1848, although nowhere successful even in the immediate bourgeois-democratic sense, provides an enormous impulse to the self-organisation of the proletariat, and by the same token, provides the flesh for the theoretical skeleton outlined by Marx and Engels on the very eve of the historic events of that year. Chartism goes into rapid and final decline, but on its shoulders will stand the first trade unions of the emergent industrial working class. Through a series of protracted battles with the bourgeois state and the employers, these unions conquer the liberty to organise the proletariat in defence of its living and working conditions. In its turn, this 'bulwark of proletarian democracy' within the heartland of the world's first and major capitalist power will provide the platform upon which the struggle will develop first for the working class vote, and then, in 1900, for the formation of the Labour Party.

This slow, but powerful, ascent of the trade union movement in England provides, in 1864, one of the essential material points of support for the founding of the First International. Several of Marx's leading collaborators in this venture are prominent leaders of the skilled workers' unions. Labour aristocrats, barely even socialists, they nevertheless lend the weight of their organisations to this first step towards the international unification of the working class. The First International, inspired and guided by Marx and Engels, becomes the organised vehicle of this organic tendency of the working class to struggle on an international plane. It is, in this sense (though never being a Marxist organisation) 'the conscious expression of the unconscious historical process'.

1848

In France, the reaction against 1848 goes very deep. The working class pays for its defeat in 1848 with 20 years of Bonapartist oppression. But then, thrust into battle by the collapse of Bonapartist rule in 1870, and the Prussian threat to Paris, it seizes power. The Commune, although drowned in the blood of tens of thousands of workers, enters into the consciousness of not only the vanguard, but of millions. Marxism itself is nourished by this upsurge in the elemental movement of the proletariat. The dictatorship of the proletariat was not 'invented' by Marx and Engels. It is simply the 'conscious expression' of the unconscious historical process, which in the spring of 1871, quite spontaneously, arose from both the inner necessities of the class struggle, and from the entire revolutionary tradition of the French masses. The Commune is crushed, only to burst forth again in Russia 46 years later, this time to triumph because Bolshevism had indeed made conscious the unconscious historical process.

In Germany, where the politically emasculated bourgeoisie so readily made its pact with reaction, the proletariat gradually distills out its own political life and organisations from those of the liberal and radical bourgeoisie. Influenced, though not entirely controlled, by Marxism, it begins to construct its own political party, almost immediately to provoke the violent reaction of the Junker-capitalist bloc headed by Bismark. But the molecular growth of the SPD and its associated trade unions continues under the lid of the anti-socialist laws. So much so that when in 1890, the lid is removed, the SPD sweeps into the Reichstag with more than a million votes.

In France also, the reaction under Thiers fails to crush the morale of the French proletariat. By 1889, the recovery has been so remarkable that Paris is the venue of the founding conference of the Second International. . The dawn of the imperialist epoch is also the era of the rise of the mass organisations of the European working class. It creates parties, trades unions, co-operatives, cultural societies and insurance clubs that with all their limitations and conservative traits, alone make possible the proletariat's struggle as a class against its exploiters, generating the confidence of a class that can master its own affairs and, in time, the affairs of mankind, and creating the framework within which the basic theoretical, programmatic, strategic and tactical problems of the international working class can begin to be resolved.

It was from within the womb of the Second International that the Russian Marxist movement emerged, was nurtured and under the leadership of Lenin, grew to revolutionary maturity. Thus the continuity of Marxism is not so much a continuity of ideas, but of the class struggle of the world proletariat, given expression through self-organisation and, at the level of programme, strategy and tactics, through Marxism itself. Again, 'the conscious expression of the unconscious historical process.'

The beginning of the turn - 1905

The opening of the general crisis of imperialism is traditionally dated at 1914, the year of the outbreak of the First World War. But in fact, the first shock-waves were felt in 1905, the year of the first Russian Revolution - 'dress rehearsal' of the successful overturn 12 years later. Again, the spontaneous movement, the 'unconscious process' is ahead of, and drives forward, its conscious expression.

Just as the Paris Commune demonstrated to Marx and Engels the steps the proletariat would have to take to secure its own social, economic and political dominance, so the eruption of the Soviets in 1905 compelled Lenin and other leading Russian Marxists to re-think all the basic questions of revolutionary strategy and tactics. It was Trotsky, standing outside the Bolshevik faction, who first gave 'conscious expression' to the unconscious process of revolution in Russia through his theory of the permanent revolution, a theory whose correctness Lenin only accepted (and at that, tacitly) in the actual course of the revolutions of 1917. For just as Marxism can only serve as a revolutionary instrument if it expresses, not the illusions of 'leaders', and the caste interests of an apparatus, but the unconscious historical process, and therefore the innermost needs of mankind; so will the latter be realised only when they do find their conscious expression, not just in the minds of Marxist theoreticians, but in organisations that guide the activity of the masses. This material conjuncture took place in Russia only in the course of the revolution itself, with Lenin's repudiation of the old Bolshevik formula of the 'democratic dictatorship

of the workers and peasants', and Trotsky's decision to adhere to the Bolsheviks on the basis of both this programmatic correction, and his own acceptance of the necessity of Bolshevik organisational principles and methods.

This historic fusion, without which there would have been no October Revolution, was the outcome, at the level of organisation and programme, of all the developments, molecular as well as those of broader sweep, of the previous period, dating back to 1848. 1905 marks the beginning of the turn, the opening of the era in which the masses will be driven, by the pressure of events, onto the road towards a struggle for power. The rise of the Soviet marks the opening of the era when the proletariat, having organised itself as a class for itself, will struggle for its own rule as a class for itself. But the previous decades of self-organisation do not lose either their significance or strategic importance as a result of this turn. Trotsky saw this more clearly than anyone. Not even the subsequent treachery of the leaderships of the traditional organisations convinced him otherwise:

"... the social democracy - from which we broke by breaking with the Second International - marked a certain epoch in the development of the working class. This was not the epoch of revolution, but the epoch of reform. Future historians, comparing the bourgeoisie's course of evolution with that of the proletariat, may say that the working class, too, had a reformation of its own ..." (Nov. 1920)

The assault of fascism upon the organisations of the German working class - social democratic no less than communist - occasioned Trotsky to re-state, with a new emphasis, this same proposition:

"It is necessary (for fascism) to smash all independent and voluntary organisations, to demolish all the defensive bulwarks of the proletariat, and to uproot whatever has been achieved during three quarters of a century by the social democracy and the trade unions. For in the last analysis, the Communist Party also bases itself on these achievements."

(Emphasis added)

Conquest

We, as re-builders of the Fourth International, take our stand on this organisational foundation the origins of which reach back to the dawn of the modern capitalist epoch. The Labour Party, no less than the trade unions which created it, was and remains a prime conquest of not only the British, but the international working class. It was conceived, born and built in a period of not merely national, but international working class struggle, beginning with the syndicalist upsurge of the decade preceding the First World War, and the 1905 Russian Revolution, and culminating in the October Revolution of 1917, its consolidation in the immediate post-war period, and the unleashing of the revolutionary wave throughout Europe and into Asia.

The lightning flashes that announce the storm are most visible in Russia. But all of capitalist Europe is agitated by a profound unrest, national as well as class. In Germany, the SPD reaches its peak of radicalism, and embraces officially the policy of the mass political strike. In France the trade unions assert their revolutionary independence from opportunist currents in the Socialist Party, a measure driven forward by violent strike battles that reach their peak on the very eve of the War. The same upsurge is seen in Italy, where syndicalism is again the main vehicle of this radicalisation.

In Britain, a contrary form - the unions step into the political arena to create a parliamentary Labour Party - expresses the same upsurge. In Spain, and a little earlier in Belgium, the class struggle intensifies to the point of violence. But in nearly all cases, the organisations built in the earlier period of a more regular peaceful tempo, prove unequal to the tasks of the new era, with its swift turns, its violent confrontations, its global dimensions. The gulf between tactics and strategy, and between both and programme, widens. The upper summits of the workers' organisations less and less give a 'conscious expression' to the increasingly more explosive 'unconscious historical process'. Bolshevism, that current which expresses most accurately the realities of the period, itself nevertheless undergoes an inner crisis, as the ultra-lefts (Ctzcovists) fail to respond with the correct tactics to the ebb within the overall flow, to the temporary (but nonetheless very real and punishing) decline between the two flood-tides of 1905-6 and 1917. And on the right, the liquidationists, by adapting, at the level of strategy as well as tactics, to the ebb after 1905, have to be resisted in their proposal to dissolve the illegal, underground revolutionary nucleus into a broad, legal 'labour' party acceptable to the liberal bourgeoisie and even to the autocracy. It is in Russia, with its volatile political rhythm, that the inner connections between tactics and strategy are first tested out in the course of battle. The Russian movement becomes the laboratory of the world class struggle. The experiments conducted there, and the provisional conclusions drawn from them that are tested out again in the revolution of 1917, will be codified in the resolutions and theses of the first Four Congresses of the Communist International. Contrariwise, in Germany where the SPD had provided, for more than two decades, the theoretical and organisational backbone of the Second International, the party of Bebel and Kautsky proves unequal to its task. The leadership comes, by imperceptible but progressive degrees, to express not the unconscious historical process, but the caste interests of the apparatus, and as such, the interests of bourgeois society. The social tensions released by the outbreak of war in 1914 break assunder the tenuous connections between this party's official, but remote strategy of power, and its every-day, real life of opportunistic tactics. The general crisis of imperialism opens with the collapse of nearly all the leaderships of the traditional organisations into opportunism, chauvinism, adaptation to the bourgeois state and the frontiers drawn up by imperialism.

The First Revolutionary Wave: 1916-1923

Imperialism raises to their greatest intensity of conflict not one set of antagonistic factors, but many. The most fundamental is of course that between the development of the productive forces, which assume a social, global and character, and the private, capitalist mode of production, expressed within each commodity in the contradiction between use value and exchange value. But there arise on this foundation other conflicts which project violently and deeply into the realm of politics - the antagonism between the development of the productive forces and the straitjacket of the capitalist nation-state, between the international working class and the world capitalist order, between the oppressor imperialist nations and the oppressed nations and peoples of the colonial countries. The Second International has been founded, and had developed, in a period during which these manifold antagonisms had been assembling and maturing, but had not yet broken through to the surface of world politics. The programmatic, tactical and strategical concepts and methods dictated by the fusion of these elements of the class struggle in the imperialist epoch had barely begun to pose themselves, let alone be clearly formulated, when the war engulfed not only traditional organisations, but the concepts upon which they had carried their entire activity.

The first revolutionary wave therefore, due to the nature of the epoch, does not arise in 'pure' class form. It explodes on the western extremity of the European continent, in the oppressed nation of Ireland. The Easter Rising of 1916, derided by Leftists then, as today, as a 'putsch' and 'premature', was no adventure, but the inevitable, necessary and just response of the Irish people to six centuries of English oppression, a revolt which in the context of the World War and opening of the general crisis of imperialism, lost none of its own national character in becoming an integral element in the rise of the revolutionary wave throughout the world.

In Berlin, in the January of the same year, tens of thousands of workers strike against the war and in defence of the arrested Karl Liebknecht. The tide begins to flow after the ebb of the two previous years. The same, if as yet only molecular, shifts are under way in all the warring imperialist countries. Russia then erupts in early 1917, and the revolutionary wave, with the national question still well to the fore, is firmly in the ascendant. Further revolutions break out in Austria, Germany and Hungary. Crowns fall, workers' councils arise, the workers reach out instinctively for power, but are blocked by the treachery of their own leaderships. The old parties of the Second International hurl themselves into the breach. The dislocated bourgeois state apparatus is patched up, rebuilt, and decked out with the slogans of social democracy. Bereft of mass parties guided by revolutionary strategy, tactics and programme, the vanguard is isolated and driven into adventures (Spartacist revolt). Only gradually do the tragic lessons of this episode translate themselves into the crystallisation of new parties of the Third International.

Flow

After this first, chaotic impulse of the first revolutionary wave, only in Russia do the workers retain their hold on state power. Elsewhere, the social democrats succeed in handing it back to the bourgeoisie. (1918-1919).

In Hungary, the Soviet Republic is drowned in blood. Then a new ascent begins. In Italy, the workers' offensive resumes in the spring, with the Fiat strike in Turin, then reaches its peak with the factory occupations in September. The Fascists are an insignificant factor scorned by all but a tiny faction of the bourgeoisie, without mass support. In Germany, the swing to the left generates vast support for the Centrist USPD, whose vote nearly equals that of its parent party, the SPD. And to the left of the USPD, the KPD begins to root itself in the vanguard. The Kapp Putsch (March 1920) triggers off a powerful response in the entire class. The general strike overflows into localised civil war. The bourgeois regime totters for the second time in less than two years. In the USSR, the White Guards are routed. The Red Army begins what proves to be its ill-founded offensive against Poland. Tukhachevsky stands outside Warsaw. In France, the intoxications of 'victory' begin to lose their effect. Partisans of the Third International win a majority in the Socialist Party. The strike movement begins to generate momentum. In Britain, a series of national strikes erupts immediately after the end of the war. The London Police force is purged after a strike for trade union rights. The army proves unreliable when used against workers. The colonies are seething with revolt, from Ireland to India (Amritsar, 1919). China rises against imperialist domination (4th May, 1919). The entire imperialist world is strained to breaking-point by the offensive of the workers and oppressed peoples. Then, in the summer of 1920, comes another turning-point within this phase of general ascent. The Red Army is defeated at the gates of Warsaw, and driven back

far into historic Russia. In Italy, the occupations are wound up, with only economic gains as the reward. The Fascist counter-offensive begins almost at once (the sacking of Bologna). In Germany, the rescued social democrats join hands with the secret sympathizers of Kapp in the General Staff to crush the workers in the Ruhr and Saxony. Bourgeois rule is temporarily stabilised. In France, the trade union leaders disrupt the strike movement. Divided by the organisational split in their ranks between the revolutionary and reformist syndicalists, the workers are pushed back. In Britain, a little later, the workers' unity is betrayed on 'Black Friday' (1921). The miners are left to fight alone. The Triple Alliance is dubbed the 'cripple alliance'.

But even this ebb within the flow is not uniform. In China, the national-revolutionary struggle marches forward, initially under the leadership of Sun Yat-sen's Kuo Min Tang. The Chinese Communist Party, guided by the theses of the national and colonial question adopted at the Second Comintern Congress, begins to spread its influence rapidly amongst the workers and poor peasants.

Then, after a temporary, but extremely fragile deadlock, (punctured by the artificial attempt of the KPD to break it through the 'March Action') the wave resumes its forward thrust in Germany, only to be frustrated by the centrist vacillations of the Brandler leadership (October-November 1923). With the bloody crushing of the Stamboliski peasant-based regime (June, 1923), the German defeat marks the definitive end of the first revolutionary wave, even though there will be localised revivals and partial upturns in the trough that separates it from the next.

Concretisation

This period of the first revolutionary wave is also the richest in the concretisation and codification of revolutionary strategy and tactics. The Second International - due almost entirely to objective historical factors - never came to grips with the problem of establishing the unity of the working class in struggle for partial demands, and at a higher level, in the struggle for its own government. The Second International, with one or two minor exceptions, was the organised working class, which divided up, for functional and not political reasons, under a single roof, into political parties, trades unions and co-operatives. The treachery of the old leaderships, and the forward drive of the workers towards political power, rent asunder this structure. Now, in each country, there contended for the leadership of the class not one political party, but two and even, as in Germany, (SPD? USPD? KPD), three. The Comintern leadership had to solve in practice, as well as in theory, this problem: how was the working class to continue to fight its class battles, defensive and offensive, and develop its strategic fight for power, whilst its ranks remained divided? At first, the problem was not even acknowledged. In the period of the first upsurge, the founders of the Comintern hoped that the workers would desert the old parties en masse and for good. But then the initial impetus to the left, in each case, stopped short of providing the Communist Parties with a clear preponderance of forces. Rather belatedly, the Comintern leadership recognised that the struggle for power had to be postponed until such times as the social democratic grip on the class had been broken organisationally and in terms of politics. The occasion for this re-appraisal was the March Action adventure in Germany (1921), where the KPD attempted to seize power with only a small fraction of the proletariat actively behind it. This, the so-called theory of

om the SPD and trade union apparatus. The ultra-left turn of 1924 therefore rises in Germany not simply as a projection of the Zinovievist "Bolshevization" of that year (one of whose targets was Trotsky and his supporters in the Comintern) but as yet another over-reaction, this time to the rightist course of the previous year. Thus in 1921, 1923 and again in 1924, the KPD leadership moves in directly contrary directions to the organic motion of the proletariat - it is not the conscious expression of the unconscious historic process in all its stages and moments, ebbs and flows, but increasingly a factor which disrupts the re-groupment of the proletariat on a revolutionary programme and its mobilisation for the seizure of power. So the period of ebb ushered in by the defeat of the German 'October' begins for the Comintern (dominated in Moscow by the troika of Stalin, Kamenev and the President - Zinoviev) under the sign of a schematic, leftist, adventurism that clashes ever more stridently with the real processes at work in a European proletariat thrust back and disoriented by the German defeat above all, but also by the failure to achieve lasting success in any other country save Russia. For the first, but certainly not the last, time, 'official' Bolshevism throws its weight behind a conception of proletarian strategy and tactics that only three years before, had been just as 'officially' condemned (at the Third Comintern Congress) and demolished by Lenin a year earlier in his polemic against Leftism, 'Left Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder'. Since these conceptions, revived and re-enforced by the turn into the Third Period in 1928, have without doubt polluted our own movement to a far greater extent than the victims themselves are capable of appreciating, it is necessary to spell out yet again the Marxist refutation of the metaphysics of apparatus radicalism'.

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that conception that equates the class struggle with a military conflict, and the high-command of its warring armies with the leadership of a revolutionary party, Trotsky says:

"... in the revolutionary (i. e. Red) army the chief motor force is political consciousness, revolutionary enthusiasm, the undertaking on the part of the army's majority (N. B.) of the military task it faces and a readiness to solve this task. How much more does this apply to the decisive revolutionary battles of the working class? There cannot even be talk here of coercing workers into revolution. There is no apparatus of repression here. Success can rest only upon the readiness of the majority of the toilers to take a direct or indirect part in the struggle and help bring it to a happy conclusion"

(July, 1921)

That speech is made in refutation of the theory of the 'revolutionary offensive' which fathered the March Action. But it does not suffice - and should not, in the face of deep shifts in the masses, and their inverse reflection on the summits of the Comintern apparatus that generates this ~~same~~ conception in ever more garishly hued guises. Bukharin, and to a lesser degree, Zinoviev, sympathise with and even discreetly egg on the KPD Lefts at the time of the Third Congress. In 1924, they are able to give full ~~rein~~ to the leftist schematism Lenin and Trotsky had held in check in the first years of the Comintern's activity. In 1928, with the Comintern executing its second - and far more long-lasting and more devastating - ultra-left turn, Trotsky returns once more to the attack. Again, the core of the problem is

the offensive, posed point-blank to Lenin and Trotsky the necessity of a strategic turn in every party of the Comintern. Each party had to express consciously not only the general, overall long-term process of history, but each step and stage in that process. The policies of the sections had to be brought into alignment with the innermost needs felt by the workers for unity against their exploiters and the capitalist state. The March Action was a crude attempt by the KPD leaders to rape the historical process, to impose on the majority a revolution by a minority, which in its turn was set in motion by the apparatus at the top. This reactionary conception, though routed in the debates at the Third Comintern Congress, re-appears in ever more hideous forms at each turn in the degeneration of the Comintern from a revolutionary international into a pliant tool of Kremlin foreign policy. Its next appearance will be in the guise of Zinovievism (1924 - mid-1925) and then, in the leftist phase of Stalinism - the third period - 1928-1934. Today, we understand this perversion of Bolshevism as the 'apparatus' conception of the revolutionary party.

Quickly, the slogan 'to the masses' issued by the Third Congress translates itself into the united front (codified in November, 1921), which then organically evolves into the strategy for a workers' government. These advances in the sphere of strategy and tactics remain as conquests of the proletariat and its vanguard, as precious in their own special way as the other great gain of the first revolutionary wave - the victorious Russian Revolution.

A balance sheet of this first wave would include on its credit side the enormously strengthened and broader based trade union organisations in France, Germany and Britain especially, the development of the British Labour Party into a national organisation which workers looked to to form their own government; in every important capitalist country the formation of sections of the Comintern, and in the colonial and semi-colonial world, the first steps towards mass resistance to imperialist domination.

On the debit side must be placed firstly, the aborting of the German revolution then the Fascist coup in Italy, the counter-revolutions in Bulgaria, Spain and Hungary, and the consolidation of bourgeois rule in the rest of central and East Europe.

Over-Correction

With Brandler's 'over-correction' (1923) of the adventurist-leftist orientation that produced the March Action, the zigzag course begins which finally destroys not only the KPD as a revolutionary organisation, but the entire Comintern. Once again, the initial impulse that feeds the deviation comes from a sudden, but ill-perceived, turn in the political situation. The united front tactic, faithfully applied ~~the~~ the Brandler leadership - and with great success - in the period from the end of 1921 up to the summer of 1923, is not grasped as the conscious expression of a distinct stage within the overall process of the class struggle - one of recovery after the defeats and blood-lettings of 1920-1921, and the closing of ranks ~~again~~ against the capitalist counter-offensive. Thus the tactical aspect of the united front is separated out from its strategic function, which is to prepare the working class for the offensive, for the next phase, which is the bid for power - the stage that opens up in the late summer of 1923 and which finds the Brandler leadership still applying the united front tactic in a way that would have been appropriate only to the earlier phase, but now serves purely to block the break of the mass of social democratic workers

the inner relationship between tactics and strategy, and as another expression of the same problem, the appreciation of the ebb within the flow, and the flow within the ebb, and the juxtaposition of both ebb and flow to the general crisis of the imperialist epoch:

"Each party (in 1924), to a lesser or greater degree, fell a victim to the false points of departure (i. e. that there had been no defeat in 1923, and that the revolutionary wave remained in the ascent.) Each chased after phantoms, ignored the real processes, transformed revolutionary slogans into noisy phrases ... For this conception there existed always and unalterably only the social democracy that was 'disintegrating', workers who were becoming 'radicalised', communist parties that were 'growing' and the revolution that was 'approaching'. And anybody else who looked around and tried to distinguish things was and is a 'liquidator'."

The same false conceptions abound today. Whilst they rear their heads in a period very different from that in which Trotsky was writing (one of overall decline, and not, like today, of powerful ascent) the method and the conceptions derive in their historical origin from this, the first stage in the decay of the Comintern, in that period when it fell victim to the 'apparatus radicalism' of the Troika. Likewise and equally dangerous is the allied conception, which attempts to surmount the manifold tactical tasks posed by the contradictory process of radicalisation with the schema that can be summarised in the phrase 'we are living in a period of revolutionary upsurge'.

Scholastic

Trotsky detected this false, scholastic conception of radicalisation in the draft programme of the Communist International (the author being the former Leftist Bukharin). The draft declared:

"The process of radicalisation of the masses which is sharpening, the growth of the influence and of the authority of the communist parties ... all this clearly shows that a new revolutionary wave is mounting in the imperialist centres".

Trotsky rejected these formulations as false, not merely because they did not accurately describe what was then happening, but for their one-sided, schematic conception of how the class struggle moves through a complex process of ebbs and flows towards its inevitable revolutionary climaxes:

"The epoch of imperialism and of proletarian revolution has already known and will again know in the future not only a 'process of radicalisation which is sharpening', but also a period when the masses move to the right; not only the growth of the influence of the communist parties, but also of a temporary decline of that influence. If it is a question of judging from the standpoint of conjuncture, it is more or less true for certain countries, in the given period, but not at all for the entire world ... the leadership of the Comintern has given no proof of comprehension in matters of dialectic regarding the growth and disappearance of revolutionary situations. On these subjects it has remained in a permanent scholasticism, the treating of 'radicalisation' without studying in a fundamental way the living stages of the struggle of the world proletariat."

Step by step with this imposition of a false orientation on the parties of the Comintern arises the type of apparatus regime necessary to stifle the proletarian base of the sections, to prevent their rebelling against the application of a line whose discord with the moods and needs of the masses became daily more harsh.

"Together with Lenin, we feared most of all that the CPSU, armed with the mighty resources of the state, would exert an excessive and crushing influence upon the young parties of the West that were just being organised. Lenin warned tirelessly against premature strides along the road of centralism, against the excessive tendencies of the ECCI and the Praesidium in this direction and, especially, against such forms and methods of assistance as transform themselves into direct commands from above from which there is no appeal."

Ebb

These lines, written in 1928, could have been written against Pablo, who with far less historical cause, and even less resources, tried to behave in just the manner against which Lenin warned, and Trotsky fought. They also remain a burning indictment of those like Healy, whom Pablo spawned, even as he used against them the methods he had taught. None grasped properly the full political implications of that proposition with which we began - Marxism is the conscious expression of the unconscious historical process. It is not the conscious expression of the caste interests of the apparatus, or the messianic illusions of the general secretary. Comintern Leftism ironically, but necessarily, flowers to full bloom in the period of the deepest decline in the class struggle. This ebb begins in the winter of 1923-1924, and is most deep-going in Germany, where the SPD regains its hold on the workers whom it had lost in the previous year, and in Italy, where after a series of crises, the Fascist regime stabilises itself, and completes its task of liquidating the workers' organisations. But this ebb, which lasts until 1930, and is only finally succeeded by a new wave in 1934, contains within it two strong counter-flows - Britain and China, and a lesser one, Poland. But here too, the Comintern, now purged of its former Leftism (this is the period of the ascendancy of a reformed Bukharin) aligns itself against the basic movement of the class struggle. It enters into blocs with forces that, in each case, serve as barriers to the advance of the revolution. The disappointed, impatient adventurists of 1924 have, by 1925-1926, swung over to the right in search of the forces that will, commanded by the prestigious Kremlin chiefs, serve as substitutes for the independent action of the majority of the proletariat and oppressed colonial masses. Just as in 1921, 1923 and 1924 in Germany, only now on a world scale, the previous false orientation - a leftist one in this instance - prepares the soil for a lurch in the opposite direction. Increasingly, the motor force for the activities of the Comintern leadership becomes not the expression of the historical process, but the defence of the material positions of the newly-formed Soviet ruling caste, to which the Comintern is progressively subordinated with each set-back on the international arena and the step by step strangulation of proletarian democracy in the USSR. One of the main political instruments of this subordination of the Comintern to the Kremlin caste is the Stalin-Bukharin doctrine of 'apparatus internationalism'. In the name of proletarian internationalism, the apparatus of the CPSU, through its stranglehold over the leading bodies of the Comintern, dictates the line of each of its sections right down to the smallest tactical detail, each being a carbon-copy of the

latest centrist lurch of the Stalinist faction in the USSR. The obverse side of this bogus 'internationalism' is the doctrine of 'socialism in one country', which permitted the Soviet Party to make its own independent way to Socialism, freed from the control of either the Comintern or the world class struggle. Trotsky deals with this false conception of internationalism most succinctly:

"It is false (as Stalin had argued) that world economy is simply a sum of national parts of one and the same type. It is false that the specific features are 'merely supplementary to the general features' (Stalin), like warts on a face. In reality, the national peculiarities represent an original combination of the basic features of the world process. This originality can be of decisive significance for revolutionary strategy over a span of many years".

One of the tasks of revolutionary strategy, given this national differentiation and uniqueness of the world historic process, is to devise the tactics necessary to the opening up of the revolutionary road in each concrete instance and situation. This, first Zinovievism, and then full-developed Stalinism, prevents by a mechanical application of 'apparatus internationalism' and its accompanying schematic conceptions of proletarian radicalisation. Revealingly the opportunist doctrine of 'socialism in one country' is first enunciated by Stalin in the midst of the Leftist period (November 1924) and then applied to the full in the rightist period which follows it. For there is a leftist, apparatus, element to this theory - namely, that independently, and even in defiance of the course of the world class struggle, and the requirements of the Soviet economy within the world division of labour, the USSR can build its own fully-developed socialist order, by neutralising the permanent threat of imperialist encirclement. This is a leftist-adventurist notion, laden with opportunist implications which flower to the full in the rightist turn that follows and which are prepared by the leftist period that has nurtured them.

General Strike

In Britain, the TUC, supported from the left by the Comintern, knifes the General Strike, and thrusts the proletariat back a full decade. In China, the Kuomintang drowns the revolution in blood, again supported, right up to the point of betrayal, by the Comintern. The ebb is strengthened by these two tragic defeats. It assumes an organic character, one to which the Comintern reacts in classic fashion by yet again turning the helm over, falteringly at first, to the ultra-left, far further than in the previous phase of the Zinoviev inspired leftism that reigned in 1924-1925.

The balance sheet of this period reads, in broad outlines, thus: Failure of the putsch in Estonia (December, 1924). Defeat in Britain (1926). Defeat in China (1927). In Poland, the coup of Pilsudski, backed initially by the Bukharinite leadership of the Polish CP! (1926). In the USA, stagnation and even decline in the trades unions, immense disarray in the Communist Party - but the second important breakthrough (the first was in France) by the Left Opposition on an international level with the emergence of the Cannon faction after the Sixth CI Congress (August 1928).

In the U.S.S.R., the Left Opposition swims against the tide of defeats that it has predicted and warned against, but now becomes, because of their impact

on the masses and even the vanguard, the victim. The Left Opposition is expelled just before the 15th C. P. S. U. Congress (December, 1927) and Trotsky and other of its leaders exiled. At the end of the congress, Stalin begins his new left turn. It will not have run its full course until the Nazis have been aided to power in Germany, and the Comintern wrecked as a revolutionary instrument.

The Labour election victory of 1929 proves not so much the harbinger of a new British upturn, but more the parliamentary echo of the titanic battle of three years previously. When Macdonald defects to the Tories two years later, Labour's vote is cut by more than 2 million, and its parliamentary representation reduced from 289 to 26. The genuine revival, agonisingly slow and protracted that is, begins only in the mid-thirties, to reach its first peak, after an ebbing during the first years of the war, in 1945 with the massive Labour victory, and the rise of Bevanism in the years that followed.

The revolutionary crisis in Germany, due to the false policies of the Comintern, gives a greater impulse to the counter-revolutionary right than the revolutionary left. But in 1931, there comes the first real break - revolution bursts forth in Spain. A new flow is in view. But before it can even begin to assume its full sweep, the Stalinist and reformist bureaucracies combine in Germany in handing over the strategically most powerful and important proletariat in Europe to its fascist butchers. The right swing follows at once in Austria. Mussolini's rule is once more re-enforced. In Portugal, the Salazarist regime liquidates the last remnants of the independent workers' movement. 1933 marks a new low point in the ebbing of the post-war revolutionary wave.

The Second Main Wave - 1934-1937

This new period of revolutionary ascent is weaker than the first of 1916-1923, because at its heart is felt the deadly undertow of the crushed German proletariat, and in the USSR, the strangulation and then physical destruction of the Bolshevik vanguard. These two counter-revolutionary vices - fascism and Stalinism - are indeed symmetric phenomena, expressing the innermost tendencies of this period of black reaction. They prove decisive, and together with the continued treachery of the social democratic leaderships, ensure that the new wave which arises in 1934 nowhere brings any lasting gains. As already stated, the new flow is anticipated by the revolution in Spain (1931). A wave of sit-in strikes then erupts in Poland, and later in the USA at the Firestone Rubber Plant in Akron, Ohio (1934). This new radicalisation of the unskilled, mass production workers has already found its first feeble reflection in the landslide victory of Roosevelt, with his promise of a 'new deal' for the nation's oppressed, underpaid and unemployed (1932). Also in 1934, a full-scale political crisis erupts in France. The fascists begin to mobilise. They bring down the government of Daladier, and help install the Bonapartist regime of Doumergue. The French Stalinists initially back the fascist gangs against the parliamentary regime (Feb. 1934). But the workers impose on their two parties an improvised united front, which is then perverted at the top by a sudden new turn in Stalin's foreign policy, away from his hoped-for bloc with Nazi Germany against the West, towards a deal with the Versailles powers and the League of Nations.

As in 1923, 1924, 1926-1927, and again throughout the 'third period', so now the Kremlin hurls the Comintern apparatus directly against the elemental, instinctive movement of the masses. It erects the popular front as a bloc against the further radicalisation of the workers in both France and Spain. It ties the organisations of the proletariat to an alliance with the 'radical' wing

of the imperialist bourgeoisie. But the unconscious movement generates enormous power both in France (and Belgium) and Spain. In 1936, the French workers respond to the victory of the popular front parties in the general elections of May, not by awaiting the promised legislation of social and economic reforms, but by seizing the plants - just as across the Atlantic, the C.I.O. is being forged and defended by the same weapon. The workers, quite contrary to the wishes of their Stalinist and reformist leaders, spontaneously take up the slogan of the 'third period' - 'Soviets everywhere!' In the third period, it was nothing more than empty demagoguery.

Spain

By 1936 it has become lethal to bourgeoisie and Kremlin alike. The Stalinists bond to the strike, then break it - with great difficulty. But hardly have the workers been seduced back to work when in Spain, Franco stages his revolt against the recently elected Popular Front government (July, 1936). The revolutionary wave remains in the ascendent in both countries until 1937. The ebb is marked by the crushing of the Barcelona workers by the Stalinists (May 1937), the purging of the P.O.U.M. and then the left socialists, and the remorseless consolidation of bourgeois rule and property which follows in the train of the Stalinist offensive. Franco's victory then becomes only a matter of time. In France, after its initial set-back in 1936, the bourgeoisie applies more and more pressure on the Popular Front through its own party, the Radicals. Blum goes, and the political pendulum begins to swing back to the Right, to Daladier and beyond. The gains of the earlier period - the 8-hour day, social legislation etc. - are whittled away. By 1938, the movement is spent. In Austria, the swing to the right, urged on by Hitler's victory, accelerates with the crushing of the Vienna workers in February, 1934. The last remnants of the workers' movement are liquidated, first under Dolfuss, then under his successor, Schusnigg. The road is cleared for the Nazi "Anschluss" in March, 1938. With the Bolshevik old guard in their graves, and the Comintern little more than a shell, Stalin prepares his turn-back to Hitler. Nazi and Stalinist diplomats open the talks that will reach their conclusion with the Stalin-Hitler pact, which in its turn, enables Hitler to launch his invasion of Poland and so usher in the Second Imperialist War. The new ebb is under way by 1938, though in the USA, the struggle to build the C.I.O. has some way to run. In fact, the only lasting gain of this second revolutionary wave is the building of the C.I.O. unions, which to this day serve as powerful bulwarks of not only the U.S. but the world working class. But the Stalinists achieve their aim of tying this upsurge politically to Roosevelt. The movement towards a Labour Party is blocked.

In continental Europe, this wave leaves nothing in its wake except the wreckage of workers' hopes and organisations. In Britain, the slow recovery begins, aided by the growth of the new, mass production industries. The trade unions begin to recruit from this new layer of workers. The Labour Party also begins its recovery from the disaster of 1931. The youth section begins a modest growth. The Stalinists get some wind in their sails in the trade unions. The Socialist League reflects in an attenuated fashion this molecular process of moral and material rehabilitation in the working class as a whole. Although initially checked by the first years of the war, this gradual forward movement will re-assert itself in more spectacular fashion in the strikes of 1944, and the landslide Labour victory of the next year. But by this time, it is mainly the national expression of the world-wide revolutionary upturn of 1943-1947.

Fourth International

In the Far East, Japanese Imperialism continues its march into China. Many cities fall to the invaders, but resistance grows in the countryside. Anti-imperialist movements are also activated in Indo-China, where the Vietnamese Trotskyists are in the vanguard, and also in India, where the Congress Party holds the movement in check through Gandhi's policy of 'non-violent resistance'. Each of these component parts of the world revolutionary process sketch the outlines of the decay of an imperialist rule that will become more and more precarious in the next period of the upturn.

The anti-imperialist upsurge also assumes a broad sweep in Latin America in this period of flow, then ebb in Europe. The Cardenas regime in Mexico takes firm steps against the imperialist oil monopolies, whilst other Latin American regimes come under the pressure of the masses (Argentina, Brazil).

This is the historic setting in which Trotsky, together with his international collaborators, founds the Fourth International in September, 1938. Founded in this period of bitter reaction, it sets itself the task of guiding the inevitable next revolutionary upsurge to world wide victory. But first there intervenes the new, profoundly deep, though relatively brief, period of ebb, during which the fortunes of the world proletariat stand at their lowest since the opening of the imperialist crisis in 1914, and indeed, in the entire history of capitalism.

The Kremlin's New Zig-Zags

Having broken up this new revolutionary wave with an openly opportunist policy of alliances with the bourgeoisie (the popular front) the Kremlin, following its pact with Hitler, orders a sharp turn left in the countries of the 'democratic' imperialist camp. Both the tactics and the conceptions of the third period, discarded in 1934 in order to facilitate the right turn of that year, are revived in new forms. And once again (though this time on the basis of the counter-revolutionary orientation that crystallises out of the period of centrist degeneration and oscillation between 1924 and 1935) the Kremlin aligns what remains of the Comintern against the needs and moods of the class. The strident leftism of the Stalin-Hitler pact now serves as a camouflage for the Kremlin's pro-Third Reich orientation in foreign policy. The exiled KPD leadership supplements this leftism in the 'democratic' imperialist camp by pursuing in Germany, a policy of thinly veiled defencism. Neither is the policy of the British, French and other allied country parties genuinely a revolutionary defeatist one. It is a combination of apologies for Hitler's war policy, and a campaign to propel a section of the imperialist bourgeoisie into an alliance with the Kremlin by making peace with Germany.;

With the invasion of the USSR by Germany in June, 1941, the Kremlin orders yet another turn, this time one that goes to the extreme right. Strike-breaking, hounding and fingering of militants, especially Trotskyists, become the central aims of Stalinist policy in each of the countries at war with Germany. The Communist Parties even embarrass reformist trade union leaders by their enthusiasm for slave-driving work tempos in industry, and scorn for safety measures and working conditions. This new right turn is gradually phased out as the war draws to an end, and by 1947, with the onset of the 'cold war' shades over into a new period of leftism-adventurism, which like the turn of 1939-1941, contains elements of third periodism, and even 'social fascism'. But unlike the third period, this new left turn takes place on the foundations of a strategy which is entirely counter-revolutionary on a world

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despite the changes in property relations effected in E. Europe in order to safeguard the security of the Kremlin's interest in the buffer states. This revival of Leftism in no sense indicates the presence of centrist elements within Stalinism, though this conclusion is in fact drawn implicitly by Pablo with his claim that under the impact of the threat of war, the Stalinist parties were capable of, and indeed about to, 'roughly outline a revolutionary orientation.' Pablo's perspective - one of capitulation to Stalinism - is refuted by the real march of events. When, after its period of ebb in Europe between 1947 and 1952, the European revolution regains its former momentum, with the French General strike and the E. German uprising in the summer of 1953, in both cases, the Stalinist apparatus comes down firmly on the side of the status quo, on the basis of the agreement concluded at Potsdam between the Kremlin and the victorious imperialist powers. Faced with the threat of a new revolutionary ascent, the Kremlin quickly discards its leftist rhetoric, and takes up with great alacrity the slogans of class-collaboration, and of close relations with the leaders of social democracy. It is this latter policy, with minor oscillations such as that pursued in Portugal in 1975 (with the same aim of blocking the advance of the revolution, only from the ultra left) that has predominated to this day. In each case, the strategic aim is the preservation of the world status quo, of the division of Europe and of Germany. Within this framework, tactical conflicts with imperialism will of course proceed at different levels and in different zones, but as is always the case, they are subordinate to, and in fact determined by, the triple holy counter-revolutionary alliance, or rather triangle, of Moscow-Peking-Washington.

Low Tide - 1938-1942

In France and Spain, the popular front regimes serve their prime function of blocking the revolution. But by the same token, they fail to achieve their secondary objective - that of preserving at least some of the features of bourgeois parliamentary democracy. Franco, not Negrin and Azana, is the victor in Spain. In France, Blum is cast down after fulfilling his role as left prop of the bourgeois regime, Hitler and Potain complete the task of breaking up the workers' movement, one that is patently beyond a regime that depends upon the support, or at the very least, the toleration, of the traditional workers' organisations.

Muffled by the treachery of the apparatuses, drained by the defeats of the previous two decades (the greatest being Germany, and then Spain), its organisations in ruins across the breadth of Europe, the working class is in no position to resist the drive to war. His Eastern flank secured by his pact with Stalin, and his internal front rendered equally secure by the treachery of Stalinists and reformists alike in 1933, Hitler is ready to make his bid to "re-organise" Europe along fascist lines, under the hegemony of German imperialism.

This opportunity arises only because not once, but twice, the proletariat has failed to unite the continent by the democratic method of the socialist revolution, and under the banner of the united socialist states of Europe. The Nazi bid to unite Europe cannot but intensify, not only all the economic problems associated with such a task, but the manifold national problems bequeathed to the imperialist epoch by the failure of the bourgeoisie to solve them in the period of its ascent. This will become more and more evident as the Nazi Empire begins to break up after 1942, and the Western Imperialists, together with the Kremlin, seek to impose a new order from above on the nations of Europe.

But before his new turn comes the high point of the Nazi conquests. From the English Channel to the gates of Moscow and Leningrad, along the coast of the Black Sea and the west bank of the Volga, the Nazi Empire holds the European proletariat in a vice. Capitalism is restored in occupied Russia, the farms de-collectivised. Krupp and I. G. Farben run riot, looting the economy built with such immense sacrifice by the Soviet workers and farmers. Stalin's purges of the Red Army facilitate Hitler's counter-revolutionary work. The USSR hangs by a thread, as 1942 draws to its close. All the occupied countries of Europe without exception are transformed into oppressed nations, from France to Poland, Norway to Greece. (Trotsky's murder in August 1940 is another blow struck by Stalin against the defence of the USSR). Yet the USSR survives. Before the very gates of Moscow, in October, 1941, factory workers spontaneously stream out of the plants to block the Nazi advance with makeshift barricades and weapons. Their loyalty to the conquests of October is written in their blood, while the top bureaucrats flee eastwards to Kuibyshev. Then, at the very end of 1942, comes a new turn, one that despite partial ebbs, and periods of stalemate, has maintained its forward thrust until today.

The First Stage of the New Upturn - 1943-1947

For the third time, the upturn contains at its core in Europe the organic movement of the proletariat towards the establishment of the united socialist states of Europe. It is for this revival that Trotsky has fought for the founding of the Fourth International, with its optimistic perspective of social revolution in the West, anti-imperialist upsurge in the colonies, and the political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy in the USSR. The Emergency Conference of May, 1940 gives added emphasis to this perspective, the general orientation of which is confirmed - though in ways that could not have possibly been anticipated - by the new revolutionary wave that begins in 1943. Utterly false is the accusation that Trotsky's revolutionary optimism proved to be ill-founded. Whatever his followers and epigones may have thought and said either then or later, Trotsky did not sustain in any way the illusion that the immense problems accumulated by the imperialist epoch, and multiplied ten fold by the treachery of the old leaderships, could be solved by one swift upturn of the class struggle. The resolution adopted by the 1940 Emergency Conference, drafted by Trotsky, projects a far longer-term perspective, one that needs no fundamental revision despite the passage of 36 years.

"The capitalist world has no way out, unless a prolonged death agony is so considered. It is necessary to prepare for long years, if not decades, of war, uprisings, brief interludes of truce, new wars, and new uprisings. A young revolutionary party must base itself on this perspective. History will provide it with enough opportunities and possibilities to test itself, to accumulate experience, and to mature. The swifter the ranks of the vanguard are fused the more the epoch of bloody convulsions will be shortened, the less the destruction will our planet suffer. But the great historical problem will not be solved in any case until a revolutionary party stands at the head of the proletariat. The question of tempos and time intervals is of enormous importance, but it alters neither the general historical perspective nor the direction of our policy".

The turn begins early in 1943. At Stalingrad, the Red Army cuts off the Sixth Army of von Paulus. It begins an advance that does not halt until it reaches Berlin. In Italy, a mass revival of the proletariat, held in the fascist vice for 20 years, sustains the resistance and partisan struggle. Strikes break out in the north. Mussolini falls. The first stirrings towards the social revolution in West Europe become clearly visible. In France the resistance, though dominated by the Stalinist-Gaullist bloc, begins to assume a broader sweep. Despite the intentions of its leadership, it poses a threat not only to the Nazi occupiers, but the collaborationist and Gaullist bourgeoisie alike. As in Italy, weakness of direct links with the Kremlin lead to the resistance struggles assuming a more revolutionary character even amongst the higher cadre of the Communist Party. Post-war purges in the C.P.F. (Marty, Tillon) will revolve partly around this deviation, in its turn a reflection inside the national Stalinist leaderships of the new upsurge. In 1944, Togliatti and Thorez return from Moscow exile to force on rebellious party cadres the Stalin line of collaboration with the western imperialists in restoring the shattered capitalist state and economic order. Enormous pressure is required before militants will hand over their arms to the 'liberators'. In Greece, the partisan struggle against the Nazis assumes an even greater sweep. Here the Stalinist leaders experience the greatest difficulty in holding the line. In Yugoslavia, where the Tito leadership jumped the gun by beginning armed resistance to Nazi rule during the last weeks of the Stalin-Hitler Pact, large parts of the country are cleared of Nazi troops before the Red Army arrives in Belgrade. Here too, workers provide the spearhead for the resistance, organised in Tito's 'Proletarian Brigades', which Stalin demands, unsuccessfully, that Tito is to disband.

Stalingrad

As the Red Army opens its offensive at Stalingrad, in the heart of occupied Europe, in the Warsaw Ghetto, tens of thousands of doomed Jews hurl themselves almost bare handed against Hitler's tanks and Himmler's S.S. This glorious chapter in the history of the world revolutionary movement, no less politically significant than the Nazi defeat at Stalingrad, is the first revolt against the Nazi new order. To the martyred Jews of the Warsaw Ghetto belongs the honour of giving the first impulse to the period of revolutionary advance that with its new turns in 1968 and 1974, has sustained its forward thrust to this day.

In Britain the revival in the trade unions gains pace again, with big strikes in 1943, and even larger ones in 1944. The Labour Party once more becomes the centre of workers' political aspirations. In 1945, they place it in power with a huge majority over all the other parties. Its programme commits it to a series of nationalisations, and the introduction of a wide range of social reforms. In the USA, a similar strike wave opens one year before the end of the war. It assumes a truly vast sweep in 1945-46, far broader even than in the upsurge that forged the C.I.O., In Argentina, the radicalisation of the workers flows into the channels of the Peronist movement, which on coming to power, is compelled by the pressure of the masses to take a series of measures against British imperialism.

All those events are well under way before the end of the war. In Europe, as stated, they drive unconsciously towards the unification of the continent by means of the proletarian revolution. Far more conscious are the steps taken by imperialism and the Kremlin to choke this movement and to

strangle it in its infancy. In 1943, Stalin confers with the allied leaders in Tehran. Already, the division of Europe into 'spheres of influence' is in view. Those areas such as Greece and Yugoslavia which Stalin renounces a majority interest in, are to remain in the imperialist orbit, the Stalinists will attempt to comply with this agreement,

but are driven eventually into a civil war they fear to win. In Yugoslavia, Tito, after several vacillations, defies Stalin's order to restore the old Monarchy, and begins to break up the old order and establish a workers' state of a deformed type.

It is to block such alarming developments that the same leaders meet again in Yalta (1944) and finally (this time with Atlee and Truman for the defeated Churchill and the dead Roosevelt) at Potsdam. By this time the strategy is clear and explicit. Europe is to be divided, Germany is to be divided, and as the capstone of this policy of divide and rule, Berlin is likewise to be cut into zones.

Stalin-Hitler Pact

Each party to this deal needs a free hand to deal with the revolutionary threat both at its back and under its foot. Inevitably, the national question is to the fore in this new revolutionary explosion. Partitioned for the fourth time in their history, by the Stalin-Hitler pact, the Polish people see the retreat of the Nazi armies as their opportunity to seize their national independence from both imperialism and Kremlin rule. Urged on cynically by Kremlin propaganda, the people of shattered Warsaw rise in revolt as the Red Army approaches the Vistula (1944). But Stalin fears an independent Poland forged in revolutionary battle against Nazi oppression. He gives the order for the Red Army to halt its advance, and await the crushing of the vanguard of the Polish national movement - and the flower of its proletariat, which is inevitably in the van of the uprising.

Not for the first time, Hitler's armies do Stalin's work in crushing the Warsaw proletariat and the Polish national movement. Only when the Polish capital is in ruins, and 200,000 of its insurrectionary population butchered, does Stalin give the Red Army the order to resume its advance - with the puppet regime of hand-picked Stalinists whom the Kremlin permitted to survive the party's official liquidation in 1938 in its baggage train. Already by the summer of 1944, the outlines of the East European overturns of the early post-war period are being defined. First comes the initial impulse of the Red Army, its military successes being the direct outcome of the incredible loyalty of its soldiers, and the entire working class, to the conquests of October. Then comes the response of the masses under Nazi rule to this impulse. The weakening and retreat of the Nazi oppressors gives them new hope. They take to arms, begin to secretly rebuild their traditional organisations. The national issues become intertwined with the movement of the proletariat towards political re-birth and power.

Because by virtue of its geographical position and historical tradition, Poland finds itself once again struggling for its national independence against both a lesser Stalinist and a greater imperialist evil, it contains within it the elements of both the social and the political revolution. The Warsaw uprising is an attempt by the masses to overthrow Nazi domination before the Kremlin can consolidate its own bureaucratic rule. Each in his own way, Hitler and Stalin appreciate the threat posed by an independent Poland,

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created in revolutionary struggle with the proletariat at its head. The Polish national movements opens the era of the political revolution in the sense that implicitly it challenges the right of the Kremlin to impose its own political system on the peoples of Eastern Europe, in accordance with the secret agreements concluded with the leaders of the allied imperialist powers. Yugoslavia is passing through the same process, but here the Kremlin is powerless to intervene militarily. The class logic of the movement unleashed by the initial resistance to Nazi domination will, in 1948, break through to the level of a challenge to the domination of the Kremlin over the buffer states. Despite the Stalinist origins of the Tito leadership, the break with the Kremlin in 1948 expresses, in a masked perverted form, the political revolution. And as stated, the origins of this process begin with the world turn in 1943.

The same progression of events takes place in Slovakia, which with the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1939, was established as a puppet fascist regime under the anti-semitic Priest Father Tiso. In 1944, the Slovaks stage a national uprising as the Red Army approaches, but as in Poland, the Kremlin rides rough-shod over the national aspirations of the Slovaks by re-creating the old, entirely artificial state of Czechoslovakia under Czech hegemony. It will take 20 years longer than in Yugoslavia for the repressed national movement to surface again, but revive it will, under the leadership of ~~Dubcek~~ Dubcek wing of the C.P., a faction that will draw most of its support from the Slovaks both within the party and without. Indubitably, the national question is not a supplementary factor in the political revolution, but one of its main motor forces. And, as in Poland (1956, and again in 1968 and 1970-71) and Yugoslavia, the initial thrust towards the political revolution is generated in the course of the very first stages of the revolutionary upturn that begins in 1943.

War

The war shakes up not only the social and political structure of its imperialist participants, victors and losers alike, but the USSR too. In ways that will not become evident until some time after its end, the war exerts such strains upon the Stalinist apparatus that the masses are able to snatch a modicum of political independence from the Kremlin where and when the opportunity presents itself, or grim necessity demands it in order that the USSR survive the initial disasters of the Nazi invasion. In Leningrad, citadel of the October Revolution, stronghold of the Zinoviev 'new opposition', the old traditions of workers' democracy begin to re-assert themselves in the course of the city's nearly three year long siege. Cut off from direct Kremlin rule, the hard-pressed party apparatus leans on the workers in order to save its own neck from the Nazi invaders. The long-bureaucratized Soviets begin to assume some genuine responsibilities for administration. The apparatus, unable to invoke the full weight of the Stalinist terror machine, has to rely to a limited degree on the initiative, inventiveness and loyalty to the revolution of the masses. The same basic process unfolds in those occupied regions of the USSR where partisan units establish close links with the local population. Even in the rest of the USSR, with the survival of not only the USSR, but the bureaucracy, at stake, Stalin ceases the terror of the mid and late 1930's. Party supervision of literature is slackened, religion is more readily tolerated (with an obvious preference for the loyalist Russian Orthodox Church). But the war also gives an impulse to the inevitable centrifugal tendencies produced by Stalin's repressive nationalities policy. Six entire national minorities are deported in this period from European Russia and deposited in the wastes of Soviet Asia. All these events and

processes, even if in their first stages of evolution and crystallisation, are components of the political revolution, and march in step with the revolutionary upturn throughout the world and especially, the rest of Europe. After the war, Stalin will, in stages, attempt to clamp the lid down again. The war literature is sharply attacked for failing to stress the 'leading role of the party' in the partisan and Red Army battles. ('The Red Guard' by D Fadeyev is a classic instance of this attempt to re-write the history of the war from the standpoint of the Kremlin - the author portrays with far too much sympathy - and accuracy - the independent mobilisation of the masses and youth in the war, and consequently, had been implicitly critical of the party's paralysis. Fadeyev has to re-write entire sections of his novel to placate his critics, and assist the bureaucracy in its drive for post-war 'normalisation').

The Leningrad Affair

The aftermath of the Leningrad seige comes a little later, when the local party leadership suffers an enormous purge - the so-called 'Leningrad Affair' (1949). The purge cuts deep into the party rank and file - obviously that section which has been most closely linked with the wartime mobilisation. IC O, C O O party members - IC O, C C O are rounded-up in one night. The top party chiefs - Kuznotzov and Voznosonsky - are executed on framed charges of seeking to restore capitalism, whereas in reality, they have simply advised that instead of brute coercion, production should be increased by means of 'material incentives' - i. e., higher wages for more work. This purge falls within the period of the Tito break, and the purge of real, suspected or imagined Titoites in the rest of the buffer states, and is certainly a component of the international crisis of the Kremlin brought on by the drive towards the political revolution in these countries. But once again, like the Yugoslav break, and the later turns in E. Germany, Poland, Hungary and then, in 1968, Czechoslovakia, this crisis has its own internal logic and driving force, one which derives from the resilience of the Soviet workers, their will and ability to defend the gains of October despite and if needs be against the counter-revolutionary apparatus. And this movement originates like its counterparts in East Europe, in the turn of early 1943.

This new wave of radicalisation grips Germany in basically the same fashion as all the other countries of Europe, whether in the axis bloc, or the allied. Even when the Nazi empire stretches from France to the Volga, the class struggle proceeds in a hidden, molecular form inside the heart of the seemingly triumphant Third Reich. Heroic workers risk almost certain torture and death in their attempts to maintain the underground skeleton structure of the old Labour movement. Both parties - SPD and KPD - maintain an underground cell system that despite constant arrests, executions, penetrations by the Gestapo and betrayals, preserves in an extremely tenuous form, the continuity of the class organisation of the German proletariat. Those tiny cells rapidly become the nuclei of the re-built German labour movement with the collapse of the Third Reich. (Though it is important to note here that just as in Portugal after the April, 1974 coup, so in Germany in 1945 the British Labour Party - and the TUC - play a key role in assisting in the re-building of the SPD and the free trade unions).

Strikes

Not even the tightly screwed lid of Himmler's S.S. and Gestapo can prevent the open outbreak of sporadic strikes. Although immediately crushed, with the instant execution of the leaders, those strikes testify not only to the immense courage of the German proletariat, but its revival as the war draws to its close. This revival is, of course, muffled and partially choked not only by the security apparatus of the Third Reich, but the Churchill-Roosevelt-Stalin strategy of unconditional surrender, and its political complement, the 'collective guilt' of the German people for the crimes of Nazism. Allied war aims serve as a gift from heaven for Goebbels' propaganda machine. Defeatist currents in the masses are therefore arrested in their earliest stages - but they nevertheless exist. The 'July Plot', falsely characterised by Stalinist and Western publicists alike as the inspiration of an officer corps anxious to avoid suicidal destruction in a lost war, testifies to the existence of the anti-Nazi current in the masses. KPD and SPD activities as well as former trade union officials, are deeply involved in the coup preparations. It is they who are ascribed the role by its military organisers of mobilising the workers against the Nazi regime once Hitler has been killed. The Stauffenberg wing of the military faction looks to the USSR, and not the imperialist west, for economic and social inspiration in the work of post-Hitler reconstruction. There is no doubt whatsoever that had the officers' coup proved successful in its initial aim of toppling the Nazi chiefs, the masses would have surged forward into the breach, just as 30 years later, they did in Portugal, when the Spinoza faction ousted the fascist regime of Caetano.

Germany

It is fear of such an upsurge in Germany, the strategic heartland of Europe - they key, as Trotsky called it, to the international situation - that drives forward the plans of the allies to grip Germany in a vice, to reduce it to the status of a semi-colony, once the war is over. The division of Germany into four zones is agreed before the Nazis are defeated. Meanwhile, Stalin prepares his own apparatus to rule that part of Germany allotted to the Kremlin. Old army officers captured in battle, headed by Field Marshal von Paulus, are easily converted to Stalinism, which they probably see as a Slav mutation of 'Prussian Socialism'. The 'Free Germany Committee', sporting the colours of the Hohenzollerns, functions as Stalin's right arm in re-introducing elements of the bourgeois order into occupied Germany. Again, this is a pre-emptive move against the movement towards political independence by the German proletariat - and hence, the political revolution in the USSR itself. As in Poland in 1939, and again in 1944, so in early 1945, the approach of the Red Army gives an initial, or rather, more accurately, an accelerating impulse, to the class struggle in Eastern Germany. Genuine workers' councils - anti-fascist committees - spring up from the underground, workers chase the hated Nazi bosses and their security forces out of the big plants. Red Flags, hastily dyed, hang out of windows as the Red Army's tanks roll through the industrial heartland of central Germany towards Berlin. An identical process is under way in the west of the country. Workers' councils appear in Hamburg. Old SPD and KPD activists at once begin to renew old pre-Nazi contacts and to make plans to re-build their shattered organisations. The revolutionary wave has reached Germany. So Stalin moves ruthlessly against it. The Olbricht-led team of German Stalinists, who arrive in Berlin in the wake of the Red Army, have as their first task, not the purging of Nazis, but the winding-up of the workers' councils, the

anti-fascist committees, which at once begin to assume the role of improvised organs of power in the liberated areas. In their places are established administrative bodies appointed from above by the Red Army command, staffed by trusted Stalinists, a sprinkling of old SPD functionaries and a sizable contingent of old bourgeois politicians and clergymen. Throughout Germany, the movement towards revolution is arrested, not only by the physical presence of the occupying forces, but the division of the country into four zones.

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Working-class organisation across zonal borders is forbidden, preventing the workers from re-building, at a national level, their organisations destroyed in 1933. Yet despite these obstacles the German proletariat does make giant strides in this direction. By the time of the first elections in the Western zone in 1949, the two workers' parties - SPD and KPD - secure 35% of the total vote, 4% more than the main capitalist party, the D. D. U. And some of the strongest centres of the SPD especially lie in the Soviet zone, where in 1946 the SPD is forcibly merged with the KPD. However, the German bourgeoisie and the Allies regard the loss of the East as a small price to pay for the division and disruption of what is potentially the most powerful and politically advanced proletariat in Europe. The division of Germany is the necessary condition for checking the movement towards the United Socialist States of Europe, with the political revolution in the USSR as one of its essential components. From this time on, each forward surge of the revolution in Europe will come hard up against the counter-revolutionary structure imposed on the continent in 1945 by the Kremlin and the imperialist allies. It is, and will remain, the central and permanently operating factor in the joint counter-revolutionary strategy of imperialism and Stalinism.

In Asia, the clash between the two imperialist camps provides the colonial peoples with a series of openings. In India, a wing of the Congress Party refuses to collaborate with the British war effort against Japan. Strikes and civil disobedience begin to assume a mass character (1942 onwards). The Indian Stalinists, egged on by their colonial masters in the CPGB, finger Indian nationalist militants to the British authorities. The national movement is only finally arrested by the policy of 'divide and rule' - the partition of 1947 - and the collaboration in this policy by the Indian bourgeoisie.

In China, the national war against Japan contains within it the embryo of the social revolution against the Chinese landlords and capitalists. Though held in check by the Mao leadership of the CPC, the revolutionary upsurge generates enormous power as the war draws to an end. A massive strike wave - the first since the second revolution of 1925-1927 - rolls through KMT-held China. The overthrow of capitalist rule in China is an immediate possibility.

Far East

Similar national movements grow in breadth and depth in Indo-China, the Philippines and the Dutch East Indies (later Indonesia). They have as their immediate targets the removal of the Japanese occupiers. But whatever the desires of their leaderships (important segments of which, supported or penetrated by the Stalinists, seek the restoration of allied imperialist rule

on anew basis) they present a threat to the former colonial powers displaced by the Japanese conquests of the first years of the Pacific war. Here too, as in the case of the political revolution in Eastern Europe, the impetus generated in this initial period, despite the checks placed upon it by the deal between the Kremlin and world imperialism, which reasserts itself in later periods - the Indonesian war of independence (1948-1949), the Indo-Chinese war against France (ending in 1954) and then the subsequent struggles to evict its U.S. successors (ending in 1975).

Although it lies a little outside the period of the first upturn of 1943-1947, the defeat of imperialism in mainland China (1949) is achieved on the basis of the revolutionary energies released in this opening phase. Unlike the two earlier periods of revolutionary upsurge (1916-1923, 1934-1937) nowhere, except Greece, is there a partial, let alone serious, defeat inflicted on the working class. Only Spain and Portugal are visibly unaffected by this new radicalisation.

Leftism

This world wide turn in the political situation, centred on Europe, also provides the impetus for the re-establishment in France, of the central leadership of the Fourth International (1944). It now operates on a political terrain vastly different from that in which it was conceived and founded, though from the very beginning, its cadres almost without exception commit the classic leftist error of failing to find the correct tactical forms and expressions for their basically correct strategical conceptions. This period of the first upturn, during which the re-established F.I. central leadership, and its sections, tended more and more to act as if they were already the leadership of the class, sows the first seeds of what will flower openly in 1951-1953 as Pabloism. But errors of tempo, tactics and perspective notwithstanding, the re-establishment of the Secretariat is a great step forward, without which the national sections and scattered cadres could not have continued to function in an organised political fashion. What holds the Fourth International back are not only the objective difficulties created by the war and the consequent losses of cadres, but its failure to appreciate that unlike the first revolutionary wave, when sizable segments of the workers rapidly broke from the reformist and centrist leaders and went over to Bolshevism, in this new upturn, the masses test out all over again their traditional organisations. The F.I. fails to align its tactics with this deep-going desire in the proletariat to rebuild and place in power the organisations destroyed or weakened in and before the war by fascism and the period of reaction. Here arise in all their starkness the questions of the united front and the workers' and peasants' government. The F.I. fails to apply either the teachings of the third and fourth congresses, or that section of the Transitional Programme devoted to the problem of the workers' government. Leftist conceptions, entirely alien to Trotskyism, thus show themselves to be deeply entrenched in the organisation that, ironically, was born out of a defeat only made possible by the adventurist policies of the Kremlin in Germany. This Leftism when its false perspectives begin to collapse by the time of the first check to the revolutionary wave (1947-1948), will turn into its opportunist mirror image. After a flirtation with Tito, Pablo will call for 'deep entry' into the Stalinist parties, which are 'projecting a revolutionary orientation' under the pressure of the war danger. To them is ascribed the task of carrying through the revolution the F.I. wrongly believed to be its own role in the first period of the upturn. This oscillation from Leftism to opportunism

recapitulates, in a strictly limited sense, the Zinovievist Left course of 1924 collapsing into the Stalin-Bukharin rightist course of 1925-1927, only with the all-important exception that the 1924 Leftism arose in a real period of decline, whereas the F.I.'s initial leftism is generated by a false tactical appreciation of a genuinely revolutionary period. This period, enormously rich in lessons for the vanguard, must be studied over and over again if we are not to repeat the same and associated errors committed then by the leadership of the F.I.

The Partial Check of 1947-1949

The high tide of this initial period of flow is reached in 1947, by which time, under the pressure of United States imperialism (this is theyear of the Marshal Plan and the Trueman Doctrine) the Kremlin imposes its wholesale nationalisations from above on the E. European buffer states, adapting not only their political and military organisations, but their economics, to those of the USSR. The old bourgeois politicians on which the Kremlin had lent against the workers in the period of the revolutionary rise are now either ousted, or stripped of all real power. The Kremlin also strikes out to the left, banning or forcibly merging with its own apparatus all other workers' parties (as in Hungary, Poland, E. Germany, Czechoslovakia). But although physically liquidated, in nearly every case these parties will re-emerge in the period of the rise of the political revolution as an integral component of the political life of the workers of E. Europe. Although carried through in a classic laeftist fashion, disguised as a blow against social democracy, this move by Stalin is in reality yet another pre-emptive measure against the ever-present threat of an independent crystallisation of the proletariats of the buffer states. If Stalin permits even in only one buffer state the legal existance of a workers' party other than the CP, then it will become, inevitably, a focus of proletarian opposition to the regime, and an example that can invite imitation in other Kremlin-ruled states - including the USSR itself.

Thus while the economic overturns, and the destruction of the last remnants of the old political system in E. Europe, constitute a big gain for the working class of those countries, and for the world proletariat, they have a conditional character, being limited by the reactionary methods with which this overturn is carried through - from above, by police-military measures which exclude, and are indeed aimed against, the independent class action of the workers. The crushing of all semblance of either bourgeois or workers' democracy in the buffer states likewise is an entirely negative product of the overturns, and a necessary condition of the Kremlin's being prepared and able to carry them through. They lower in the eyes of the workers of all Europe, and indeed the world, the prestige of the Russian revolution, in whose name these regimes quite falsely claim to act. Nowhere is this more true than in E. Germany, where the regime, established by foreign bayonets and tanks, rests on the denial of the German people's right to national unity and self-determination. The horrors of the mass expulsions of Germans from East Prussia and Silesia p approaching 15 million in all - feeds the anti-communist confusion and reaction in the west. The partition of Germany is performing its allotted function of erecting a barrier to the proletarian revolution in not only that country, but all Europe.

Buffer States

The buffer state overturns therefore mark at the same time a high point in this first wave in Europe, and also its checking. The tempo slackens also in the USA, where the strike wave peters out after the workers secure substantial gains after long years of enforced sacrifice in the war. In Britain, the Labour government, after the nationalisation of sectors of the infrastructure, and the enactment of its social legislation, calls a halt to any more radical measures (1948). Cripps succeeds in selling a voluntary wage freeze. There are few signs as yet of a left swing in the ranks as a reaction to this retreat at the top. And in Asia, the Labour government mobilises militarily against the CP-led national movement in Malaya, which after years of bitter fighting, is effectively crushed. Armed repressions are also launched in Kenya.

But in China, despite the decline of the strike and peasant movement of the first upturn, the Chiang regime begins to fall apart, partly through its own internal corruption and decay. Taking care not to mobilise the workers in the KMT-held regions, Mao's peasant-based armies drive Chiang from the mainland (October 1949). Imperialism suffers a gigantic reverse in Asia, one that matches easily its losses in E. Europe. Neither ~~it is~~ a defeat that Stalin can look upon without mixed feelings, for it poses a threat to the Kremlin's hegemony in the 'socialist camp'. (Stalin in fact advised Mao against any attempt to seize power, just as he did Tito during the war, and the Greek Party leaders a little later). The defeat of imperialism in China changes the entire balance of forces in Asia, and consequently, at a world level. The Korean War follows almost at once, in which U.S. imperialism fails to redress in any sense this new balance. So in effect, despite partial temporary stabilisation in Europe (which ends in the East in 1948 with the Tito break), the class struggle gains new vantage points for the world proletariat in another area. This return to the uneven pattern established in the pre-war period of ebbs within flows, and flows within ebbs, will remain a central characteristic of the class struggle from the late 1940's until now. One of the factors contributing to the unique shape of the curve of revolutionary ascent in the period 1943-1947 is the immobilisation of the military forces of world imperialism. Not only are the axis forces shattered by 1945. The forces of the victorious imperialist powers were inhibited from taking firmer action in Europe and elsewhere not so much by legalistic and other material factors as the political consciousness of the rank and file soldiers, who had been themselves radicalised by the war and their experiences in it. British servicemen vote overwhelmingly Labour in 1945, while G.I.'s demonstrate all over the world to be brought back home to the USA. Those armies are morally and politically incapable of fighting large-scale counter-revolutionary wars in Asia or Europe. Hence the strategic importance of the Kremlin's intervention on the side of the status quo in world politics, without which imperialism could never have preserved its dominance.

The Political Revolution Begins - 1948-1953

Stalin's clamp down in E. Europe co-incides with a temporary stalemate in the West (ejections of Stalinists from coalitions in Belgium, France and Italy, integration of W. Germany into the imperialist system etc.). The Cominform is founded in 1947 to secure tighter control over the buffer states and the major western CPs. Less than a year later, the one CP that had carried through its own revolution without outside aid from the Kremlin (indeed, against its instructions) breaks from the 'Soviet bloc'. The 'two camp' theory

promulgated by Zhadanov is openly defied and threatened by Yugoslavia's defection from the Cominform. And here, too, the proletariat on which Tito based his partisan units in the anti-Nazi struggle carries the main burdon of the struggle against Stalin. Leaning on the workers, but only after the break with Stalin, the Tito leadership institutes its policy of 'workers self-management', which involves making a series of far-reaching concessions to the workers in the day to day running of industry. Although regulated from above, a genuine political discussion begins in the CP and the country as a whole on the nature, origins and role of Stalinism. And naturally, the Kremlin replies by accusing Tito of being simultaneously an ex-agent of the gestapo, a Wall Street spy, and ... a Trotskyist.

Stalin's reply to the Tito break, with all its political implications, is to stage a series of show trials of 'Titoites' in the buffer states. Not one of them escapes the purge. Top party leaders are arrested on trumped-up charges of spying for the imperialist powers and links with western social democracy, Tito, and the Fourth International. All confess, and are either sentenced to long jail terms, or executed. The prisons are filled to overflowing. In the midst of this purge, the Kremlin orders a new adventurist turn in economic policy, with forced collectivisation, and crazy targets for industry. The peasants and workers are driven to breaking point as the Kremlin vainly attempts to make the 'socialist camp' economically self-sufficient. The political counterpart to this economic isolationism is Stalin's campaign against 'cosmopolitanism', which begins in the USSR, but which spreads quickly to the other buffer states. Not only in politics, but art and science, the Kremlin attempts to sever all the bloc's links with the rest of Europe - again in conformity with the strategy that produced the Potsdam agreements. The first stage of this campaign, based on the theory of 'two camps', and not two classes, is guided by Stalin's 'cultural' advisor, Zhdanov. 'Cosmopolitan', anti-Russian tendencies are detected in novels, poems, symphonies, genetics, linguistics, cybernetics, painting, historiography, philosophy - in fact in every domain of human activity. Other associated heresies also emerge at this time, reflecting the deepening opposition to Stalin's repressive nationalities policy. 'Bourgeois nationalist' deviations are unearthed in the music of national minorities' composers (Khachaturian), literature and history writing. The omnipotent and super-centralist tendencies in the Bonapartist regime of Stalin reach undreamt of Byzantine proportions. But they are not the projection of the cult or will of one man, but the defensive response of the apparatus (which in turn delegates, in true Bonapartist fashion, all political decisions to a single arbiter), to the manifold threats to its rule that are being generated below. The slightest opening, be it in the field of music or even more abstract spheres, might be seized upon by the masses as an avenue of approach to the political revolution. This Stalin knows. He takes good care to stop up all the gaps, no matter what the cost.

Writers

On a less rarified plane, strident attacks are made on writers who fail to 'say yes to life' by embellishing grim Stalinist reality in accordance with the police art doctrine of 'socialist realism'. 'Positive heroes' and 'no conflict' situations are obligatory for those writers who wish to see their work published. The whole apparatus of official Soviet 'culture' is mobilised to crush any incipient crystallisation of independent thought in any field whatsoever. This last period of Stalin's rule raises to their apogee all those

traits of totalitarianism that Trotsky initially detected and analysed in his writings on the USSR in the period of the thermidorian degeneration. But now the contradiction between the regime and the property relations is far more acute even than in Trotsky's day. And in its turn, the growth of the productive forces has generated a vast working class which despite its atomisation, still manages to exert an increasing pressure, through its role in production and the planned nature of the economy, on the bureaucracy. Even the top summits of the apparatus feel compelled to bend to this pressure by periodic demagogic attacks on bureaucracy, mismanagement, clumsy interference in the arts by the party, insensitivity to the needs of the workers etc. As Stalin's death approaches, it is evident that the crisis within the apparatus cannot be contained much longer, and the same proves to be true for its agencies in the buffer states.

Doctors Plot

This phase of the Kremlin's campaign against the growing threat of political revolution reaches its barbaric climax with the so-called 'doctors' plot', in which a group of leading Soviet doctors, most of them Jews, are arrested on frame-up charges of attempting to poison prominent Stalinist officials (January, 1953). Also at this time, Stalin considers a plan to deport the entire population of the Ukraine and re-settle it with Russians. The persecution of the Jews approaches pre-1939 Nazi proportions. Chauvinism, an anti-semitism, anti-intellectualism, more mass purges and show trials, hermetic isolation of the 'socialist camp' - those are the Kremlin's answers to the ever-deepening crisis of the Stalinist regimes.

Stalin's death in March 1953 therefore does not create but rather accelerates, the open political crisis that begins in that year. A factional struggle breaks out inside the Soviet leadership, and the group headed by Malenkov and Boria temporarily wins out, with its policy of making tactical concessions in both the USSR and the buffer states, and by re-opening talks with imperialism. The immediate result is a sudden change of leaders and policies in most of the E. European states - i. e. Nagy returns to the government in Hungary. The masses sense the turn, and the rifts in the apparatus. They attempt to force their own demands through the gaps in the state and party machine. They succeed in taking advantage of the temporary disorientation of the apparatus caused by the death of Stalin and the change of tactics in the Kremlin. A short cultural 'thaw' begins in Moscow, which has its counterpart in Hungary, and at a more discreet level, in some of the other buffer states. Hints are made of a rapprochement with Tito, which at once raises the question of the unequal relationship of all the buffer states with the Kremlin against which Yugoslavia successfully rebelled.

The prospect of such a detente also places a question mark against all the 'Titoite' frame-up trials. This new turn is therefore fraught with possible dangers for the Kremlin and its client regimes, even though some easing of the Stalin terror is a dire necessity for economic as well as political reasons. The turning point comes in Germany, where the submerged processes of the previous decade break through to the surface in spectacular fashion.

Beria-Malenkov

The new turn in the Kremlin leadership struggle, itself revolving around the linked problems of how to head off the threat of political revolution, and

establish more stable relations with imperialism, throws the E. German Stalinist regime into crisis. Rumours abound of the Beria-Malenkov faction preparing to 'neutralise' E. Germany as a means of proving its good faith to the imperialists. In the ranks of the workers, this is seen in another light, as a possible opening to begin the struggle for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from the Eastern Zone, and the reunification of the nation through free elections in all Germany. Without doubt, the crisis in the Kremlin feeds the political radicalisation of the E. German workers, and deepens the crisis of the Ulbricht regime. Flashpoint in fact occurs when the Ulbricht regime, in the wake of making a range of concessions, economic and political, to the middle class and medium property owners, imposes increased work-norms on wide sections of the working class. On 17th July, after smaller demonstrations and strikes the previous day by construction workers in E. Berlin, revolt flares up all over the Zone. It is crushed so quickly that there is no time for the workers to construct the workers' councils that were built in the course of the Hungarian Revolution three years later. But the political demands of the workers demonstrate not only the revolutionary direction and content of the uprising, but also underline the strategic importance of the national-democratic components of the political revolution. Among the most popular demands raised by the E. German workers are not only those for a reduction of the work norms, and an end to the slave driving methods of the Ulbricht regime, but the withdrawal of Soviet troops, the abolition of the zones, free elections throughout Germany, and for the legalisation of the banned S.P.D. On the workers' march through E. Berlin on 17th July, the slogan is changed - 'Neither with Ulbricht nor Adenauer, but united under Cillenbauer' (Adenauer is the right wing C.D.U. Chancellor of West Germany, Cillenbauer the S.P.D. leader). Ulbricht may have "solved" the problem of the SPD in the East by his shot-gun fusion of 1946, but it rears its head again in 1953, as the workers seek an organisational vehicle for the political demands. The SPD proves itself to be the party of all the German working class, Soviet zone included.

East Berlin

This uprising is not only the product of the crisis in the Kremlin and the buffer states, however. It also expresses the renewed upturn in the class struggle in Western Europe. In West Germany, throughout the late forties and early fifties, the SPD and the trade unions have been mobilising hundreds of thousands of workers against allied plans to re-militarise Germany, to annexe the western zone as part of the U.S. anti-Soviet alliance. Huge rallies of workers against German re-armament and a series of massive political strikes on the same issue testify that the workers reject the partition of their country just as much in the Western zone as in the East. The East German uprising consequently evokes enormous sympathy in the Western zone, and in West Berlin especially, where the Allied military authorities seal the border to prevent the infection from spreading. When a group of workers escape to the Western sector of the city in order to broadcast news of the uprising to workers in the rest of the Eastern zone of Germany, the U.S. controlled radio network refuses them permission to give their report. Official news broadcasts instead call upon the East German workers to show restraint and 'demand only what is possible'. The Potsdam agreement is proving itself to be not only the central target of the East German uprisings but its main obstacle. The Kremlin and imperialism alike fear this revolutionary movement for German unification, even though

it at no stage consciously raises sharply the social and economic content of a re-unified Germany. Indeed one of the most dramatic and moving episodes in the revolt is the tearing down of the Red Flag over the Brandenburg Gate, the flag which for the East German workers has become a symbol of their oppression by the Kremlin's occupying forces. In its place is hoisted the flag of Berlin - the traditional bear - to rapturous cheering by the assembled workers. Three years later in Hungary the Budapest workers will not only haul down the statue of Stalin that mocks their national oppression, but rip out of the Hungarian national flag the five-pointed Soviet star. In both cases Stalinist and imperialist propagandists will ^{seize} upon these impassioned acts against the symbols of Kremlin tyranny as proof of the anti-communist nature of these two rebellions. In reality they simply demonstrate that he who does not understand the profoundly national-democratic content of the political revolution is hopelessly lost, and will become, sooner or later, trapped either by imperialism or by its Stalinist agency.

And this is in fact the fate of Pablo. Already committed to his policy, advanced in 1951, of 'deep entry' into the Stalinist parties as they begin to 'project a revolutionary orientation' under the pressure of the war danger, he is compelled not only to play down and even deny the national-democratic demands and content of the East German uprising, but claim that under the pressure of the ~~workers~~ Stalinist regime and its Kremlin protectors are making deep-going concessions. The comments and statements of the Pablo-dominated Secretariat give undue emphasis to the economic demands of the workers, and, after the revolt, to the fact that some of them are met in part by the Ulbricht regime. This method has its own logic. It is precisely the economic demands that the Kremlin is most prepared to meet, since they do not, of themselves, place in question the domination of the bureaucracy. But the national-democratic demands - withdrawal of Soviet troops, abolition of the zones, free elections in all Germany, legalisation of the SPD, do. Thus Pablo now performs the function of a left pseudo-Trotskyist cover for the counter-revolutionary role and actions of the Kremlin in crushing the East German uprising. And by the same token he places the leading bodies and apparatus of the Fourth International on the side of the Kremlin, and, therefore, in the last analysis of the imperialists - the interests of which it serves, against the organic movement of the European proletariat towards the social and political revolution and the United Socialist States of Europe.

This is the outcome of Pablo's acceptance of the Zhdanov theory and strategy of the 'two camps', the division of the world, not into classes but in rival blocs. Pablo's orientation towards the Kremlin 'bloc' as the motor force of progress and world revolution (leaving in its train deformed workers' states that will last for centuries) necessarily involves an acceptance, post factum, of the Potsdam agreements, the division of Europe and the division of Germany. Neither is it only symbolic that the first revolutionary challenge to this system should erupt at the heart of divided Europe and divided Germany, in Berlin itself, the partition of which between the four occupying powers was intended to be the capstone of the counter-revolutionary deal between the Kremlin and imperialism to block the process, already in motion in 1943, towards the United Socialist States of Europe. From 1953 it will be correct to say that not only has the period re-opened of the struggle for the realisation of the programme of the United Socialist States of Europe, but that, ranged alongside the main counter-revolutionary agencies of the

Kremlin and imperialism against it are those cadres of the Fourth International who have gone over to Pablo-ism in all its guises.

Split

And this betrayal is symmetric. Scarcely has the East German uprising been crushed than in France a strike in the postal services develops into a movement of general strike dimensions. This strike movement coincides and in fact is linked with, the deepening crisis of French rule in Indo-China, where the liberation forces are nearing victory. Here presents itself a splendid opportunity for the Kremlin to prove its gratitude for the understanding shown by the imperialists at the time of the East German uprising the previous month. The Stalinist-controlled C.G.T. breaks the strike. And just as in the case of the East German uprising, the Pablo-ites come to the aid of the Stalinists. When the expelled French majority (now the CCI) issues leaflets in Renault denouncing the CGT leadership for its treachery, the Pablo-ites counter-attack with another leaflet, defending the CGT leadership by claiming that the CGT is a trade union, not a political party, and therefore should not be attacked for failing to give political leadership during a strike.

Once more the logic of Pablo's initial proposition that Stalinism could project a revolutionary orientation leads to capitulation, not only to the Kremlin, but in this case directly to imperialism. These twin betrayals compel the S.W.P. to make a sharp turn against Pablo, and the events are set in train that will lead at the end of 1953 to the 'Open Letter of the Socialist Workers' Party' and then, in early 1954, to the founding of the International Committee.

Just as in the case of the degeneration of the CPSU and the Comintern, the crisis and then the split in the Fourth International is a product of historic events and brutally sharp turns in the world class struggle. The specific response of the cadres and sections to these events is, in its turn, shaped to a large degree by the political methods which they have developed over the previous years. Here national and other factors play their part. The sum-total of all those elements in the crisis and split is a bloc - the International Committee - the disparate and even contradictory components of which will only reveal themselves by successive stages of and new sharp turns in the world class struggle.

In the summer of the same year the Kremlin is then rocked by the first mass revolt against its own rule - the general strike at the Vorkuta slave camp. The crisis precipitated by the death of Stalin and the accompanying radicalisation in the Soviet and Eastern European masses, has penetrated even into the prison colonies of the far North and Siberia. Hurried decisions are made to dismantle a part of the apparatus of horror built up in the last years of Stalin's rule. The process is set in motion as a direct result of this revolt of the Kremlin's slaves, of the release of millions of political prisoners (many of them Soviet soldiers captured by the Nazis, who were charged and jailed for treason on their return home) held in those giant colonies and used as cheap labour for Stalin's grandiose construction schemes such as the near-useless Volga-Don canal. Their return to civilian life, with their horror accounts of life in Stalin's camps, their desire to put an end to police terror, will act as a yeast, accelerating the fermentation already at work amongst the Soviet youth, workers and intellectuals. The rise to prominence of the former camp inmate Solzhenitsin as a leader of the dissident movement,

as well as his justified fame as a writer, originates in this process which began in 1953 with the East German revolt and the Vorkuta general strike, and the partial retreat of the apparatus under the pressure that those uprisings generated.

Khrushchev

1953 therefore marks a water-shed in several ways. In the USSR after the shock of East Germany and Vorkuta the Beria-Malenkov faction comes under attack from the 'intransigents'. Beria is ousted almost at once and executed on the usual frame-up charge of being an imperialist spy. Khrushchev makes his initial bid for power as a 'hard-liner', an opponent of the cultural 'thaw' and of Malenkov's policy of favouring consumer industry (an obvious attempt to placate the workers and collective farmers). The down-grading and then the removal of Malenkov has its parallel in the buffer states with a reversal to tougher policies and the ousting of leaders associated with Malenkov's tactics (Nagy is sacked early in 1955). But the new Khrushchev-Bulganin team cannot impose the old Stalinist methods. The previous phase, brief though it was, of easing, has generated an independent momentum at every level of Soviet and Eastern European society below the apparatus. So then comes the stunning about-turn of 1956, when Khrushchev delivers his secret report on Stalin's crimes (or rather some of them) to delegates at the 20th Congress of the CPSU. A new stage of the political revolution begins.

The simultaneous eruption of the French General Strike and the East German uprising testifies to the unity of the international class struggle, which assumes different forms when refracted through the distinct and unique national terrains and the two property systems of divided Europe. But the inner unity of the political and social revolution is not to be mistaken for uniformity, any more than the former is to be understood as merely a reflex and projection of the latter (after the fashion of Healy-ism, itself riddled with Pablo-ite/ conceptions, despite the split of 1953, as well as strong 'Third Period' and Left Communist admixtures). They proceed according to the law of uneven as well as of combined development - Hungary and Poland will pass through revolutionary crisis while the majority of the capitalist countries enter upon a period of partial stability, on the foundations of the deep-going post-war boom.

But what gives strength to the movement towards the political revolution in the USSR and the buffer states is, undoubtedly, the patent inability of imperialism to inflict any serious or lasting defeats on the working class of the major capitalist countries or on the masses in the semi-colonial states. The USA is checked in Korea. The Chinese revolution, though held in a firm grip by the Mao leadership, nevertheless continues to retain the momentum it generated in the early post-war period. In Britain, although the Labour Party loses the 1951 General Election, it records its highest-ever vote. At the same time, continued radicalisation of the more advanced workers thrusts itself to the fore in the shape of Bevanism and the beginnings of a slow change in the trade unions that will later bear fruit with the rise of the left-wing current represented at the top of the apparatus by Cousins and then Jones in the T&GWU, Scanlon in the AUEW, and Daley in the NUM. In the USA McCarthyism fails to achieve one of its aims, that of intimidating the trade unions, which cling on to the gains won in the early post-war strike wave. The French imperialists are defeated

at Dien Bien Phu in 1954. Capitalist rule is rescued in that part of the world only by the Moscow-Peking deal with the West at Geneva a little later. Then, in the same year, the Algerian nation begins its revolt against French rule. Africa becomes an arena of struggle against several imperialisms, British, French, Belgian, Portuguese, with the US waiting in the wings to pick up the pieces. In the same period, the Arab masses begin to intensify their struggle against their own corrupt regimes (Egypt, then Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq) and the Zionist annexation of Palestine. In 1956, synchronised with the Kremlin rape of Budapest (4th November) comes the joint French-British-Israeli attack on Suez, an operation that, unlike the Kremlin's strangling of the Hungarian political revolution, does not have the full backing of US imperialism. It ends in fiasco, and further deepens the crisis of the Fourth Republic, and precipitates a new crisis in the Tory leadership in Britain.

Japan

In Japan, whose strategic position in Asia stands in a similar relationship to that of Germany in Europe, the working class has succeeded, by exploiting the democratic manoeuvres of the US occupying forces, in re-building its parties and trade unions banned for nearly two decades under the military regime of Emperor Hirohito. It enters the international political arena in this period by resisting attempts to involve Japan in a new imperialist alliance against China and the USSR.

The Pablo-ites deduce from this temporary easing of the class struggle in Europe and the USA (the centres of the strongest workers' organisations) and the emergence of what they wrongly called the 'colonial revolution' in Africa, Asia and Latin America, that there has arisen a new 'epicentre' of the world revolution. Thus, like all previous deviations from and perversions of Bolshevism, Pablo's new orientation arises from a false appreciation of the processes and stages through which the world class struggle must pass - it ebbs within flows, it flows within ebbs, and then partial stabilisations. Pablo-ism originally arose on the basis of the acceptance of the Kremlin and imperialism as the determining factors in world politics, and consequently that within this framework the Fourth International had to align itself with the 'Soviet bloc'. This was called 'the new reality'. The partial ebb of 1947 was not seen as a stage in an overall process of revolution, demanding new tactics in accordance with both it and overall strategy, but understood instead as the starting-point of a new strategy oriented towards world Stalinism. The method having been established, Pablo now turns towards another 'new vanguard' - this time the left-inclined elements in the leadership of the 'colonial revolution' - F.L.N. in Algeria, later Castro-ism in Cuba etc. etc. In reality, what was unfolding in the 'third world' was not a classless 'colonial revolution', but the proletarian revolution in the colonies - the process of the permanent revolution, which begins with democratic-national tasks, but can only solve them and pass on to socialist construction under the dictatorship of the proletariat, and at the level of world economic collaboration. Just as in the case of East Germany, Pablo-ism erects a barrier to this process. Here too the adaptation is in the last analysis to imperialism, through the medium this time of the petty-bourgeois nationalist leaderships.

1956 - A New Stage in the Political Revolution

In 1955, the Kremlin, coming under the leadership of a Khrushchev faction in its initial phase of seeking to impose a tougher regime both at home and in the buffer states, establishes the Warsaw Pact. The high point of the 'Cold War' has long since passed (the Korean war ends in 1953, while the Geneva Peace Conference, which imposed partition on Vietnam, has laid the basis for an Asian Potsdam agreement). It is more than likely that even as early as 1955 the Kremlin considers as its main enemy, not the pressure of imperialism, exercised through NATO - for the USSR has by this time developed the H-Bomb and is fast advancing its rocketry - but the threat of the political revolution, which in East Germany and Vorkuta became real.

The terms of the Warsaw Pact give to the Kremlin de jure recognition of the right, which it already exerted, to station its troops on the soil of the buffer states and to subordinate openly the armed forces of these countries to the Soviet High Command and the political discipline of the Kremlin. Comecon, the Soviet counterpart of the EEC and the economic equivalent of the Warsaw Pact, also helped to tighten Kremlin control over the buffer states in this period.

Warsaw Pact

The role of the Warsaw Pact, the existence of which and, therefore, the functions of which, the WRP defends to this day, becomes starkly obvious only a year after its foundation. First in Poland, then in Hungary, the Kremlin uses the powers given to it under the Pact. It intimidates the workers moving towards the political revolution in Poland - a last-minute deal between the newly-appointed Gomulka and the Kremlin averts open clashes - and physically crushes them in Hungary. We began ~~this~~ resolution by re-stating the basic axiom that Marxism is the conscious expression of the unconscious historic process. Marxism, as distilled, concentrated and made concrete in the founding programme of the Fourth International, gave, eighteen years before the event, the conscious expression to the unconscious process of the political revolution. In Poland, as in Germany three years before, the prelude to the open crisis is a split within the top-most levels of the apparatus. The same process evolves in Hungary, at an almost identical tempo. In its turn, this division in the national party apparatuses, driven forward from below by the increasing pressure of the radicalised workers, youth and intellectuals, is accelerated by an equally profound rupture within the Kremlin. Having ousted Malenkov for his too 'liberal' concessions in the USSR and the buffer states, and spending his first year of power seeking, albeit cautiously, to revive some of the crudest methods of Stalin's last years, Khrushchev performs an about-turn. He breaks from his 'hard-line' Stalinist allies, Molotov, Kaganovich and others, who will be denounced at the 22nd Party Congress in 1961 as leaders of the so-called 'anti-party' group (the faction that unsuccessfully attempted to unseat Khrushchev in 1957, after the tumultuous upheavals of the previous year, for which they held him directly responsible - with a degree of justification).

For Khrushchev, his 'secret speech', which burst like a bomb-shell on the unsuspecting delegates, is primarily a factional ploy. It is designed to harness the growing anti-Stalinist current in the masses and even the lowest levels of the party, to his own band-wagon. It also has undoubted pre-emptive motives. But like all such manoeuvres, it gives added impetus to

the very process he is seeking to arrest. Then the speech is reported back to local Party organisations, meetings break up in disorder. Leningrad University is in ferment. All over the USSR students demand how and why Stalin's crimes could take place in a country that claimed to be socialist. The questioning not only percolates down into the ranks of the industrial working class but spills over into the various buffer-states. There the regimes are still executing the hard line initiated by Khrushchev in early 1955 after the fall of Malenkov. The former ang... the already advanced process of radicalisation in Hungary and Poland, which, unlike Yugoslavia and East Germany, have not experienced any open manifestation of anti-Stalinist opposition. Yet another zig-zag is forced upon the Polish and Hungarian regimes, this time in the direction of concessions to the masses. In Hungary, the regime creates an 'official' opposition - the Potofi Circle - which is intended to function as a safety valve for discontented intellectuals. But like Khrushchev's speech, this manoeuvre becomes a vehicle for deepening the radicalisation, not only of the intellectuals, but the youth and workers. They attend in their thousands lectures and debates on party policy and cultural affairs that go on, in an electric and emotionally charged atmosphere, until the early hours of the morning. As a last ditch attempt to head off the approaching revolution, the Kremlin forces the old Stalinist butcher Rakosi to stand down for Nagy. But this too only gives an added impetus to the crisis. The revolution breaks out in October, and after a tactical retreat, is drowned in the blood of thousands of workers by the Red Army. But not before, unlike E. Germany in 1953, the Hungarian workers throw up, quite spontaneously, genuine organs of power - workers' councils - (soviets) and a founded-out programme for the overthrow of the bureaucracy, the defence of the nationalised economy, and the building of a developed workers' democracy.

Poland

In Poland, the same process is under way, but is arrested by the Gomulka leadership. Gomulka, expelled from the Polish CP for 'nationalist' and 'social democratic' deviations during the anti-Tito purges, returns to the leadership in the Autumn of 1956, after the workers' revolt of Poznan earlier in the year (June, 1956) signalled the entry of the masses into Polish politics for the first time since the Warsaw uprising of 1944. His reputation as an anti-Stalinist martyr enables him to head off the independent crystallisation of a council system of the type that arose in Hungary, though he has to veer far to the left in the first weeks of his rule. He cannot prevent the rise of factory councils, which while not presenting a direct challenge to his government - in fact, in its early days and even months it is a popular one - do express the movement of the proletariat towards class independence. They will be gradually wound up over the next two years, and their functions usurped by the state-controlled trade unions.

In Hungary, the power of the workers' councils reaches its peak under the heel of the Red Army, whose commanders are compelled to negotiate with the democratic representatives of the Hungarian proletariat. Piecemeal, the workers' councils are dismantled, their leaders arrested, and often executed. A series of total general strikes rocks the Quisling Kadar regime, but it survives with the backing of the Kremlin- and because of the relative quiescence of the class struggle in the West. Other-fundamental features and trends in the political revolution as a component of the European revolution come to the fore in the course of the Polish and Hungarian events.

One, that when confronted with the actuality of the political revolution, all the factions of the international Stalinist movement close their ranks, from Peking to Kilsly and Belgrade. Mao, Tito, Ulbricht, Togliatti, Pollitt, Thorez, ~~Dimitroff~~, ~~Merz~~, ~~and~~ ~~others~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~emphasing~~ of the Hungarian workers, and justifying the second Soviet intervention that crushes it. The biographer of Trotsky, Deutscher, adds his voice to the chorus of slander against the Hungarian workers, who are accused of following the lead of fascists and agents of imperialism. Secondly, the national-democratic issues come to the fore powerfully, as they did in Germany in 1953. All tendencies in the revolution unite in demanding not only the withdrawal of Soviet troops, but withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact, a demand which is so popular that Nagy has to accede to it.

Tito-Gomulka

In Poland, Gomulka has the greatest difficulty in resisting similar demands. Here, at a far higher level, is being expressed the movement towards the revolutionary unification of Europe that lay beneath the break by the Tito regime from the Kremlin in 1948. Then, one of the elements producing the tension between the Kremlin and the buffer states had been the organic tendency of the Balkan states to gravitate towards a federation - Dimitroff had, at one stage, shortly before his death, hinted that this might provide the answer to some of the national and economic problems of S.E. Europe. Fearing that even a bureaucratically imposed 'federation' might generate independent political currents in the countries concerned, Stalin blocked the plan, and intensified his drive to subordinate all the Balkan states to the Kremlin. The Tito break came almost at once. Now the Hungarian revolution raises again this same nationalities problem, only at a far higher level. In Rumania, the Magyar (Hungarian) minority region is swept by a wave of sympathy for the revolution. The reverberations are also felt in other buffer states composed of various nationalities - Czechoslovakia, with its Slovak and Ukrainian minorities, Yugoslavia, with its Croat, Albanians (Kosovo) Slovenes, Bosnians, Macedonians, Montenegrins as well as dominant Serbs; Bulgaria, with its Macedonian minority (which spreads over into Greece, posing again the question of the unity of the social and political revolution) and the USSR itself, nearly half of whose population is made up of national minorities. With the renewal of the political revolution in Poland and Czechoslovakia in 1963, and again in Poland in 1970-1971, the national question will increasingly come to the fore as an issue which unites the anti-bureaucratic struggles in every one of the deformed and degenerated workers' states, and then in turn with the countries of W. Europe, where the national question has also loomed larger as the capitalist crisis has become more profound and the struggle of the working class has ascended to higher levels of consciousness and intensity. The national question, left unresolved in so many regions of Europe from the period of the great bourgeois revolutions, and augmented by three attempts to impose an imperialist order on the continent (Versailles, Third Reich, Potsdam), thus demonstrates itself to be at the very heart of the movement towards the united socialist states of Europe.

Partial Stabilisation - 1955-1960

The mid and late 1950's are years of stalemate in the global class struggle. In Hungary, a defeat is indeed inflicted on the working class, but its consequences gravely weaken the world Stalinist movement, and in certain countries provide openings to Trotskyists to win new recruits. In Latin America, this

period opens with a set-back - the overthrow of the Peronist regime by right wing forces. But at the end of the decade, the Castro leadership comes to in Cuba, and embarks on a series of economic measures that expel all imperialist interests from the island. In Britain, the Tories win two elections, the second in 1959, by 100 seats. In W. Germany, the SPD swings steadily to the right, and in 1959, ditches all references to socialism in its programme. In France, in 1958, de Gaulle assumes power and builds his Bonapartist regime. The events in the Arab world have already been referred to. There is a rapid rise of political movements dominated by the local bourgeoisies (Nasserism, Baath). But it must be stressed that this period, although without any substantial victories for the working class (and indeed, a series of partial set-backs) is by no means a period of recession. It is rather a plateau, from which will arise new peaks in the next stages of the world class struggle.

But this relatively tranquil period inevitably has its negative effects on the vanguard. The International Committee enters into the first stages of the crisis that will result, in 1963, in the defection of the SWP to the Pabloite Secretariat (thus forming the 'United Secretariat'). The long period of stagnation in the trade unions in the USA, and then the sudden emergence of Castroism in Cuba and all Latin America, disorients the SWP leadership to such an extent that they capitulate - temporarily as it will turn out - to the Pabloite theory of new vanguards and epicentres, of non-proletarian leaderships carrying through the proletarian revolution. The signs of this turning away from the programme of the F.I. are already visible in the SWP before the end of the decade. The basis is, like Pablo's earlier capitulation to Stalinism, the course of the world class struggle, its unannounced shifts of direction, tempo, ebb and flow which, if not clearly perceived and the necessary tactical measures adopted, are certain to disorient the vanguard and leave it exposed to alien class forces and the pressure of the apparatuses. The next favourable conjuncture will then find the vanguard entangled in perspectives and alignments that render it powerless to give conscious expression to the unconscious revolutionary process. This was the fate of the Pabloite leadership, and today of the W.R.P.

S. L. L.

The SLL as one of the three leading sections of the IC, correctly rejects this turn away by the SWP from the task of constructing the FI in the advanced capitalist countries, just as it rejects as a capitulation to Stalinism the theory advanced at this time by the SWP that 'liberalisation' under Khrushchev had an internal logic that would carry it far along the road of the political revolution (and this is after Hungary). But the British movement's response contains the embryo of an opposite, but symmetric error. The decision to launch the SLL in 1959 is not only a product of previously only latent sectarian conceptions, but of the Healy leadership's false application of the principles of internationalism. As early as 1961, it becomes clear that Healy has substituted Britain for the 'third world' as the new epicentre of the world revolution, (the SLL Resolution 'World Prospects for Socialism'). By 1966 this national messianism is explicit - Britain will not only build the first mass Trotskyist Party, but have the first revolution. Others fired by the British example, will then follow. In 1971, shortly before the split from the CCI, Healy will go even further. The FI will only be built by starting from the principle, newly discovered by Healy, that the revolution will take place first in Britain. All the efforts and resources of the IC will therefore have to be devoted to the building of the SLL, which in Healy's thinking, is identical

with the IC. The split that follows is inevitable, given Healy's acceptance of this 'national Trotskyist' conception, which originates, or at least, is fertilised by, a one-sided appreciation of Pabloism, and a mechanical reaction to the theory of epicentres. The world revolutionary process is not uniform. Neither does it progress through schematic stages - first the revolution in the advanced capitalist countries, then in the 'third world', and finally, when imperialist pressure on the USSR, China and the buffer states has been eased, in the countries ruled by Stalinism. The actual course of the world class struggle has been, is, and will be very different. The theory of permanent revolution does not state that the revolution must begin in the advanced countries. This is a Menshevik conception. Neither does the political revolution necessarily arise as a response to upsurge in the class struggle in the west. What the theory of the permanent revolution does say is that whatever the combination of stages and ebbs and flows of the world revolution, the key to the solution of all the basic tasks facing the oppressed peoples of the 'third world', and the workers and other strata dominated by the Stalinist apparatus, lies in the advanced imperialist countries. But the precise order and combinations through which the unwinding of these problems progresses cannot be laid down in advance, as first Pablo, and then Healy attempted to do.

Zinovievism

Both Pabloism, and Healyism (its younger cousin) contain an element that was present in embryo in Zinovievism, and flowed to full bloom under Stalinism - namely the attempt to impose on the vanguard, and through it, on the class as a whole, a schematic conception of the development of the class struggle. The real relationship of Marxism to the material world is thus inverted (as indeed it has been in theory in Healy 'philosophy' - the ideological refraction of the apparatus conception of history and the party). Instead of Marxism being the conscious expression of the unconscious process of history, history is the projection of the plans and policies of the would-be Marxists. Likewise, instead of the class expressing itself at a higher level through the vanguard, and the vanguard through the party, the party - and first its 'cadre' (the apparatus) expresses itself through the vanguard and the vanguard through the class. Out of this idealist, in fact almost solipsist, conception - a subjective perversion of the statement that the crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of proletarian leadership - has arisen the notion, which masquerades as Leninism, that the task of the party is to 'fight the working class' and not, therefore, to give conscious expression and political direction to the struggle of the workers against the bourgeoisie and its bureaucratic agencies in the workers' movement. This travesty of Bolshevism (based on a false interpretation of "What is to be Done") will later be developed to even more absurd lengths by the W.S.L., with Thornett's theory of 'minorities'. It is important, even vital, to understand that the seeds of these utterly false conceptions, and methods of building revolutionary organisations, although sown in an earlier period when Stalinism was in the ascendent, are nurtured, and come to full bloom, in the period of partial stabilisation of the world class struggle after the first wave of 1943-1947 had begun to ebb.

The eve of the new up-turn - 1961-1967

The next decade opens with rumblings of an impending split between the Moscow and Peking bureaucracies. It will emerge that inside each apparatus are not only factions that drive towards a split, but also elements that seek a limited agreement (Molotov in Moscow, Liu in Peking), though the extent

of their influence, and degree of commitment, will never become clear. Each of the national Stalinist parties is affected by the Moscow-Peking split, though only in rare cases (Brazil, New Zealand)* do the pro-Peking elements win a majority. The basis of the split originates in the increasing desire of the Kremlin to reach a long-term world agreement with imperialism, one that underwrites, and makes global, the deals of 1945 (Potsdam on Europe) and 1954 (Geneva on Indo-China). Such an agreement, concluded obviously primarily with the USA, can only be reached at the expense of the Chinese Revolution, and of the anti-imperialist movement in the entire continent of Asia. In return for isolating the Chinese Revolution, and containing anti-imperialist struggles throughout Asia and the rest of the 'third world', the Kremlin hopes to secure large-scale western assistance for its ailing economy, which is increasingly feeling the effects of low technology in key industries, and low yields in agriculture.

China

By 1963, the confrontation is an open one, with Peking justly accusing Moscow of selling out the anti-imperialist struggle in order to reach a deal with the USA. For a short period - roughly up to 1964 - the Peking leadership revives in a crude way some of the principles of Leninism against Khrushchev's parliamentary road to socialism (ironically first advanced by Mao's idol Stalin in the early post war period) and his ultra-opportunist interpretation of Stalin's policy of 'peaceful co-existence'. At no time does this challenge to the Kremlin go beyond the bounds of 'left' Stalinism. The theory of socialism in one country is at no time questioned, whilst Khrushchev is denounced as Trotskyist for his 'liberal' cultural policy, and his 1956 attacks on Stalin's crimes. In fact, Peking's polemics rapidly degenerate into a revived third periodism, with the Moscow leadership being derided as 'social fascist', and the USSR characterised as a 'social imperialist' state. Also in the traditions of the third period is the quest by the Mao leadership for an alliance against the 'social fascist' main enemy, the Kremlin, with first the lesser imperialist powers (France, Japan etc.) and then, towards the end of the decade with the USA itself. This strategy of 'leaning to one side' will be crowned by Nixon's visit to Peking in 1972.

Intervening between the birth of this new turn by Peking, and its consummation, is the 'cultural revolution'. Stated briefly, the Cultural Revolution begins as a factional struggle within the apparatus over a range of questions - economic policy, foreign policy, the succession to Mao, party-army relations etc. But once the proletariat exploits the rifts and confusion in the apparatus to press its own demands (beginning in a mass way with the Shanghai general strike of January 1967, against the Red Guard invasion of the city), the Mao faction, or rather coalition, becomes the main agency through the petty-bourgeois Red Guards and the PLA, for crushing the move towards the political revolution. In this sense, the two main factions - Liuist and Maoist - stand in the same relationship to one another and to the working class, as did Nagy and Rakosi in Hungary, Gomulka and the "Natolin" group in Poland (both 1956) and Dubcek and Novotny in 1967-1968 in Czechoslovakia. An indicator of the continued decay of Pabloism is that Maitan sees in the most ultra-left faction in the Maoist bloc the emergence of a genuine Trotskyist current in China. Neither is the IC immune from this entirely false orientation. The SLL, under Banda's leadership, identifies the Cultural Revolution with the political revolution, and Mac with Trotsky.

*Also Albania

Cultural Revolution

The Workers' League of the USA actually defends the beating-up and hospitalising of SWP militants by Maoists (i. e. Stalinists) on the grounds that by opposing the Cultural Revolution, the SWP has 'joined the White Guards'. Clearly, the Pabloite virus has infected the IC, whilst within the U.S.E.C., the SWP has initiated a contrary turn back towards the positions that it defended in the split of 1953.

Signs of a new turn in Europe come at the beginning of this decade. In Spain the first large-scale strikes since the civil war break out in the mines of the Asturias. This political re-birth of the Spanish proletariat will continue without serious checks right through the sixties until the death of Franco in 1975. The workers' commissions, and the skeleton structure of independent trade unions, will be built on the basis of this powerful revival. In Germany a new crisis erupts with the erection of the Berlin Wall (August, 1961) and the intensification of repressive measures against the proletariat in East Germany. Yet in the USSR, after another reversion back to 'hard line' Stalinism in the wake of the Hungarian and Polish upheavals (a phase that lasts through to 196C) Khrushchev performs yet one more zig-zag, this being a new phase of 'liberalisation' initiated with the 22nd CPSU Congress in 1961. This time, the 'thaw' in the arts goes much further than in Malenkov's brief tenure of office in 1953-1954. Young poets, writers, painters and sculptors seize their chance to break out of the straight jacket of 'socialist realist' police culture. Mass poetry readings attract tens of thousands of youth to rallies entirely outside the control of the apparatus. The workers also begin to mobilise in this period, actually staging strikes and even, in the city of Novocherkassk, a violent insurrection against the local party and state administration (June, 1962). The immediate cause of these strikes and mass actions is usually food shortages and price increases. But at once political issues come to the fore with demands being placed directly on the CPSU Central Committee. At Novocherkassk, the workers go entirely outside the official trade union structure, and elect their own strike committee. Another element in this new crisis of the apparatus is the refusal of militiamen and soldiers to fire on the unarmed demonstrating workers.

The national struggle in the USSR also begins to deepen at this time, with not only the Ukrainians to the fore, but the Crimean Tartars (deported in the war to Soviet Asia, and denied the right to return to their native land), the three Baltic nationalities, the German minorities, the various Asian minorities, and although they do not constitute a nation, the Jews.

Outspoken political leaders of these various movements become prominent in this period - Grigorenko, Yakir, Litvinov, Solzhenitsyn being among the best known. At this stage, the majority of these spokesmen use the idiom of Leninism to advance their positions, and indeed, Yakir and Grigorenko can be considered, with certain reservations, to constitute an emergent 'Reiss faction' in the USSR. None of the oppositionists goes outside the framework of the property relations established by the October Revolution, even though, as in the cases of Solzhenitsyn, Daniel and Sinyavsky, their socialism makes no claim to being Marxist-inspired.

De Gaulle

In W. Europe, the French working class demonstrates that it has fully recovered from the serious set-back of 1958 (de Gaulle's assumption of power) in the miners' strike of 1963. Once again, the Stalinist-led CGT blocks the movement by breaking the unity of the striking miners, thereby aiding not only de Gaulle, but a Kremlin that sees in the French President's anti-US manoeuvres a means of pressurising the major imperialist power into an agreement with the Soviet Union. This revival comes only a year after a partial defeat for French imperialism in Algeria, where after having fought the French Army to a standstill, the Pablos-supported FLN leaders conclude an agreement with de Gaulle that protects French economic and military interests. The end of the Algerian war also brings to a conclusion the series of political crises that have wracked the Fifth Republic since the winter 1959-1960. Two attempted coups by an alliance of Colonels and rebel Army chiefs fail to prevent de Gaulle from carrying through his strategy of military withdrawal from North Africa, one that depends on the tacit collaboration of the FLN. Nevertheless, the events of 1959-1963 demonstrate the fragility of the Bonapartist structures of the Fifth Republic, and the ability of the working class to explode them. 1968 will see this battle re-joined at the level of a full revolutionary crisis. Belgium, its capitalist class placed under economic strain after withdrawal from the Congo in 1960, is swept by a general strike (early 1961) that assumes pre-revolutionary dimensions. It equals the movement unleashed more than a decade previously against the pro-Nazi King Leopold.

In Greece too there is a steady revival after the betrayals and blood-lettings of the early post war years. By 1964, the rightist regime has been compelled to permit the previously banned CP to participate in elections. In 1965, workers and youth take to the streets in their tens of thousands against the Monarchy, which is blocking the road to the achievement of democratic liberties. Then in April, 1967, only weeks before the elections that the bourgeoisie fears will give a majority to the left and centre parties, the colonels strike. Bourgeois democracy proves to be a luxury in backward Greece - for the bourgeoisie.

In Britain, Labour wins the 1964 election by a narrow majority, ending 13 years of Conservative rule. The Tories experience a crisis of leadership and policy which is unresolved by the election of Heath in 1965. In 1966 Labour increases its majority to 100. In W. Germany the SPD continues its gradual growth, winning enough new votes in the 1965 election to persuade the CDU to take it into the government for the first time since the fall of the Herman Mueller cabinet in 1930.

Indonesia

But in 1965 there is also a terrible blow, far worse than any other struck since the war. After the Maoist leadership of the Indonesian CP becomes involved in an abortive coup by a group of army generals, a reign of terror is unleashed on the country's workers and poor peasants. At least one million communist party members and sympathisers are murdered over the next year, and tens of thousands more thrown into concentration camps. The powerful trade union federation S.O. B.S. I. is banned, and are all other workers' and socialist organisations. This disaster, only made possible by the adventurist-opportunist policies of the Peking leadership (they have cultivated the closest relations with Indonesian President Sukharno)

considerably eases the pressure on US imperialism in the Pacific and S. E. Asia. In the Middle East, imperialist-backed Zionism inflicts a serious defeat on the Arab masses in the June, 1967 war.

There are also other defeats in this period, but not so serious or long-lasting. There is a steady shift to reaction in Latin America after Castro's victory in Cuba. The military seizes power in Argentina, Brazil, and Bolivia, though in no case is it able to use its positions of power to do to the workers' movement what was done in Indonesia. In Chile, there is a shift to the left, where the workers' parties combine to nearly win the Presidential elections against the Christian Democrat Frei (1964). In 1970, they will in fact do so.

Africa is the arena of some of the bitterest struggles in the colonial world. Civil war erupts in the Congo after the sudden withdrawal of Belgium, while in the same year (1960) South African police murder more than 60 Blacks at Sharpeville. In several other African states, however, the imperialists effect a transition to bourgeois nationalist regimes without serious upheaval (Nigeria, Kenya, Zambia).

In the USA, the trade unions are still able to secure rising wages for the majority of their members without the mass actions of the CIO period, or the early post war period. US capitalism is still able, because of its immense wealth, to retreat tactically on the wages front at home. But other, associated issues come to the fore in this period in an explosive way. The black struggle against segregation in all walks of life, and for jobs, better pay and living conditions, become a central factor in the American class struggle. Democratic issues, unresolved either by the Revolution of 1776, or the civil war a century later, now become components of the proletarian revolution. The theory of the permanent revolution expresses the necessary course of the class struggle in the world's most advanced imperialist country, no less than it does the struggle of the Vietnamese peoples against US imperialist oppression. Also in this period, opposition to the Vietnam war begins to assume a mass character in the USA, as well as in other imperialist countries, indicating the important and highly symptomatic shifts that are taking place at every level of the petty-bourgeoisie on a world scale. In reality this is an expression of the growing political instability of the period, and therefore of the intensification of the class struggle on a world level. The Pabloites nevertheless see in this new petty-bourgeois radicalisation the vehicle of a 'new vanguard' that can substitute itself for the proletarian vanguard. This anti-Leninist conception will fully mature in the wake of the events of 1968, but it is already clearly visible in the earlier years of the decade.

No Clear Trend

This period (1960-1967) is a highly contradictory one. There is no clear trend at work on a world scale - defeats are followed, and balanced by advances, and vice-versa. But the accumulating tensions in the USSR, the USA and China, and rapid shifts in countries such as Greece, and in Latin America, the upturn in France, Britain and W. Germany, and the first serious crisis in the leadership of the Czech CP towards the end of 1967, all point towards a new breakthrough.

It will come in 1968.

1968 - The Post-War Watershed

1968, it is generally understood, is the year of the turn. However, on its own, this phrase is meaningless, or alternatively one can put several meanings into it. It is therefore necessary to state clearly, in analysing the turn of 1968, what it was a turn from and what it was a turn into. The first section of this document has attempted to indicate the main line of the class struggle in the years that preceded the simultaneous eruption of the social revolution in Western Europe and the political revolution in the East. The year 1968 was both prepared and anticipated by a period of increasing political instability, concentrated in Europe it is true, but which manifested itself in different ways throughout the world. Yet no clear trend up to 1968 defines itself. There are, indeed, serious setbacks (Greece, Indonesia, Latin America, Africa) as well as significant advances (France, Britain, Vietnam, Germany, USA). The trend is there, but, as stated, it had not clearly defined itself in the course of those events alone. The period of accumulating tensions, contradictory shifts, then undergoes a qualitative transformation in the early months of 1968. The two most spectacular and deep-going upturns are, of course, those that take place in France and Czechoslovakia. But these two upsurges must be seen as the most acute manifestation of a global turnpoint. The revolutionary developments in France and Czechoslovakia lose none of their national specificities in their being seen as the most clearly visible tip of a still largely submerged, though emergent, iceberg.

Let us re-trace our steps a little. In the USSR we have the fall of Khrushchev in October, 1964. His removal is brought about by a coalition headed by Kosygin and Brezhnev, a bloc that has not only grown impatient with his foreign policy zig-zags (i. e. the Cuba crisis in October, 1962, his handling of Moscow-Peking relations, the summit zig-zags of May, 1960, etc.), and his blunders in agriculture (see appendices), but his tendency to indulge in demagogic attacks on Stalin (1956, 1961) and his inconsistent policies in the cultural world (approving 'One Day' by Solzhenitsyn and then, a little later, denouncing abstract art in the crudest terms).

Khrushchev's last years are punctuated by open working-class actions - strikes and demonstrations - about prices, wages and other economic issues. The various oppressed national minorities exploited his references to Stalin's crimes in this field to press their demands for justice (Crimean Tartars). Various religious sects raised their voices against persecution by the KGB atheists and their agents in the Russian Orthodox hierarchy. The Jewish opposition gathers momentum in this period, indignant at the flagrant anti-semitism of the anti-religious propaganda of the regime, especially in the Ukraine, where the Kremlin attempted to divert the national feelings of the people to the time-honoured target, the Jews - "Beat the Yids and Save Russia".

Daniel and Sinyavsky

The assumption of power by the Brezhnev-Kosygin team is unable, for a full year and more, to stem these streams of dissidence and even open opposition. They have initially to bend to the pressure, raising workers' wages, permitting historical discussion to continue within the limits prescribed by Khrushchev, and easing controls in other areas. The turn comes in 1966, when it becomes evident that concessions to the opposition have failed to demobilise the movement generated under Khrushchev. Then follows quickly the first political trial, that of Daniel and Sinyavsky (early 1966). This trial back-fires on the Kremlin in that it not only generates yet more opposition in the USSR but also

causes qualms in the leaderships and even more in the ranks of several Western Communist Parties. (To the SLI belongs the dubious honour of rallying to the defence of the Kremlin by slandering the two writers as 'right-wing opponents of the Soviet Government', instead of calling for their immediate release and an end to the censorship, the SLI declares blandly that it hopes they will get a 'fair trial').

Even under the tightly-screwed lid of the Novotny regime in Czechoslovakia the same process is at work. As early as 1963 a writers' opposition is in process of formation, using the banner of the great Czech novelist Kafka to rally support for a more liberal cultural policy. Stagnation in the economy worsens the position of the bureaucracy, since the Kremlin has long relied upon it to provide, with its relatively sophisticated industry, both foreign currency and high technology for the rest of the Comecon bloc.

There are two other highly explosive issues which exacerbate the crisis of the Novotny regime- the complicity of the regime in the 'Tito-ite' purge trials of the early 1950's (Slansky etc.), and the un-resolved question of the oppression of the Slovak and Ukrainian minorities. All these streams converge in the last weeks of 1967 and find their initial political articulation and vehicle in the 'Liberal' Dubcek wing of the party leadership. Once again, as at the time of East Germany and the USSR in 1953, Poland and Hungary in 1956 (and also the Tito split of 1948, since there was a well-organised, though poorly supported 'Cominform' faction in the Yugoslav Party), the first stage of the movement towards the political revolution finds its refraction at the very summit of the party apparatus, as it attempted to use a segment of that same apparatus (and with varying degrees of limited success).

In Hungary, Nagy in fact travelled some distance along the road of the break with the Kremlin and paid for it with his life. In Poland Gomulka arrested the same process in its early stages. With Dubcek we find that his faction, internally divided from the very beginning and increasingly so as the movement develops, stood somewhere between these two cases. And it is important to note here that the same fissures undoubtedly run through the Kremlin leadership, which after several months of hesitation throws its weight behind Dubcek at the January 1968 session of the Central Committee, which ousts Novotny from the party leadership, only to crush the same Dubcek (though in a vastly different political setting) barely seven months later. Even the decision to invade splits the Kremlin leadership, a fact which should help us to understand the recent flourishing of 'liberal' currents in the top leaderships of the Western Communist parties. In every case, we can be sure that they have not only their supporters, but patrons, in the very summits of the Kremlin apparatus.

Italian CP

Only by understanding the crisis of the Stalinist apparatus and regimes in this way can we properly evaluate the evolution of the Italian Communist Party, which remains a counter-revolutionary agency of the Kremlin in the workers' movement, and in no sense can be said, as Mandel and the other USEC majority leaders claim, to be developing in the direction of a social democratic party, that is a non-Stalinist, reformist party. And by using the term 'reformist' to denote the Western Communist parties the SWP makes a concession to this Pabloite conception.

The real dangers of the January 1968 change of leadership, endorsed if not directly effected by the Kremlin, become clear when the workers seize on one of the weapons Dubcek has been compelled to use against the Novotny faction -

freedom of information - to press its own demands on to the political arena. Just as in East Germany in 1953 and again in Hungary in 1956 (Petofi circle), the movement, provided with even the slightest legitimation from above, rapidly escapes control of all the factions of the apparatus. Hence the invasion and Dubcek's capitulation to it.

Therefore, when we speak of the 'turn of 1968', we are designating the events of that year - in their totality - as comprising that stage in the world class struggle, concentrated in Czechoslovakia and France (to which we will come in a moment), where the tendency towards the break of the proletariat from the bureaucratic apparatus achieves an unprecedented unity at an international level. 'The laws of history are stronger than the bureaucratic apparatus' - this key proposition of the Transitional Programme finds its most concrete manifestation and vindication in the qualitative transformation of world class relations expressed in the French and Czech upheavals of 1968. In both countries - and therefore, since the class struggle is international in tendency though not uniform in tempo, at a world level - there is present in a highly developed form this unconscious process towards a break from the bureaucratic apparatus. True, in Czechoslovakia it passed through the Dubcek leadership in its initial stage. But then it seeks out other vehicles - the more radical elements of the Dubcek faction itself, then beyond it, to the revival of the banned Social-Democratic Party (as in Hungary in 1956), at the underground conference of the Communist Party at the end of August, where the ban on factions was lifted, - and then, under the heel of the Red Army, through the formation of workers' committees in the plants.

Czechoslovakia, 1968

On the very eve of the invasion, the type is being set up for a Czech edition of Trotsky's 'Revolution Betrayed'. The Kremlin invasion, though preventing its publication, nevertheless gives new strength to the analysis of Stalinism advanced in that work. Even more than in the years when Trotsky evolved his understanding of the Kremlin system of rule, Stalinism is a regime of permanent, though fluctuating crisis. The new element, present since 1948, and ever more concentrated with each mounting step of the resistance to bureaucratic repression, is the renewed drive towards the self-rule of the masses, the tendency towards a workers' government or a workers' and peasants' government. This is the inner unity between Czechoslovakia and France.

Its conscious expression is the programme of the United Socialist States of Europe, a programme which integrates all the elements of the social and political revolutions - revolutions which, of course, have distinguishing features. The political revolution evolves on the basis of nationalised property relations and in fact enhances them. The social revolution overturns property relations - capitalist ones - and establishes a new system of production. But what predominates is their unity - the unity, first of all, of the international class struggle. But this unity also expresses itself in a diverse fashion, through certain key elements of the programme of the united socialist states of Europe.

Democratic Demands

Democratic demands loom large in 1968. Their specific weight will then increase with each passing year. First, the political revolution itself is the overthrow of the usurping bureaucratic caste, and the conquering of deep-going democratic liberties by and for the mass of the working population.

The dictatorship of the proletariat, said Lenin, is the highest form of democracy. The struggle for council (Soviet) power, whether in the capitalist or Stalinist-ruled states, is bound up with the struggle for democratic liberties, liberties which can only be conquered by and for the proletariat and its allies, through the destruction of the existing state apparatus and the creation and rule of organs of workers' power subject to the democratic control of the proletariat and those other sections of the population to which it chooses to award full political freedom.

In Czechoslovakia the movement towards the political revolution begins with the ferment in oppressed Slovakia, the demands of the writers and other cultural groups for more artistic freedom, the struggle for freedom of information (leading on to the abolition of all media censorship), for basic student's liberties. The working-class, after abstaining in the first stage of the factional tussle between Dubcek and Novotny (in which the latter made demagogic play of Dubcek's 'managerial' politics and backing and his growing support among the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia,) seizes on the rapid disintegration of the old police and censorship system to raise its own class demands, which also have a strong democratic content - independence of the trade unions, genuine elections in trade union bodies, workers' control in the plants etc.

In France, the first shock tremors of the volcanic upheaval of May-June also travels on the path of democratic demands - all the basic demands of the students concern themselves with democratic issues. And it could not have been otherwise under the Bonapartist structures established by the Fifth Republic. When the working class enters the arena it finds itself in battle against the same enemy - the Bonapartist capitalist state. Whatever the intermediate stages of the struggle (the first of which is given correct tactical expression by the CCI with its call for a central strike committee), its necessary development is the creation of a workers' government, one breaking from the bourgeoisie and relying on the organised power of the working-class to settle accounts with its enemies. This in its turn will pose in the most concrete possible way - just as is the case in Czechoslovakia - the shattering of the Stalinist apparatus, the left prop of the Bonapartist regime. Notwithstanding the contrasting economic and social terrain upon which the two struggles are fought and brought to a temporary (though unresolved) conclusion, one cannot but be struck by the truly remarkable and sinister symmetry of the combination of tanks and Stalinism both in Paris in the first days of June and in Prague less than three months later. In Paris the tanks were De Gaulle's, but they rolled into the city with the approval of the ambassador to France of the Kremlin and thanks only to the treachery of the French Communist Party. In Prague the tanks were the Kremlin's - but, again their arrival had been notified and approved twenty-four hours in advance, over the hot line with Nixon. The rising tide of the movement towards the united socialist states of Europe necessarily activates to an unprecedented degree of co-ordination, the holy alliance enshrined at Potsdam, precisely because it challenges the division of Europe imposed in 1945. Both the Kremlin and imperialism understood that, whatever tactical differences separate them, they have at the level of strategy to close ranks against the threat of simultaneous revolution in Eastern and Western Europe. For example, one of the factors which drives the Kremlin towards its invasion of Czechoslovakia is the spilling-over of the democratic ferment into the already politically-aroused Ukraine, where the national movement has been in the ascendent since the years of the Khrushchev period. The Ukraine party boss, Shelest, (ousted in 1972 on the ironic charge of 'nationalist deviations') pressed hard

for invasion on the ground that uncensored publications originating in the Ukrainian minority region of Czechoslovakia had begun to circulate inside Shelest's fief, further deepening its political unrest. It provides the Ukrainians with their first opportunity to read legally published journals in their own language critical of Stalinist policy. Invasion it has to be, despite the hesitations of some of the Kremlin tops about the possible repercussions in other Stalinist parties. Ulbricht adds his support to Shelest's, for the same basic reasons - his own rule was in danger. Gomulka, one-time victim of Stalinist repressions, also lends his voice to those calling for a ruthless policy towards the Czechs. The reactions of the Stalinist chiefs give eloquent testimony to the extent to which Czech events concentrate a new upsurge towards the political revolution in all the Stalinist states without exception. The same principle holds for France.

May-June

May to June, 1968 concentrates, at a national level, the movement towards workers' governments throughout Western Europe, a movement which in its first and many of its intermediate stages, of necessity involves the attempt by the working-class to make its traditional organisations establish unity against the class enemy, and implement, on the basis of this unity, the demands of the proletariat and its class allies - i. e. from the united workers' front to the workers' government or the workers' and farmers' government. True, the Stalinists choke off this process in its initial stages in France, but they do not succeed in breaking the movement itself, a movement which at different levels and through different forms expresses itself in several other European countries in the same year.

Italy enters into a prolonged social and political crisis which remains unresolved to this day and has in the course of development acquired many new features. Again, like France, the basic crisis is one of bourgeois rule, mediated through the specific, national, historically determined features of the state - Bonapartist in France, clerical in Italy, fascist in Spain, monarchist in Britain etc. And in each case (even in Spain) a key element in this crisis of bourgeois rule has been, especially since 1968, the under-mining of the ability of the apparatus to split the proletariat and subordinate it to the bourgeois state.

Britain is a case in point. In 1969 the Wilson government attempts to impose its 'in place of strife' policy on the trade unions, a move that places in danger the long-established unity between the political and the economic wings of the Labour movement. Only the employers and their direct political representatives can gain from such a policy. It was blocked by the advanced workers, acting through the trade unions. Then, despite the rancour that remains afterwards, these same advanced workers returned to the political struggle in the period of Tory rule between 1970 and 1974 to such good effect that Labour comes to power in 1974 with the most radical programme in its history with, among its pledges, one that it will never resort either to an incomes policy or state interference in the internal affairs of the trade unions.

Other historic problems beset the British ruling class at this time - 1969 - with the sudden upsurge of the national struggle in Ireland. The despatch of thousands of extra troops to the North only unleashes a new crisis for British imperialism and its social-democratic agencies. It begins to seek ways of retreat from its Ulster redoubt, without disturbing the historic alliance that has been built up over centuries between the English ruling class and its

Unionist connections. Attempts to use the petty-bourgeois Catholic leaderships in the North and the Irish bourgeoisie in the South on each occasion not only end in dead-lock, but create worse tensions among the Protestant plebeian base of British rule in the North. The national question is a central element in the crisis of rule of the English bourgeoisie no less than in any other European country. The Scottish and Welsh questions have recently underlined this.

The Turn

The turn of 1968 thus opens the road of approach to the United Socialist States of Europe. But this must be understood as being a road that crosses the most diverse terrains. In West Germany the SPD gains enough votes in 1969 to become the dominant partner in a coalition with the Liberals. This victory marks a decisive shift in class relations throughout Germany. Brandt's 'Ostpolitik' almost at once creates serious problems for the Ulbricht regime, for when Brandt goes to the East he is greeted rapturously by workers. For once, their enthusiasm is genuine, much to Ulbricht's dismay. They still see the SPD as their party, just as they did in 1953. In 1974 a Stalinist spy provocation provides the pretext for the removal of Brandt and the appointment of Schmidt, a far less appealing figure for workers of both East and West Germany. Brandt served in the anti-Nazi underground and in Spain. He has a left, anti-Stalinist past (SAP). Schmidt is a career politician pure and simple. He fought on the other side to Brandt under Hitler, serving as an officer in the Wehrmacht on the Eastern Front. Both for the German Bourgeoisie and for the Kremlin and its Pankow puppets Schmidt is far safer than Brandt, who today heads the left current in the SPD.

Coming so soon after the Czech events the SPD victory in West Germany places the Ulbricht regime under enormous strain. It is followed very soon by a demonstration of youth at the Berlin Wall, chanting 'Dubcek' and 'we want reforms'. This organic movement towards the re-establishment of the unity of the German nation and its proletariat, already in evidence at the end of the war, and again, on a higher level, in 1953, is the basic feature of the period that begins with the SPD election victory of 1969. In 1972 strikes sweep the country as the CDU attempts to topple the Brandt cabinet over its 'Ostpolitik', which workers both East and West see as an opportunity to re-establish, even if only on an individual basis (tourism, family visits etc.) the unity shattered first by fascism and then by the partition of 1945. In 1973 a record vote for the SPD indicates that this movement is still advancing, posing new dangers to bourgeoisie and Stalinists alike. Brandt's fall follows within a year.

Referendum

A new crisis opens for the Bonapartist regime in France in 1969 with the defeat of De Gaulle's referendum. The working class is able to close its ranks at the polls by voting massively "No". De Gaulle resigns at once. But even then the apparatuses erect again their barriers to a workers' united front and government. The PCF and the Socialist Party each run their candidate for the Presidency, handing it over, in so doing, to De Gaulle's nominee, Pompidou.

In Italy the strike wave of the previous year generates stupendous power and breadth. The country is rocked by a series of one-day General Strikes and by longer strikes of a partial nature. Here too the apparatuses block the road of advance to a workers' government, with the Stalinists directing all their energies towards a 'historic compromise' with the ruling, capitalist party, the Christian Democrats. Throughout this period the trend is for the workers'

parties to approach an absolute majority in parliament, as it has also been in France, and since 1974, in Portugal, where this has in fact been achieved. The formation of a government based on such a majority would not, of course, constitute a genuine workers' government, in the sense defined by the Comintern in 1922-1923, (before its left-ist perversion by Zinoviev at the 5th CI Congress), but the creation of such a parliamentary government can open up the road towards it. And for the mass of the workers no other road of approach is as yet either conceivable or practically possible. The slogan of the workers' government (and that of the united workers' front, where is posed by the division of the proletariat between two or more large workers' parties as in France, Italy and Portugal, but not in Britain or most of the Scandinavian countries) especially since 1968, is indeed the 'conscious expression' of the unconscious historical process. How to give a specific, national, concrete content to it is one of the most pressing tasks of the vanguard, just as it is essential to advance this slogan in a way that opens the road to the United Socialist States of Europe - in other words, a programme that would constitute the foreign policy of a national workers' government.

It would be belabouring these points to demonstrate how in each instance this overall, global process and tendency has expressed itself since 1968. It will suffice to list just some of the main events in the period up to 1974, when the turn of 1968 is deepened and accelerated by the opening of the proletarian revolution in Portugal, followed a year later by the defeat of imperialism in Indo-China.

But it is important to see that, like all previous periods of overall ascent save that of 1943 - 1947, this one is characterised by swift oscillations both at a national and international level, with partial ebbs inserting themselves into the general flow. In 1968, beginning in Mexico, there opens a new political crisis in Latin America, leading on to the General Strike in Cordoba (1969). Bolivia sees the fall of the right wing Junta the same year and the emergence of the Torres leadership. The workers also maintain the offensive in Chile, an upturn reflected on the electoral plane by Allende's Presidential victory the next year.

But in Britain the Tories oust Labour, though the strike movement that began in 1968 under Labour continues to gather momentum. Later in 1970 the national question again erupts - this time in Canada, where the Trudeau government declares a state of emergency to quell the national movement in Quebec. Then hard on the heels of this crisis comes the Burgos trial of Basque Nationalists in Spain, precipitating both a split in the ruling class and a mass movement against Franco at the base. Simultaneously comes the insurrection of the Baltic workers against the Gomulka regime and the threatened execution of two Jewish militants in Leningrad. In each instance it is resistance to various forms of national oppression that feeds these crises - by French-speaking Quebec people in Canada, by the Basques in Spain, against the Kremlin in Poland and by the persecuted Jews in the USSR. So once again we must repeat to those latter-day imperialist economists and national nihilists among us - the national question lies at the very heart of the social and political revolution and of the struggle for the United Socialist States of Europe.

The national question also comes to the fore in the Balkans in this period, just as it has done in every period of political tension and turmoil over the last century and more. In Yugoslavia 1968 sees a new upsurge of radical opposition to the Tito regime amongst students and intellectuals and a massive mobilisation

of almost the entire population against the possible threat of a Kremlin invasion after the occupation of Czechoslovakia. The old problems surface again in 1971. Demands are raised for Croatian autonomy and even independence, demands which are echoed in the South in Kosovo by the Albanian minority. The Macedonian question becomes a bone of contention between the Tito regime, Bulgaria and Greece. The developing struggle of the Basques, a nation divided between France and Spain, reaches the point that the Pompidou government begins to collaborate with Franco in policing the national movements.

National Question

In this period it becomes clear, yet more so, that hardly a single European state, capitalist or Stalinist, is not affected in some way by un-resolved national problems. From Britain in the far west (Ireland, Scotland, Wales) through France (Basques, Corsica, Brittany), Belgium (Flanders and Wallonia), Spain (Basque, Catalonia, Galicia, Spanish Morocco), Portugal (its African, Chinese and Pacific colonies), Switzerland (Zura), Italy (Tirol), Greece (Macedonia, Cyprus), Turkey (Cyprus) ... to the buffer states - Yugoslavia, Romania (Magyar and German minorities), Czechoslovakia (Slovaks, Ukrainians), Albania (with part of its population under Yugoslav rule) - and, with the exception of Albania and Yugoslavia, direct Kremlin domination of them all ... the national question looms ever larger. And, of course, at the core of this problem is the Gordian knot itself - divided Germany. Moving yet further east, we see that again there is no evading the central strategic importance of the national question, beginning with the Ukraine in the West of the USSR, passing through the three oppressed Baltic nations of Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia, through the seething Caucasus to the oppressed nations and religious minorities of the Soviet East. What an indictment of the counter-revolutionary Kremlin apparatus that under its barbaric rule the USSR has become again the 'prison-house of nations', as Russia was in the time of the Tsars.

But the ramifications of the national question do not end there. While we recognise that the national question in Europe has real historic and not merely geographic limits, we must appreciate that it draws into its orbit issues of a broader dimension again. The Kurdish nation is one. This martyred nation is oppressed by no fewer than four regimes - Syria, Iran, Iraq and the Kremlin. There is no hope for the Kurds outside of the struggle for the United Socialist States of Europe, the political and social revolutions that will unlock the door barring the way to the democratic solution of the national question, not only in Europe but even in areas far from it. The speed and ruthlessness with which these four regimes combined to crush temporarily the Kurd's war of resistance to the Iraqi Baathists and their Stalinist coalition partners gives yet more proof that the national question is a powder keg under the foundations of imperialist and Stalinist rule throughout Europe and indeed the whole world. It is in no sense a 'diversion' from the struggle for socialism. Our task, as re-builders of the Fourth International, is to give it conscious expression in the form of strategy, programme and tactics, through our activity in the workers' movement both nationally and internationally.

So when we use the phrase, 'the turn of 1968', we must understand by that term, not only the movement towards more intense levels of class-struggle, and not only even that the tendency towards a break of the workers from their apparatuses is passing through a period of qualitative change. We have to grasp the living embodiments of this turn - among them being the rise of democratic issues, with the national question to the fore. Unless we give this emphasis to 'the turn of 1968', the concept becomes perverted into another variant of the old left-ism.

This turn does not minimise, but lends greater urgency to, those tasks unresolved by the period of capitalist ascent. Mankind cannot bypass the great democratic-national tasks. Nor can mankind accept their being postponed to an indefinite socialist future, only to be told then that they no longer matter. The great historic period of man's cultural ascent was also a period of the building of nations, through revolutions, civil and national wars. That era is far from finished, only now nations will conquer their freedom and be built in the course of the process, not of the bourgeois revolutions, but as constituent elements and even, on occasion, stages, of the proletarian revolution.

U.S.E.C.

This is what we mean by the 'turn of 1968'. So at the level of revolutionary organisation and programme this turn must find its highest political expression. It necessarily produces associated crises in the two main organisations claiming to represent Trotskyism - the USEC and the International Committee. In the USEC the SWP began to resist more strongly the pedigree Pablo-ism of Mandel, Frank, Maitan and Krivine. New vanguardism was challenged together with other kindred abominations. The importance of democratic demands and their relationship to the struggle of the proletariat became a central plank in the anti-Mandel platform of the SWP.

In the International Committee, the crisis was more masked but none the less real. The SLL leadership was already strongly influenced by Healy's national and personal messianism, and began to advance the thesis that May-June 1968 in France was but a dress-rehearsal for the real battle in Britain. Britain was to become the new epicentre of the world revolution - a notion that has been nurtured in the period of the initial struggle against the SWP's adaptation to Castro-ism and 'Third World'-ism generally.

Since the SLL, by the same nationalist token, automatically became the key-section of the International Committee, and since, by this time, Healy had convinced himself that the SLL was the revolutionary party, and had been so for several years (certainly since 1966), then it followed, given this false premise, that the Fourth International had been re-built. The SLL was the International Committee, and the International Committee was the Fourth International. The tasks of re-building it and, therefore, of fully understanding the forces that had led to its collapse in 1953, were pushed to one side. So very quickly there re-emerged in the British movement the 'bloc' conception of Pablo. The political revolution, and therefore the upheavals in Czechoslovakia and later in Poland - were side shows. By the early 1970's the West German Healy-ites had become accomplices of the division of Germany, advancing the demand that the SPD build socialism in West Germany, ignoring altogether the struggle for the overthrow of the Stalinist regime in the East (which, it must be presumed, had already built socialism there). All these monstrosities flowed from the utter failure of the SLL to comprehend the inner significance of the turn of 1968. It meant simply for the cadre that it was 'going to happen in Britain next and much bigger', or that 'the workers are on the move', or that student demands were at best small change and at worst a reactionary diversion. Some of the student leaders of that period were privately characterised as incipient fascists by Healy and Slaughter. In 1970 Healy expressed the opinion that the whole Nanterre movement had been a police provocation, with Cohn-Bendit as the main police agent. This had also been the line of the Stalinists at the time.

Though it is possible that the split of 1971 was not certain by 1968, the failure of the SLL to understand the significance, in terms of the nature of the epoch, of

the events of 1968 and their necessary strategic, programmatic and tactical expressions, was one of the decisive turningpoints in the decline of the International Committee.

Thus 1968 generated new shifts in both the two international organisations that today have reached the point of the possibility of a split in the USEC and of total liquidation in the International Committee.

Towards 1974

The forward thrust generated in 1968 does not spend itself over the next two years but rather achieves a new plateau. It is true that the new Gierk regime in Poland succeeds in holding back the upsurge on the Baltic, but only at the cost of cancelling all the measures of the Gomulka regime that sparked off the revolt - price increases and increased work norms. Gierk is forced to parley directly with the workers and to accept the reality of their democratically elected plant and yard committees. The right to strike is conquered in violent battle, with hundreds killed by Gomulka's militia. The new organs ~~disband~~ disband after the initial aims have been gained. To this day the regime has to face a working class that at local level exercises limited control over its plant and even trade union organisations. Unlike East Germany in 1953 and Hungary in 1956 (and to a lesser extent Czechoslovakia in 1968-1969) there has been no defeat in Poland. Strikes are still a common-place and the regime is unable at this moment to use police methods to curb them. This does not mean that the bureaucracy is changing, as Pablo-ism would claim, but rather that the relationship of forces has so changed, not only in Poland but on a European level, that the proletariat has been able to regain and to fortify some of the positions that it lost under Gomulka after 1956. Poland is a thorn in the side of the Kremlin and a source of inspiration to all workers under Stalinist rule. In fact, at the time of the Baltic revolt, strikes spread across the border along the coast into the USSR. To the south in neighbouring Czechoslovakia the Husak regime seals the frontier with Poland and all Polish news media are excluded from the country. In the West the various Stalinist parties do their best to disclaim reports of the blood-lettings. Government spokesmen in Bonn and Washington express relief that the transition to a new regime had been made without Poland being plunged into civil war. Again the Potsdam deal threw its shadow across Europe. Things go yet further. Just before its fall, the Gomulka regime issues through its press a statement to the effect that it could no more tolerate the revolt of the Baltic workers than the Franco police could permit the separation of the Basques from Spain. In each case, said the article in question, the integrity of the state was at stake - be it fascist or 'socialist'. And we should not forget that just a year earlier it was this same Gomulka regime that had come to the aid of Franco by exporting shipments of coal to Spain at the time of the Asturian miners' strike (a strike in the course of which many miners were arrested and brutally tortured by Franco's police).

1971 is for the most part a year of partial stabilisation in Europe, though in Britain the strike movement against the Tories' anti-trade union policies continues to ascend, with strikes against the Industrial Relations Bill and long stoppages in the Post Office and at Ford's. The year ends with the threat of an official miners' strike for big pay increases - the first official miners' strike since 1926.

Bengal

However, early in 1971 the Indian sub-continent explodes, with the rise of the Bengali national movement in East Pakistan. Just as the partition imposed on Europe is being challenged by the turn of 1968, so too is the partition of 1947 imposed on India. The Bengali national movement poses in a long-term sense, though not immediately, the perspective of a United Socialist States of the Indian sub-continent. The sympathies of imperialism are, of course, with the Pakistani militarists in their bloody attempt to crush the national movement in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). Moscow too seeks a 'solution' within the framework of a united Pakistan. It cautiously echoes the initial demands of the bourgeois Awami League for a degree of autonomy within the theocratic state of Pakistan. But now a new factor in world politics comes to the fore - Peking's role as a third participant in the counter-revolutionary Holy Alliance. The Maoist regime not only extends full diplomatic support to Pakistan in its attempt to strangle Bangladesh at birth, but sends arms and other material to it to do the crushing - even though Maoist forces are involved in the fighting on the side of the Bengalis. This turn by Mao co-incides with another bitter fruit of the 'cultural revolution' - Peking's 'ping pong' diplomacy, which is climaxed a year later with Nixon's visit to China and an audience with the Chairman himself, even as US bombers make one last bid to pound the Vietnamese people into submission. (The Paris Agreements follow almost at once early in 1973).

Faced with rising national and class unrest at home (fed partly by the national struggle in East Pakistan) the Gandhi regime invades East Bengal and installs the Awami League in power. The invasion is a violation of the national rights of the mass of the East Bengalis, because they did not invite it. But in the context of the Pakistani oppression of Bangladesh, the liberation fighters of necessity aligned themselves tactically with the Indian armed forces to finish off the greater evil. The Indian troops do in fact withdraw early in 1972. Then Bangladesh begins its chaotic slide towards the fall of Mujib in the summer of 1975 and the rise of a new militarist, theocratic clique which still holds power at the time of writing. The check to the national movement in Bangladesh is closely linked to the course of the class and national movements in India itself. There, after the strike wave of 1974, Gandhi, with the support of the pro-Kremlin Stalinists, attacks democratic liberties by declaring a state of emergency in 1975. The fall of Mujib follows almost at once.

'Third World'

This period also sees serious defeats in the strategic areas of the 'third world'. The Palestinians are crushed by Hussein in Jordan - though not before they establish a genuine Soviet in Irbid. The movement in Bolivia reaches a similar climax a year later, with the embryo of council power being pulverised by Banzer's coup. A serious set-back is also inflicted in the Sudan at the same time (July 1971) with the crushing of its Labour movement by the Libyan-backed Numeiry regime. Each of these defeats was inflicted with the tacit support of the Kremlin.

1972 sees even less basic changes than the previous year. In the Federal German Republic (West Germany), the Christian Democratic Union's attempt to un-seat the Brandt cabinet is met by a sudden wave of strikes during the crucial debate and vote in the Bundestag. With all its limitations, this expresses the struggle of the German workers for their own government, and for the unification of the nation, since the issue under debate is Brandt's 'C stpolitik'. This obtains certain concessions from the East German regime on such questions as travel

between the zones, family visits etc. though it accepts the division of Germany, as do all the parties of the Federal German Republic in practice if not in theory. Such personal contacts as can be re-established by using Brandt's policy contain the possibility of a political exchange between workers of East and West Germany. It therefore raises implicitly, the question of all-German political parties and an all-German government. In Britain new strikes rock the Tory government - the miners' strike most notably, which secures nearly all its demands. In an attempt to dam the breach blasted by the miners' victory, and to give a cutting edge to British industry in the EEC, the Heath government moves in the later part of 1972 towards an incomes policy, a plan which meets stubborn resistance from even right-wing trade union chiefs. Battle positions are being taken up in this period for the conflict that will end with the fall of the Tories early in 1974.

1973 is also not only a year of marking time but even of serious reverses. It opens with the Paris agreements on Vietnam, which on all sides accept yet again the partition imposed on the nation by the 1954 Geneva agreement. Nevertheless the Pablo-ites claim it as a partial victory as, of course, do Stalinists of every stripe.

In Britain the strike wave recedes as the trade unions come hard up against Heath's incomes policy, with defeats for lower-paid and public employees in the early months of the year. The miners vote heavily against strike action. The axis of the struggle begins to shift from the trade unions, where it has concentrated since 1968, to the Labour Party. At its conference in autumn 1973 the rise of Benn predominates, as does the adoption of the party's most radical programme since the war. Certain of its proposals will become main planks in the election manifesto in 1974.

But in 1973 there falls one of the most serious blows inflicted on the international working class since the pre-war period of decline. Certainly, strategically, it ranks with the crushing of the Indonesian proletariat in 1965-1966, even though the number of victims is not nearly so great. In retrospect it must be seen as opening a new period of ebb in Latin America, climaxed by the recent military coup in Argentina, but expressed also in the consolidation of the rightist regime in Uruguay, which came to power in 1972, and that of Banzer in Bolivia. Yet here again is posed the question of discerning the ebb within the flow, and the flow within the ebb.

The SLL/WRP, on the very eve of its founding, mechanically extrapolates the Chile disaster on to the world arena and into the indefinite future. 'Chile first, Britain next' is the war-cry of the prophets of doom. Just as Britain after 1968 was to 'dwarf' France in the scale of its revolutionary class battles, so Britain was also going to have the bloodiest-ever military coup. From the undoubted localised defeat in Chile is projected, in the style of Zinoviev or Pablo, a world orientation of impending defeats and third world war. As always, reality is far more complex, and therefore, strategically, programmatically and tactically far more demanding. It poses tasks that the theoretically-lumpen Healy leadership never even dimly perceived. In Britain, as Healy went through his elaborate charade of launching - for the second time - the revolutionary party, the working class, acting both through the Labour Party and the miners' strike, challenges and defeats Heath's 'putschists' and brings Labour to power. For the first time in British history, a government has been brought down by the class-action of the proletariat. From the very beginning, unlike, 1964, Wilson finds that he is riding a tiger.

As 1973 draws to its end, the first signs of a new break-through in Europe become visible. In Greece students battle with police and troops outside the Polytechnic building in Athens. The military regime comes under pressure, not only from the workers, students and oppressed petty bourgeois but from important sections of the bourgeoisie itself. The Cyprus crisis pricks the Colonels' bubble. In a matter of hours, the seven-year-old dictatorship collapses. But by this time the turn of 1968 has passed through a qualitatively new stage - the opening of the proletarian revolution in Portugal with the overthrow of Caetano in April 1974.

Mitterand

Hard on the heels of this dramatic turn comes the French Presidential election with Mitterand as the single candidate of the two workers' parties (and unlike 1965 when he ran as a bourgeois radical, Mitterand ran as First Secretary of the French Socialist Party), coming within less than one per cent of winning an absolute majority over Giscard d'Estaing. In Greece, Britain, France and Portugal, the bourgeoisie passes through profound crises of rule. In each case it has either to consider using, or actually rely upon, the apparatus of the workers' parties for managing its political affairs, just at the precise moment when the proletariat and its class allies mobilise themselves across half the continent of Europe to place their own parties in power - to act against the bourgeoisie. This is the great contradiction of our epoch, accentuated by the turn of 1968 and yet further deepened in 1974.

Italy is of course already engulfed by the same crisis of rule, with the Democristian defeat on the divorce referendum shaking the bourgeois-clerical state to its foundations. Again a section of the ruling-class looks, without joy as we can be sure, to the Stalinist party as a possible ally in its hour of need. And again it has to do so just as the workers' parties draw near to winning a total majority, placing on the immediate agenda a government of the workers' parties without any representatives of the capitalist parties. The same road opens up in France at and after the May 1974 Presidential elections. It is posed from the first days of the Portuguese Revolution and given added emphasis by the April, 1975 election results to the Constituent Assembly (which gave the two main workers' parties a clear overall majority); in Britain, where Labour comes to power on the crest of a powerful miners' strike and, in a longer-term sense, in Spain, where the Franco regime regards with growing apprehension the revolutionary rise, not only in Portugal where the threat is most immediate but throughout the European states bordering on the Mediterranean.

Chile is not therefore cancelled out by the new turn in Europe in 1974 and the same to come in South-East Asia a year later. The Chilean proletariat, betrayed by the Allende regime to the Junta through the classic Stalinist policy of the popular front and the peaceful road to socialism, is still enchained by Pinochet. But this turn in Europe offers new hope, gives new perspectives to the oppressed peoples and classes of Latin America. The advance of the proletarian revolution in the metropolitan countries cannot substitute itself for the lack of tangible victories in the semi-colonial world, but it can and will undermine the ability of imperialism and its agencies to make its temporary victories lasting ones. But if we go further than this and argue that the defeats in Latin America since 1971 count for little when measured against the advances recorded in other areas (especially Western Europe), then we would be guilty of an inverted Pablo-ism. Latin America, like Europe, is a historically determined and materially conditioned arena of class and national battles. The slogan of the United Socialist States of Latin America (which takes as one of its starting

points the recognition that each Latin American state has, in the course of its history, defined itself as a nation - most especially in the struggle for freedom from Spanish and Portuguese rule) is no less the legitimate and necessary political expression of the organic movement of the class struggle in Latin America than the United Socialist States of Europe is for Europe. That is why we do not minimise the extent of the serious defeats suffered in Latin America over the last half-decade. To do otherwise would disorient the sections of the (CRFI) operating in that continent and quite wrongly down-grade Latin America as a component of the world class struggle.

Nixon's Fall

In fact the ability of the main imperialist power - the USA - to impose its strategic aims as being progressively undermined throughout the period by a series of checks to its home and foreign policies. First in Cambodia (1970), then in Laos (1971), Nixon's attempts to extend the battle-zone against the MLF and Khmer Rouge end in fiasco. They also intensify opposition at home to his Indo-Chinese policy. Then follows the protracted Watergate crisis, ending in the fall of Nixon in 1974 - at the precise moment when in Europe a new stage of the European revolution opens. The spectacular collapse of Nixon's Cambodian and Saigon client regimes comes hard on the heels of Ford's assumption of office. US imperialism is patently unable to pursue a clearly-defined policy when beset by internal divisions of the scale that produced the Watergate crisis.

The fall of Nixon, supported to the end by both Moscow and Peking, is a defeat not only for world imperialism but for Stalinism. It introduces a new element of instability into an already fragile world political balance.

The fall of Nixon also underlines the enormous historical specific weight of democratic conquests. Nixon's attempt to subvert normal bourgeois-democratic conventions and procedures in the 1972 Presidential elections involves, on the face of it, little more than a sordid squabble between the two parties of the US ruling class. But, if that were all, how come Nixon fell? Nixon's removal from the highest office in the world (in terms of the material power its occupant wields) is the outcome of a head-on collision between the ruling class and the deep-going democratic tradition - and the constitution which imperfectly codifies it - generated by two historic revolutionary battles - the War of Independence and the Civil War. U.S. imperialism, we know well, has often resorted to a demagogic exploitation of this tradition, which it counter-poses, with some success, to the tyranny of Stalinist rule, which, like the Kremlin, it falsely depicts as Communism. But in fact the social basis, political aims and methods of US imperialism collide more and more with this tradition, from Indo-China to the Watergate Hotel. Nixon has to break the rules of his own bourgeois ancestors in order to be sure of winning the Presidency. And, just as important for those who scorn freedom of the press as a 'right-wing' demand' (WSL), Nixon is exposed and driven from office and even branded as a crook. His highest advisers go to jail. The innermost secrets of White House intrigue and violations of democratic liberties are dragged into the light of day. Not because the US working class was pressing powerfully for any of these things to be done. Far from it. Nixon won the highest working-class vote ever for a Republican candidate. The lid of the CIA and FBI conspiracies against democratic liberties is prised open because (among other reasons) the activities of these two organisations run counter to the revolutionary-democratic traditions of the 18th and 19th centuries. They collide with a tradition that, far from losing its meaning and momentum, has given added impetus to the various movements and currents

in USA battling for democratic liberties - Blacks, Women, Gays etc. None of these movements can attain its goal outside of the struggle for the overthrow of capitalist rule in the USA, a struggle that must be headed by the most powerful proletariat in the world, the working class of the USA. But just as surely the US proletariat can only find the correct road to revolution by giving the necessary weight - and it is enormous - to all these and other democratic issues. This is the dialectic of the permanent revolution - and the importance of understanding the link between 1776, the failure of MacCarthyism, the fall of Nixon and the proletarian revolution in the USA.

Mid-1975 A New Plateau is Established

It goes without saying that the sudden and immensely powerful forward surge of the proletarian revolution that began in the early months of 1974 could not continue its ascent indefinitely. Towards the middle of 1975 a new high point is reached, and then comes a partial, though none the less real, check. But first the ascent. In the spring comes the fall of the pro-imperialist regimes in Saigon and Pnom Penh. Though not final victories for the proletarian revolution in either South Vietnam or Cambodia, the fall of these two regimes constitutes an important victory for the proletariat at a world level. The crisis of US imperialism, and consequently all imperialisms, is deepened. And so is that of the Peking and Kremlin bureaucracies, which both, at every stage of the struggle against imperialism in Indo-China, attempted to contain the masses within the limits acceptable to the US ruling class.

The final collapse of Washington's two client regimes in Indo-China, when it came, conformed to the pattern established by the break-up of the Kuomintang regime in China in 1949. It was not the product of a revolutionary upsurge headed by a Stalinist Party and military machine - though this is the picture painted not only by the Stalinists but by Pablo-ite and Healy-ite organisations alike. In China the main revolutionary wave had begun to ebb in 1947, being contained and even beheaded by a Mao leadership that had been seeking a deal with Chiang, in accordance with Kremlin policy. The inner decay of Chiang's regime, after its initial bid to crush the cp-controlled regions of China (which Mao could not but resist with all the forces at his disposal) compelled the CP to fill the vacuum, and to begin the process of establishing a deformed workers' state. In South Vietnam the indigenous resistance to the Saigon regime reached its high point in the mid and late 1960's, being cruelly sacrificed by Hanoi in the criminal adventure of the March 1968 'Tet offensive'. After the loss of tens of thousands of cadres in that fruitless adventure, Hanoi's armed forces became the dominant factor in the struggle. Like Mao in 1949, it was almost embarrassed by the sudden collapse of Saigon in early 1975. Its final victory was not, therefore, the culminating point of a protracted upsurge of the South Vietnamese masses, though their earlier struggles had undoubtedly contributed enormously to the eventual weakening and collapse of the Saigon regime.

At the time of the defeats of imperialism in Indo-China, the Portugese revolution took another giant step forward, with the elections to the Constituent Assembly, giving a clear majority to the two workers' parties, in defiance of appeals by the Armed Forces Movement to abstain. At this point the Portugese CP began an ultra-left tack, reviving some of the slogans and tactics of the 'Third Period' in driving a wedge deep into the working class at the precise moment when the task was to act on the mandate given by the masses to form a government of the two workers' parties. Instead the CP masked its basically right-wing strategy (of collaborating with the Armed Forces movement in re-building the bourgeois state dislocated by the events of April 1974 and after) by attacking the Socialist

Party as the main enemy of the workers - 'social fascism' in everything but name. The workers and poor peasants mobilised in their hundreds of thousands against this bid to strangle the Portuguese revolution and liquidate its gains. They forced the Goncalves government to resign - covered from the left not only by the Stalinists but by the Pablo-ites and all manner of centrist groupings, it had unveiled plans to undermine the newly liberated labour movement with its programme of 'popular assemblies' dominated by the AFM.

Spain

In Spain also a new and open crisis of the Franco regime broke. Deep rifts appeared in the bourgeoisie as Franco elbowed aside Juan Carlos almost on his death-bed to approve the death sentences on the Basque freedom fighters. With the executions and his death the crisis deepened even further, with open mobilisations of workers and national minorities for political liberties and on economic and social issues. In Britain the wages offensive that began with the miners' defeat of Heath rolled on almost unopposed by the Wilson government. Most demands were won without any strikes. All the Tory anti-union legislation was scrapped, as was Heath's incomes policy. These constituted real gains for the working class which would have been impossible without the return of Labour in 1974.

In Italy there is at this time a powerful left swing in the regional elections. But here, just as in Portugal, the Stalinists take as their point of departure the defence of the capitalist state. Despite superficial differences, both CPs have identical policies on the main questions of the day. Both stand for an alliance with a wing of the bourgeoisie. Both repudiate the dictatorship of the proletariat in theory as well as in practice. Both stand for continued and loyal membership of NATO. Both oppose the formation of a government of the main workers' parties, without any capitalist parties. Both set themselves against the formation of governments on the basis of a majority won by the workers' parties in elections, and seek instead entry into governments of 'national unity'. In following each and every one of these policies, the Italian CP no less than the Portuguese CP acts as an agency of the Kremlin. Such criticisms of Kremlin policy as it does make are entirely subordinate to this strategy of defending the bourgeois order in Italy and Europe generally. In so far as these criticisms raise the prestige of the PCI among the masses, they even further the Kremlin's counter-revolutionary aims. (This is not to say that we will not exploit at every opportunity even the most mealy-mouthed criticisms voiced by Italian or other CP leaders against the repression of dissidents in the USSR and Eastern Europe. But we must be clear why they are made and why the Kremlin feels it worth while to tolerate them.

Argentina

Also at this time (Summer 1975) there is a new upsurge of the class struggle in Latin America - in Argentina. The return of Peron in 1973 failed to achieve its purpose of containing the rising movement of the proletariat. His widow and successor to the Presidency, Isobel, showed even less aptitude for this formidable task. Several times she had to retreat before the rising wages movement, even to the extent of sacking a favourite Cabinet minister. The Peronist trade union leaders are even forced to call a general strike for a wage increase to offset price increases. There are rumblings from the barracks of a coup.

The rise of the opposition in the USSR and Eastern Europe, though not, of course, reproducing in each of its ebbs and flows the exact path of the class struggle in

the capitalist countries, also experienced a new phase of upturn in this period. After the advance of the political revolution in Czechoslovakia in 1968, the associated crisis in Poland in the spring of the same year, and then the demonstration on Red Square in Moscow against the Kremlin's invasion, the Soviet regime undertook a brutal series of measures against the opposition. In the Ukraine especially (Moroz, Dzyuba and others) but also in many other National Republics arrests and harrassment of dissidents were stepped up. Political trials, after the adverse reactions to those of Daniel and Sinyavsky, of their defenders Ginsberg and others, and finally those who demonstrated in Red Square (Litvinov, Larissa Daniel, etc.) were replaced in the main by the method of certifying as insane those who opposed the policies of the Kremlin. This avoided both charges and a trial. The KGB offensive against the opposition scored some successes. Yakir and Krasin capitulated - under what pressures and threats we can only guess - in 1973. The Chronicle of Current Events temporarily suspended publication in the same year. Meanwhile the Kremlin was pursuing the policy that was and is the natural and necessary complement to its war against the dissident movement - namely, detente. In 1969 hard on the heels of the revolutionary upsurge of the previous year in both France and Czechoslovakia, the meeting of the Stalinist parties in Budapest issued a call for a European Security Conference. Security against what?

Since all the governments of the capitalist European states, together with the USA, were invited to take part and collaborate with the Warsaw Pact in making Europe safe to live in, it could only have been security against the combined threat of the political and social revolution. As the framework of the projected conference emerged and its main aims crystallised, it became clear that the Kremlin sought at a higher and more co-ordinated level a renewal of the Potsdam agreements of 1945, agreements the central axis of which was and remains the division of Europe and of Germany.

Upsurge

The revolutionary upsurge of 1974 did not find a spectacular expression in the Stalinist-ruled states, but it without doubt renewed the impetus of the various dissident movements. 'Non conformist' artists successfully defied the KGB art critics, to hold an unofficial exhibition in Moscow in late 1974, after an earlier attempt had been met with an onslaught of bulldozers driven by KGB men dressed up as indignant proletarians. Thousands attended the exhibition, which proceeded without let or hindrance under the very noses of the Kremlin leaders. This historic event, no less significant in its way than the Red Square demonstration of August 1968, gave proof that the Soviet opposition had not only survived the KGB offensive and its own internal dissensions and defections, but was growing more bold, more audacious. What gave these artists, armed with nothing more lethal than paint brushes, the courage to take on and defeat the huge apparatus, not only of the official Stalinist 'cultural' machine, but the KGB itself?

Here we are able to discern the material connections between the class struggle in the capitalist countries and the anti-bureaucratic struggle in the USSR and the other Stalinist-ruled states, and the universality of the strategic importance of democratic demands and conquests. At the first unofficial exhibition, held in September, Western newspaper correspondents and cultural writers witnessed at first hand the barbaric wrecking of the work of the exhibiting artists by the KGB's bulldozers. Accounts of this fascist-type vandalism appeared in the media in certain of the capitalist countries. But which? Only in those where have been gained, in some cases through centuries of struggle, the freedom of the press, the liberty to print and speak without fear of censorship or worse.

Can one imagine the Fascist Franco press protesting against the wrecking of a modernist, abstract, formalist art exhibition in Moscow, when like activities would have been given the same treatment in Madrid or Barcelona? Could one have imagined the Nazi press, with its fanatical hatred of all innovation in the arts (which it shared with Stalin's 'socialist realism') raising its voice in indignation against police control of the arts?

Arts

This for us is a class question. Police control of the arts flows inexorably from the destruction of all those democratic liberties conquered in the era of the great bourgeois-democratic revolutions, liberties which neither Stalinism nor capitalism in its epoch of decay can afford to tolerate, whatever tactical concessions they may be forced to make in certain situations and at certain moments. The freedom of the press, even of the bourgeois-liberal press, proved in the case of the Moscow Art exhibition to be a capital conquest of the proletariat, not only of the capitalist states, but of the Soviet proletariat also. For such was the outcry amongst the radical and liberal intelligentsia in the West as a result of the reports that the Kremlin had to relent and allow another showing to go ahead. Could there be any better example of the profound international character of democratic conquests and the strategic significance of the struggle for democratic liberties? Although the left-ists are blind to such subtleties, we must note that the ability of the 'Guardian' (or even the 'Times' for that matter) to report on the abuses of the KGB in the arts and in psychiatry hinges on the fact that the proletariat of both Britain and capitalist Europe has been able either to regain what it lost in past periods of reaction or go on to win new conquests. No independent workers' movement - no freedom of the bourgeois press. And to state this does not in any sense imply that under the dictatorship of the proletariat we would favour necessarily extending this freedom to our class enemies. This would be a question of expediency. But under capitalism it is a principle - the lesson of Republica has a wider significance than the problems associated directly with the Portugese revolution.

The advance of the dissidents' movement in the USSR in turn aided the struggle of the vanguard in the West. Powerful blows were struck against the Stalinist leaderships in France and elsewhere in the course of the campaign to secure the release of imprisoned militants. A milestone in the history of the Fourth International was recorded when the campaign initiated by the OCI succeeded, against all the odds, in snatching Leonid Plyutch from the claws of the KGB 'doctors'. The essential foundation for this work had been laid by the two years of upsurge in the world class struggle that had preceded his release. The campaign in defence of Plyutch was successful because it gave conscious expression to the unconscious process of the political and social revolution, which first in 1968 and then again in 1974 -1975, became inter-meshed to a degree never before experienced. Like the victory of the Soviet painters, the release of Plyutch seems a miracle. It is not. It is the product of the conjuncture of immensely powerful class forces and the political orientation and programme through which these forces must find their legitimate expression - those of the strategy of the re-building of the Fourth International, against Pabloite liquidationism and all apparatus-conceptions of constructing revolutionary organisations.

Portugal

So we have in this period (1974-mid 1975) the most vigorous upsurge of the world class struggle since the 1943-1947 revolutionary wave. Its dimensions are truly global - from Latin America (Argentina) through the whole continent of

Europe, Africa (the fall of Portugese rule, the deepening crisis of White rule in Rhodesia and South Africa), the national movement in Eritrea, the instability of the regimes in Nigeria and Kenya), the mid-East (beginnings of the national upsurge in Lebanon, the check to Zionism at the end of 1973) to South East Asia (Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos) and Australasia (the return of Labour governments in Australia and New Zealand). Against the objection that, whereas in the 1943-1947 period and again in China in 1949 a large sector of the capitalist world economy was bureaucratically expropriated, the period under discussion cannot claim conquests of such a scale and sweep, we can reply that to argue thus would be to fall into the economist, vulgar 'Marxist' error of identifying property overturns with the advance of the world revolution. There is, of course an intimate and necessary connection between the two, but not an identity, as both Lenin and Trotsky pointed out many times. The decisive criteria by which we evaluate the significance of a particular historical event or process is to what extent does it aid or hinder the raising of the revolutionary consciousness of the proletariat on a world scale- to which degree does it aid or hinder the development of the world revolutionary process. Seen in this light, the expropriation of 1944-1947 in the buffer states and again in China under Mao have a dual character - their progressive economic content (for there can be no socialism in these countries without such property relations) has come into conflict at every stage in the history of these regimes with the political rule and social parasitism of the bureaucratic caste - both as regards domestic policy and on the arena of the world class struggle. The same of course holds true of such overturns as have taken place in South Vietnam and Cambodia over the last year. They constitute defeats for world imperialism and gains for the working class, but they do not represent the final victory of the proletarian revolution in Indo-China. It must be stated bluntly that the proletariat does not hold political power and that, therefore, political revolutions in Vietnam and Cambodia are necessary. The main characteristic of the current period is not the transformation of property relations in a small part of South-East Asia, but the global shift in class relations expressed not only in the defeat of imperialism in Vietnam and Cambodia, but the fall of the fascist regime in Portugal, the opening of a new stage in the proletarian revolution in all of Europe. The speed with which the Portugese workers rebuilt their class organisations outlawed for four or more decades under the old regime, is in fact no less significant from the standpoint of the world revolution than the property overturns, carried out from above in Indo-China by military-bureaucratic measures.

National and Democratic Demands

The Portugese revolution which opened in April 1974 concentrates and expresses the predominant thrust of the proletariat on a world level (by no means uniform or undifferentiated) towards the formation of governments of its own parties, for a break with the bourgeoisie and its state and, along this road, towards a break from the bureaucratic apparatuses. According to the national and socio-economic terrain on which this process unfolds, the movement of the proletariat towards its own government (expressed at a certain stage in the struggle to place its own traditional parties in power) assumes the most diverse forms and is compelled to solve the most varied tasks. Hence the importance of the national question and a wide range of other democratic issues, either left unresolved by the era of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, or compounded or newly-created by the delay of the proletarian revolution.

In 1924 Trotsky asked and attempted to answer the question which should always be in the forefront of our thinking - 'Through What Stage are we Passing?' In 1924 the Zinovievist leadership of the Comintern, then in a bloc with Stalin, was

advancing a left-ist line based on the false premise that the revolution was still in the ascendent - in a period of near world-wide ebb after the defeats in 1923 in Germany, Bulgaria and Spain (the coup of Primo de Rivera) and in 1922 in Italy. Trotsky discreetly sought to correct this adventurist line and in doing so aroused Stalin to advance the now-notorious theory of 'Social Fascism'. Fifty-two years on, we find ourselves in a world political situation that has very little in common with 1924. Since 1968 there has been an overall advance, albeit with the almost inevitable internal ebbs. 1974 witnessed a further deepening of the shift. 1975 saw this shift continue. Thus it might seem that there is little or nothing for us to glean from the debates of 1924 on tempo or perspectives that might throw light on the problems of today. This would be a big mistake. The mechanical, metaphysical conception of radicalisation and tempo that was the political premise of the organisational methods known as 'Zinovievism' or 'Cominternism' is no less dangerous in a period of upturn such as that which opened in 1974, as in the period of ebb which gave birth to it half a century before. In fact, in a certain sense, this metaphysical conception of radicalisation can be far more dangerous in just such a period as ours. A powerful upturn in the class struggle, of a general and prolonged nature, seems to lend substance to the demagogic claim that any talk of an ebb, a set-back or partial defeat, is tantamount to an admission of pessimism, is a concession to liquidationism. Revolutionary optimism is not an act of will or imagination. It is grounded in Marxist realism, in an understanding of the dynamics of the class struggle and their necessary expression at each stage in the language of strategy and tactics, integrated into the programme and the re-building of the Fourth International.

Summary

So we make the following tentative, conditional observations on the present stage of the world class struggle.

1. The new upturn that began in early 1974 had by mid or late 1975 experienced a partial, localised check: in Britain with the EEC 'Yes' vote, the end of the wages movement after the adoption of the £6 pay deal; in Portugal with the events of November; in Spain with the temporary and precarious stabilisation achieved by the bourgeoisie after the death of Franco; in Latin America with the military coup which halted the offensive against the Peronist regime by the workers, and led directly to an intensification of repressions against the vanguard and the workers' movement generally (the CGT is now banned); in France, where the divisive tactics of the Stalinists erected a block against the organic movement for a united front and a government of the two workers' parties; in Australia and New Zealand where Tory governments oust Labour ones, and with big majorities; in the mid-East, with the crushing of the Kurdish independence movement; in India where the Gandhi emergency brings to a temporary halt the strike movement and other struggles of the previous year and more.
2. But this must be understood as a partial and by no means universal ebb, within a far more general and powerful flow, which continues even through the secondary ebbs. In some cases there is no ebb; for example in Italy, where the powerful Left swing continues right through to the June 1976 elections and beyond: in Africa, with the deepening isolation and crisis of the white-supremacist regimes, climaxed by the uprising in Botswana (on the democratic issue of language, the sectarians should note); in Lebanon; and in the Stalinist-ruled states. In China the death of Chou opens a new stage in the crisis of the Mao leadership, which it attempted to pre-empt with a revival of some of the tactics used in the 'cultural revolution'. In the USSR the deepening economic crisis feeds the already smouldering democratic-national and class problems, such as food shortages, corruption,

graft, work norms etc. Most recently of all in Poland the workers' resistance to the new price increases forced upon the Gierek leadership the unprecedented humiliation of a total policy volte face in a matter of hours. This dramatic turn in the political revolution, concentrated in Poland for reasons that are in no sense accidental, and are examined in some depth in earlier sections of this document testifies that the underlying trend, even in this subordinate phase of partial localised ebb, is powerfully upward, and is moving towards the strategic goal of the united Socialist States of Europe as a component of the world revolution and rule of the proletariat.

3. In those countries and regions where the temporary ebb has manifested itself, the molecular process of radicalisation continues - at least in certain cases. In France the leftward trend of voting which came so close to giving victory to Mitterand in 1974 continues to this day. Without doubt the result of a General Election today would be to give a clear majority to the two workers' parties. In Portugal the April 1976 elections did in fact secure such a majority. And, despite the check to the revolution last November, there has been no strategic set-back. The plan of the Armed Forces Movement to castrate the independent workers' movement was smashed by the hundreds of thousands of workers and small farmers who mobilised against it through the Socialist Party. All the problems which brought about the April 1974 coup and which have since provoked the many zig-zags and manoeuvres of the Armed Forces Movement and its bourgeois supporters, remain unsolved.

The same is even more true in Spain. Under the creaking lid of the fascist regime, the workers are already re-building their traditional class organisations (i. e. the recent open conference of the UGT, the Socialist Party Congress etc.) using every legal opening that the vacillations of and divisions within the Carlos regime provides them. And here too the national question - Basque, but also Catalonia and Galicia, carries enormous weight and is linked directly with the main democratic demands of a Republic and a Constituent Assembly. The Catalan Assembly, like the permanent mobilisation in the Basque country, is providing a focal point of resistance to the fascist regime and a forum of revolutionary strategy and tactics.

The WRP has more than once recently denounced the struggle for national self-determination in Spain as a 'diversion' from the class struggle against the fascist regime. In fact it is a powder-keg underneath it. It is the revival of the proletariat which has brought it to the fore. For just as Franco came to power by subjugating the national minorities of Spain, (and in this emulating the Castilian dynasty four centuries before him), so his regime will be broken up - partly by the rise of the same national movements. It is not given to us to choose a more easy, direct route to the proletarian revolution. It will travel along a course dug by the currents of history. Our task is to give conscious political expression to the historical reckoning that is being prepared in Spain, Portugal, Italy, Germany Poland and all the other countries of Europe and indeed the world.

The Fourth International will only be re-built on the basis of a correct appreciation of this relationship between the objective, unconscious movement of history which is, as the Transitional Programme says, decisive, and its conscious political expression - the theory and programme of revolutionary Marxism and the organisational forms and tasks which flow from them.

Cur Tasks

Strategically our goal is the re-building of the Fourth International and, in Britain, the revolutionary party as one of its sections. This goal is in turn subordinate to that of the consummation of the world revolution, the construction of a world socialistic and then communist order.

The task that confronts our Group as a section of the CCREFI is to evaluate the stage reached in the world class-struggle, most specifically in Europe, and, from this analysis, to take certain steps towards the re-building of the Fourth International and the construction of its British section. We characterise the situation in Europe - all Europe - as pre-revolutionary, though that has to be understood in the precise sense, that not in each and every European country is there a pre-revolutionary situation - for example in Britain or in the Scandinavian countries. If we speak of Britain being in a state of pre-revolutionary crisis, by virtue of its being an integral part of a continent in such a state, then we can regard such a conclusion as being highly conditional. It does not provide a working hypothesis for our activity, and can lead to dangerous results if combined with a false appreciation of national tempo that might flow from such a conclusion.

The revolutionary upturn does not ascend, step by step, all in perfect marching order. That is the lesson this document has tried to extract from the history of the world class-struggle since 1848. The working class is not a military organisation awaiting its orders from above, or from outside its own ranks entirely (the mistake made by all the sectarians). Its struggles proceed according to materiality-governed laws, which the vanguard can either accelerate and bring to fruit, or can undermine and lead to disaster. But the objective motion of the class-struggle is decisive. It has to be studied in all its facets. On the basis of provisional conclusions drawn from such a study, policies and tactics must be devised to give expression to the current stage in the movement of the class struggle, and which lead on to what we believe will be its next, each policy and tactic being subordinated to strategy and programme.

We find it a sad, but none the less accurate, commentary on the present state of the British movement that a polemic which Trotsky directed against 'Third Period' Stalinism forty-six years ago can with almost equal effect be turned against nearly all those organisations claiming to be Trotskyist:

"The social-democratic parties, especially before the war, imagined the future as a continual increase in the social-democratic vote, which would grow systematically until the very moment of the taking of power. For a vulgar or a pseudo-revolutionary, this perspective still essentially retains its force, only instead of a continual increase in the number of votes, he talks of the continual radicalisation of the masses. This mechanical conception is sanctioned by the Bukharin-Stalin programme of the Comintern. It goes without saying that from the point of view of our epoch as a whole, the development of the proletariat advances in the direction of the revolution. But this is not a steady progression, and more than the objective process of deepening of capitalist contradictions. The reformists see only the ups of the capitalist road. The formal 'revolutionaries' see only its downs. But a Marxist sees the road as a whole, all of its conjunctural ups and downs, without for a moment losing sight of its main direction - the catastrophe of wars, the explosion of revolutions. The political mood of the proletariat does not change automatically in one and the same direction. The up-turns in the class struggle are followed by

down-turns, the flood-tides by ebbs, depending upon complicated combinations of material and ideological conditions, national and international. Our epoch is characterised by exceptionally sharp periodic fluctuations, by extraordinary, abrupt turns in the situation, and this places on the leadership unusual obligations in the matter of a correct orientation."

Healy Leftism

The Healy school of Left-ism advanced the essentially intuitionist (and therefore, quite reactionary) notion that whatever ran counter to the claim of an upturn (fall in strikes, drop in Labour votes, rise in Tory votes, fall in unemployment, fall in the price of gold, improved balance of payments, falling rate of inflation, etc.) was merely the 'surface' and that 'deep down' the 'real struggle' was still going on at ever greater levels of intensity.

Then, when the Tory vote fell, Labour's vote picked up, strikes broke out, the stock exchange fell, the balance of payments worsened, the price of gold soared and inflation accelerated, these previously scorned 'surface' phenomena would be invested with almost supernatural significance. This system of double book-keeping was necessary to sustain a membership that lacked the least semblance of understanding of Communist tactics and strategy, and an apparatus that lived off the illusions - and the incomes - of the humbler members. The origins of this metaphysical conception of proletarian radicalisation (the theory of the 'permanent offensive') have been traced both in this document and in that on the WRP. Not only do we reject it as alien to Bolshevism. It is necessary to understand and apply the methods that Bolshevism perfected in the Russian Revolution and codified in the First Four Congresses of the Communist International, to gauge the temper of the masses. Trotsky enumerates them in the same article ('The Third Period' of the Errors of the Comintern):

"The political activity of the masses before it assumes a more decisive form, for a shorter or longer period may express itself in more frequent attendances at meetings, in broader distribution of Communist literature, in additional electoral votes, in increased membership of the party. Can the leadership adopt in advance a worked-out orientation based on a stormy tempo of development, come what may? No. It must be prepared for one or the other tempo. Only in this way can the party, not altering its revolutionary direction, march in step with the class ...

Temper

"One of the most important elements in orientation is the determination of the temper of the masses, their activity and readiness for struggle. The mood of the masses, however, is not predetermined. It changes under the influence of certain laws of mass psychology that are set into motion by objective social conditions. The political state of the class is subject, within certain limits, to a quantitative determination - press circulation, attendance at meetings, elections, demonstrations, strikes, etc. etc. In order to understand the dynamics of the process, it is necessary to determine in what direction and why the mood of the working class is changing. Combining subjective with objective data, it is possible to establish a tentative perspective of the movement, that is, a scientifically-based prediction, without which a serious revolutionary struggle is in general inconceivable. But a prediction

in politics does not have the character of a perfect blueprint: it is a working hypothesis. While leading the struggle in one direction or another, it is necessary to follow the changes in the objective and subjective elements of the movement in order to introduce opportunely corresponding corrections in tactics. Even though the actual development of the struggle never fully corresponds to the prognosis, that does not absolve us from making political predictions. One must not, however, get intoxicated with finished schemata, but continually refer to the course of the historic process and adjust to its indications ...

If our strategic line is determined in the final analysis by the inevitability of the growth of contradictions and the revolutionary radicalisation of the masses, then our tactics, which serve this strategy, proceed from the realistic evaluation of each period, each stage, each moment, which may be characterised by a temporary softening of contradictions, a right-ward turn of the masses, a change in the relation of forces in favour of the bourgeoisie, etc. If the masses were to turn leftward un-interruptedly, any fool could lead them".

We need, not fools, but revolutionary realists.

Supplementary Resolution on the World Economic Outlook

Political perspectives can no more be mechanically deduced from economic trends and shifts than they can be projected independently of them. Our organisation has yet to address itself seriously to the long-overdue task of probing the manifold factors and processes that have underlain the protracted post-war boom, a boom which in its unprecedented longevity and vigour has disoriented countless individuals and groups struggling to build the Fourth International in the period since the end of the war. Here it is possible only to indicate the areas that such an inquiry should cover and provide some statistical guidance for the group in its general political activity in the Labour movement.

First, it should be stated unequivocally that the foundation of the enormous post-war boom was, in its inception, political. The counter-revolutionary deal between the Kremlin and the victorious imperialist powers in 1943-1945, which resulted in the European revolution being stifled in its infancy in the West and bureaucratically beheaded in the East, created the political premises for the re-building of the shattered state structures in occupied Europe, with these in turn creating the necessary political framework for the stabilisation, and then the expansion, of production on a capitalist basis. In several countries - France most notably - this involved large-scale statification of the infra-structure and even other sectors of the economy, as in Britain also. But these drastic measures in no sense altered the class nature of the re-built economies or the position of the working class within them. Stalinist participation in capitalist governments in Italy, Belgium and France, on the direct orders of the Kremlin, successfully tied the workers' organisation in the main to this policy of reconstruction. Strike-breaking, production-boosting and other reactionary labour policies were faithfully carried out by the Stalinists, once again as part of the Potsdam deal of 1945.

By the time of the opening of the Cold War, of the Marshall Plan and of the Kremlin's left turn into Cominformism (1947), the Stalinists had served their purpose in re-establishing the various capitalist regimes of Western Europe. From this date on, capitalist expansion had developed its own internal logic and momentum, as the figures cited in the appendix incontrovertibly demonstrate.

Here is not the place to develop worked-out answers to the questions - fundamental ones for Marxists - raised by the protracted boom of 1947 - 1973, a boom which maintains its upward momentum with only slight cyclic lags, far more feeble than those which punctuated the capitalist booms of the pre-war period and of the period between the mid-19th century and the outbreak of the First World War.

The first task, then, is to draw attention to the scope, the nature and the political implications of the problem. This problem has never been honestly confronted by the British movement since the early post-war period. It is one that the Healy leadership has quite 'consciously avoided and mystified. We might recall here Healy's original 'third period' notion of the early post-war period of the Revolutionary Communist Party - the 'absolute ceiling on production'. This was endorsed by Pablo and Mandel and opposed in Britain by Grant, Haston, Cliff and Harber. As late as the mid-1950's, when production levels had far outstripped those of the pre-war period (see the tables below), Healy was echoing the British Communist Party and Stalin's last work, 'Economic Problems of Socialism', in his claim that the slump was upon us, that capitalism could offer only wage-cuts, dole queues and, generally, 'a return to the thirties'. When Behan took up this refrain in 1960, to bolster his case for the 'open party', Tom Kemp provided all the correct arguments to defeat it. Economics never being Healy's least weak suit, he was quite content to leave the economic aspects of the debate with Behan to an expert, while he handled the apparatus struggle. (The old entrists provided most of the ammunition for the political questions).

When Healy next ventured forth on to the unfamiliar terrain of political economy, it was with the aid of another 'ideas man' - Pilling. Pilling first embellished Healy's half-baked ideas about automation (it was going to put all the youth out of work and thus generate a 'new vanguard', that would capture, from the outside the leadership of the adult workers - hence the false youth-orientation of the early sixties). Then, when automation proved to be a loser by the mid-1960's since it had neither come to Britain on the scale predicted by Healy nor put many youth out of jobs, Pilling fed Healy with another gimmick - monetarism. Not only the mysteries of capitalist production, but also its doom, was enshrouded in the fetish of money, and its purest fetishistic form, gold. Instead of money being seen as the 'shadow of commodities', as Marx depicted it in 'Capital', Healy embraced the fetishism of commodities by investing money and gold with the status of primary factors in capitalist economy - he stood Marx on his head.

Gold

While SLL members faithfully followed each rise and fall in the price of gold as if the fate of the world revolution hung upon it, the real processes in the world and British economy proceeded entirely un-noticed. Just some of them are hinted at in the tables reproduced below. They will come as a shock to those of us reared on 'artificial booms' and the like. And they should serve as a warning to those who in their anxiety to prove their revolutionary credentials regard it as a point of honour not to concede either that there has been a boom in the past or that there can be one again in the future.

The first tentative conclusions that could be drawn from the figures presented

- a) That the post-war boom witnessed an upsurge in the level of production not experienced in any previous phase of capitalism;
- b) That, far from being ruled out, a boom is most likely in the near future, and that the slump that opened at the end of 1973 is at an end. We are now almost certainly entering on the first stages of a capitalist upturn which could last for not less than two years, on the basis of existing data and projections (the second of which must, of course, be treated as conditional).

This is not to say that this period of upturn in the world capitalist economy will be uniform or will not have its periods of crisis, economic as well as political. The upsurge in production that preceded the first world war was also one of enormous and violent class battles throughout Europe. Only those who hold to a mechanical, vulgar causation theory of the relationship between economics and politics will deduce from this conditional projection a political perspective that rules out new revolutionary struggles and conquests. Indeed, past experience indicates that the capitalist upturn will give a new impetus to the class struggle, will whet the appetites of the workers, give them more confidence in their power as they become more necessary to the employers in the process of production. This conjuncture is not new to Marxists. Trotsky writes about it in the early post-war period and again in mid-1932, when the worst of the slump began to pass over into a revival, especially in Germany and USA, with the result in both countries of a new impulse in the class struggle. In Germany there was a strike wave, terminated by the Nazi victory. In the USA there was the CIO upsurge. This conjuncture is once more on the horizon and we should be attuned tactically to it right now, in order that it does not throw us off course, if and when it comes.

Convulsions

Neither does the prospect of an upturn exclude even deeper economic and social convulsions in the near future. The fetters of the national state on capitalist production (and on production in the Stalinist-ruled states) will become ever more restrictive, as the EEC experiment is already proving, (like its Kremlin counter-part; Comecon). The 'realisation problem' will grow ever more acute. The mass of surplus-value, under pressure from a revived wages movement, will have to be distributed among an expanding quantity of competing capitals. The disparity between the growth and investment rates of the national economies (bound up with the level of technology, and hence with the rate of surplus value and of profit) will produce new tensions in the world trading system. These will disrupt attempts to resolve the currency problem in Europe and throughout the world. We neither bewail nor rejoice at the prospect of an upturn now under way - even in feeble Britain. We simply have to prepare politically for it.

Table 1 indicates the rate of post-war recovery in the major capitalist countries, with 1938 as the base-year (the last year of peace). Already by 1949 the recovery has gone beyond the highest pre-war levels. Especially of interest is the upsurge in the USA, which then feeds the recovery in Europe (Marshall Plan etc.)

Table 2 carries this recovery forward into the post-war boom to 1970 in fact. The effect of inflation is excluded, since these figures are for physical production, and do reflect increases in production in value terms. This table demolishes the Healy myth of the 'artificial' or 'inflationary' post-war boom. These figures indicate increases in real, physical production. For the devotees of 'last crisis' theory, they are quite shattering.

Also to be noted is the highly uneven tempo of the recovery and then further expansion - West Germany for example, in contrast with the U.K. Table 3 gives additional perspective on the same process.

Table 1

Post-War Boom: Selected Capitalist Countries: 1938 as base

	<u>1938</u>	<u>1949</u>	<u>1955</u>
France	100	112	149
West Germany	100	100	178
Italy	100	101	150
Belgium	100	109	135
U.S.A	100	174	219
U.K.	100	113	134

Table 2

Gross National Product, in billions of dollars
(adjusted for inflation)

	<u>1953</u>	<u>1963</u>	<u>1970</u>
France	52	67	117
West Germany	33	79	178
Italy	18	40	78
Belgium	8	12	22
U.S.A.	360	528	844
U.K.	n.a.	73	n.a.

Table 3

Industrial Production: (1952 as base 100)

	<u>1938</u>	<u>1946</u>	<u>1948</u>	<u>1952</u>
France	71	60	81	100
West Germany	78	n.a.	41	100
Italy	62	n.a.	62	100
Belgium	71	63	87	100
U.S.A.	36	67	78	100
Japan	88	24	38	100
U.S.S.R.	30	29	45	100

Table 4 places these figures in their world-historical setting. They point up even more sharply the enormous significance of the post-war boom, which few, if any, in the Fourth International thought was possible before it happened, or acknowledged once it was under way.

Table 4

World Capitalist Production: 1876-1961
(1938 as base at 100)

	<u>Food</u>	<u>Mining</u>	<u>Oil</u>	<u>Manufactures</u>
1876	48		1.5	19
1913	80		18	75
1925	88		35	87
1929	92		70	109
1932	104		75	69
1938	100		100	100
1948	114	133	180	145
1955	132	177	290	224
1961	154	214	379	280

(These figures exclude USSR after 1913, Eastern Europe after 1938 and China after 1948)

Tables 5 and 6 A key index of the effectiveness, and therefore of competitive ability of a capitalist economy (or any other economy) is output per head. Output per head depends, in turn on the level of technology, and therefore, in turn, on investment as a percentage of total output.

Table 5 gives output per head over the period 1950-1970, measured in terms of the USA. Note the rise of France and West Germany and the relative decline of the U.K. Bear in mind also, when dealing with the economic problems of the Stalinist-ruled states, the low levels of labour productivity in the USSR and the other European deformed, workers' states, and the incredibly low level in China - lower even than Kenya, and only 7% of the U.S.A. This constitutes the biggest imperialist pressure on the workers' states, far more telling than the most deadly nuclear warhead.

T a b l e 5

Output per head compared with U.S.A.

	<u>1950</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>
U.S.A.	100	100	100
Canada	75	77	-
West Germany	37	64	75
France	46	58	75
Italy	25	33	46
U.K.	55	64	60
Czecho-Sl.	-	44	-
East Germany	-	53	-
USSR	-	38	-
Poland	-	34	-
Argentina	-	31.3	-
Australia	-	69	-
India	-	-	7.1
China	-	-	5.2
Japan	-	-	62
Kenya	-	-	5.7

T a b l e 6

% Annual Growth of Labour Productivity: 1949-1959

	<u>All</u>	<u>Manufacturing</u>
West Germany	4.9%	6.0%
Italy	4.9%	7.2%
France	4.3%	5.1%
U.S.A.	2.1%	3.4%
Belgium	2.6%	3.7%
U.K.	1.8%	2.4%

Table 7 gives annual percentage growth rates, that is, the percentage by which the total output for each year was higher than that of the preceding year. Here again the U.K., starved of investment and high technology, shows up poorly. Note once more the powerful surge of defeated Japan and Germany. The last column gives the percentage increase of 1959 on 1937.

T a b l e 7

	<u>1937-1948</u>	<u>1948-1953</u>	<u>1953-1959</u>	<u>On 1937</u>
U.S.A.	5.0	5.0	2.35	265
U.K.	1.2	3.8	3.2	170
W. Germany	-4.5	22.7	8.5	220
Other EMC	0	5.8	7.0	200
Japan	-4.4	27.4	13.2	280
All capitalist countries	2.5	6.5	4.6	240
U.S.S.R.	4.8	17.3	10.3	685
E. Europe	0	19.0	12.0	480
China	0	26.1	26.2	1290

Table 8 extends these growth rates into the 1960's, with the U.K. again at the bottom and with Germany (i.e. West Germany) at the top in Europe.

T a b l e 8

	<u>1950-1964</u>	<u>1955-1964</u>
West Germany	7.1	5.6
Italy	5.6	5.4
France	4.9	5.0
U.S.A.	3.5	3.1
U.K.	2.6	2.8

Table 9 gives some of the background to the previous sets of growth indices. The correlation between a high percentage rate of growth and a high percentage investment rate is obviously high.

T a b l e 9

Investment as% of G.N.P.	1950-1962
West Germany	25.9%
Italy	21.8%
France	19.5%
U.S.A.	18.4%
U.K.	16.1%

Table 10 (p.75) gives the investment rates in some major capitalist countries (investment as% of Gross National Product).

- 75 -
T a b l e 10

	<u>1961</u>	<u>1973</u>
Japan	34%	38%
West Germany	26%	26%
France	22%	25%
Italy	25%	21%
U.S.A.	18%	18%
U.K.	19%	18%

Table 11 gives increases in output per man-hour in manufacturing, in 1961 and 1974. The slow increase in U.S.A is from a high base. The U.K. one is from a base considerably lower: see the tables above on output per head

T a b l e 11

Rise in Output per man-hour in manufacturing:
1974 on 1961 as base

	<u>1961</u>	<u>1974</u>
Japan	100	340
Italy	100	240
France	100	220
West Germany	100	190
U.K.	100	170
U.S.A.	100	165

Table 12 gives the percentage shares of world manufacturing supplied by different countries in the years 1937, 1948 and 1959.

T a b l e 12

	<u>1937</u>	<u>1948</u>	<u>1959</u>
U.S.A.	34	44	40
U.K.	10	9	7
West Germany	8	3	6
Other E.E.C. Countries	10	8	7
Japan	3	1	2
U.S.S.R.	10	13	17

Tables 13 and 14 hint at some of the structural changes and problems of some of the capitalist economies, including the phenomenon of parasitism, reflected in the growth of the service sector.

T a b l e 13

Share of Service Sector in Total Investment: 1949-1959
as percentage of total investment

France	11.7%
Italy	12.0%
West Germany	16.6%
U.K.	20.0%

T a b l e 14

Labour Force in Selected Capitalist Countries: 1970

<u>Percentage in:</u>	Industry	Agriculture	Services	Trade Unions
Belgium	44	5	49	70
France	40	14	44	20
W. Germany	42	9	41	33
Italy	42	19	35	50
Netherlands	47	7	51	30
U.K.	46	3	49	45

Tables 15 and 16 provide some background to the way in which the imperialist countries have been able to postpone the problems associated with advanced capitalist economies or to weaken the impact of them. Exploitation of the 'third world' primary producers, by depressing world prices of raw materials and inflating the prices of manufactured goods, provides additional profits to the big monopolies and partially offsets the tendency of the falling rate of profit.

T a b l e 15

Index of Volume Changes in World Trade,
Based on 1958

	<u>1958</u>	<u>1967</u>
Primary Products	100	158
Manufactures	100	210
All	100	190

T a b l e 16

Index of Price Changes in World Trade,
Based on 1958

	<u>1958</u>	<u>1967</u>
Primary Products	100	98
Manufactures	100	108

Table 17 gives some guide to the ebb and flow of the class struggle since 1962, confirming the analysis made in the main document that the early and mid-sixties were years of relative stagnation, and that the period 1968 onwards is one of renewed class struggle.

T a b l e 17

Days lost through strikes, per thousand workers, annual average

	<u>1962-1967</u>	<u>1968-1972</u>	<u>1973</u>
France	364	277	330
W. Germany	34	74	40
Italy	1050	1912	2280
Japan	200	226	210
Belgium	160	414	500
Sweden	26	62	-
U.K.	184	968	570
U.S.A.	930	1534	770

The figure of 277 for France for 1968-1972 excludes the May-June 1968 General Strike.

Table 18 gives provisional indicators for the new upturn: we have taken the percentage rise in output in the first quarter of 1976 above the preceding quarter and have calculated what will be the percentage increase in output for the whole of the year 1976 if the rise is maintained at the same rate.

T a b l e 18

	<u>% Change</u>
Italy	79
France	27.5
Netherlands	22.5
Japan	21
Australia	15
Sweden	14.5
U.S.A.	8
Canada	7.5
U.K.	5
West Germany	0

On the USA specifically - the key to the whole pattern - the following figures will help:

In the first quarter of 1976, consumer spending rose by 16%
Gross National Product was the highest for four years,
A Growth Rate of 6% is projected for 1977,
The Dow-Jones index stood at its highest (around 1000) since its
previous peak which was in 1973. It stood at 577.6 in Dec. 1974,
Industrial production was up 11% on the same quarter of 1975,
Profits were up by as much as 400% on 1975.

AFFILIATION OF THE EAST EUROPEAN SOCIALIST PARTIES
IN EXILE TO THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL

Memorandum submitted by the Socialist Union of Central-Eastern Europe (1 Norfolk Place, London W. 2.) to the Bureau of the Socialist International.

We have received a letter of 16th December, 1971 from Hans Janitschek, the General Secretary, informing us that the Bureau at its meeting in London on 15th November decided to recommend to Congress that the category of consultative member be discontinued and enclosing a copy of the Statute of the Socialist International as revised by the Bureau. We should like to submit the following observations:

1) The abolition of the category of consultative member would terminate the individual membership of the East European Socialist Parties in the Socialist International. This would be a most regrettable decision, with grave political repercussions.

The affiliation of the East European Socialist parties to the Socialist International has been of considerable moral and political significance for the cause of Democratic Socialism in their countries. The fact alone that the free activities of these parties have been suppressed for many years cannot justify the termination of their membership of the Socialist International. On the contrary, the longer the suppression, the greater is the need for continuing expression of solidarity with them.

Despite years of oppression and persecution, serious attempts have been made by the East European Socialist parties to restore their activities. Thus in 1956 the Social Democratic Party of Hungary revived its activities throughout the country, the Party newspapers re-appeared, and Anna Kethly, together with two other Social Democrats, became Ministers in the Hungarian Revolutionary Government. Anna Kethly was elected Chairman of the Party, and those living in exile (since the suppression of their Party in 1948) were recalled to Hungary, their leader, Imre Szelig, being invited to become General Secretary. After the 1956 Revolution was crushed, Anna Kethly remained as Chairman and Imre Szelig as General Secretary of the Party in Exile, and today half the members of the Executive Committee consist of those who left the country in 1956. In 1968, during the Prague Spring, the activities of the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Party were restored under a Central Preparatory Committee, with preparatory committees created at regional and district levels. Supporters of this great attempt came from all generations, and some of them, after the Soviet invasion of the country, joined the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Party in Exile; one of the newcomers, Josef Sadek, former leader of the Association of Social Democratic Students in Slovakia and an economist, became Secretary of the Party in Exile. Though temporary, these attempts testify to the determination of East European Social Democrats not to accept the suppression of their parties as permanent. The strength of the yearning of the working class to stand up in defence of its rights was demonstrated again in the memorable events in the Baltic ports of Poland in December, 1970.

2) It is this body of Social Democratic opinion, very widespread in our countries, which the Socialist parties in exile represent and seek to convey to their fellow Social Democrats in the free countries, and this is the purpose of their affiliation to the Socialist International; they draw their inspiration not only from tradition and history but also from these still fresh developments in their countries, thus creating a continuity not only with the past but also with the very recent and continuing trends. This should be taken into account when considering the span

of time that has passed since the suppression of free Social Democratic activities in the Communist-dominated countries of Central-Eastern Europe.

In this connection it should be recalled that the Spanish Socialist Party, whose free activities were suppressed ten years earlier than those of the East European Socialist parties, is still admitted into the Socialist International as a full member, which it fully deserves. In contrast, the East European Socialist parties in exile have been admitted as member parties with consultative status, and consequently the proposed Statute of the Socialist International would deepen still further this differentiation, for which there is no justification whatsoever. The regime responsible for the suppression of the Socialist parties in the Central and East European countries is certainly not less totalitarian or more human than the Fascist regime in Franco Spain.

3) We appreciate that, as was stated in the General Secretary's letter, "the Bureau made it quite clear that the East European exile parties would in future continue to be represented in our organisation as members of SUCEE", and we were glad to note his statement published in SINEWS of 18th December. Yet the continued affiliation of the SUCEE to the Socialist International would not alter the fact of the termination of the individual membership of the East European Socialist parties. It was on this fact, confirmed by the statement, that the press and radio reports about the expulsion of the East European Socialist parties in exile from the Socialist International were based. As examples we would like to quote:

a) a TRIBUNE (British Socialist weekly) article of 19th November under the title "Socialist International Breaks with the Past":

"The Socialist International ... in effect threw out the ten East European and Central European 'exile' parties by abolishing the consultative member status under which they operated. Admittedly the exiles still have a link with the S.I. through their membership of the Socialist Union of Central-Eastern Europe, an S.I. affiliate. But in reality they - and their anti-Communist implications - have gone."

b) a RADIO BUDAPEST report of 17th November:

"The Executive Committee of the Socialist International at its last session in London abolished the category of consultative member. This decision automatically puts an end to the membership of those groups which were formed by right-wing Social Democratic politicians who have left the socialist countries. One of them is Anna Kethly's organisation which calls itself the (Hungarian) Social Democratic Party in Exile. Sources close to the headquarters of the Socialist International comment that the aim of this decision was to eliminate the impediment which handicaps the Western Social Democratic parties in the East-West dialogue".

A dispatch along similar lines from its London correspondent was published in NEPSZABADSAG also on 17th November.

c) A despatch from Maciej Slotwinski, WARSAW RADIO correspondent in London, broadcast on 22nd November, reported the decision of the Bureau, adding that,

"in this way the Socialist International got rid of the so-called socialist parties from Eastern Europe and anti-communist elements".

4) This shows that the proposed termination of the individual membership of the East European Socialist parties in exile is being made full use of by the unceasing Communist crusade against Social Democracy in our countries. That is why we appeal to the Bureau of the Socialist International to take a decision that would clarify the situation fully, dispel any doubts, and prevent the repetition of any biased interpretations. This could be done, for example, by a decision of the Bureau that the parties which until now have had consultative status will, after the adoption of the new Statute, become Observer parties. This would simply preserve the state of affairs which has been in force for many years and has proved satisfactory. "To make the Socialist International a more compact body with a more rational structure, in which membership would in future be vested in parties functioning in their own countries" (as the statement in SINEWS said) certainly does not require the termination of the individual membership of the East European Socialist parties, which have had no right to vote and which have always carefully avoided any abuse of their rights within the International, for instance agreeing as a rule on having one common spokesman in the debates. This is how they propose to act also in the future.

We trust that the Bureau will give careful consideration to our observations and to our appeal, which is motivated solely by our concern for upholding the prestige of the Socialist International in the eyes of the people of our countries and avoiding any damage to the cause of Democratic Socialism.

17th January 1972

SOCIALIST UNION OF CENTRAL-EASTERN
EUROPE

The following is a document received from Poland:

**A REPORT OF REPRISALS AGAINST THE WORKERS OF THE 'URSUS'
AND OTHER MANUFACTURING PLANTS**

(based on numerous eye-witness accounts)

On June 25th almost the whole of the labour force of the Ursus motor factory was out on strike from morning. At first the workers waited on the shop floor for the management representatives to come, and about 9.00 a.m. made their own way out of the factory to the administrative block. The workers demanded that representatives of the principal authorities come immediately for consultations with the labour force of the factory. This demand was refused by the management and in view of this workers took up positions on nearby railways lines and stopped rail traffic on the Warsaw to Kutno and Warsaw to Skiernica lines. The purpose of this action was to inform as large a number of people as possible of the Ursus strike.

Protest action was throughout carried out in quite an orderly fashion. Police authorities did not intervene, but only mobilised large units of militia and made observation (including helicopter surveillance). Of the more important incidents mention should be made of the following: a female worker slapped the local Party First Secretary and the Ursus Manager when during their address to the crowd they were critical of the strike; trains were stopped, including international connections, railway lines were dismantled and an unsuccessful attempt was made at cutting rails with acetylene torches; a locomotive was rolled into the gap where the rails had been taken up; an egg delivery van was stopped and the eggs were distributed among the strikers and casual passers-by; a sugar delivery van was stopped and the sugar partly distributed.

About 8.00 p.m. workers heard a television broadcast by the Premier revoking the price increases and after this announcement began to disperse. It was exactly then that the detachments of the militia attacked the dispersing crowds with rockets and tear gas, hitting out with truncheons and kicking the fallen. During the police action a restaurant car burst into flames (probably hit by a rocket or other incendiary device). The fire was extinguished by the fire brigade but because of difficult operational circumstances (successive charges of police detachments) the restaurant car and part of the next carriage were destroyed.

The militia detachments then organised a man-hunt that was accompanied by brutal beating of people in the streets, mainly of youths. Both uniformed and plain-clothes detachments rounded up people, often passers-by, in the area round the factory, in the town's main streets and in the outskirts of Ursus. Those stopped were beaten with truncheons, spanners, belt buckles and were kicked often to unconsciousness. This operation lasted until morning.

Here are some examples illustrative of the methods used by the police authorities:

- a worker on his way for the third shift was arrested and brutally beaten;
- a worker returning from the second shift was arrested and beaten and further abused in a police car;
- a worker gone to fetch his wife, on foot, from Wlochy (from the second shift) was arrested and beaten up in his wife's presence; he was dragged by the feet to a police car;

- a worker returning home with a wife in late pregnancy was forcibly pushed into a police car, the wife being brushed aside;
- a worker returning in the evening to the workers' hostel was stopped near the hostel by some men in civilian clothes driving a private car (commandeered for the operation) and beaten in the car until bleeding;
- some young people walking along the Street of the Heroes of Warsaw near a police station were attacked by militia and beaten; one of them lost consciousness, whereupon he was abused as he lay unconscious; he was later collected by an ambulance;
- a young worker was hit so hard with a truncheon during the police intervention, that he sustained fractures of the jaw in two places.

On arrival at the Ursus police station the arrested had to walk down between a double line of truncheon thrashing militia men. Some were forced through the double line twice. Once inside the building they were thrown in, one by one, into a special room where a number of militia would beat them and kick them and if some fell they would be kicked on the ground. Cases are known where ribs were broken. In the back yard of the station a 'health trot' was organised round which the arrested were ordered to run under a hail of truncheons.

It seems that all the arrested were beaten - not one exception to this rule is known. That night a sum total of 200 to 300 people were arrested.

The arrested were next transported to the Mostowski Palace - those who had collapsed during the beating were dragged by their feet and bodily thrown into police cars. In the Mostowski Palace they were photographed and had their finger-prints taken. Then they were examined under ultra violet lamps to see if they had been marked with special dust dispersed by cartridges fired during earlier action by the militia for identification purposes. Here too enquiries were held for the first time. Then they were transported to the HQ in Takowiecka Street. Before being taken to the Mostowski Palace some passed through a middle stage at the Walicow police station, where they were also beaten.

On Sunday, 27th June, courts of summary jurisdiction were called and these sat late into the night. Those arrested were charged with attacking the militia, ignoring orders to disperse, demolishing shops, railway carriages etc. The majority of the accusations were false. Militia men were called as witnesses - generally these were not the same people as had arrested the accused - and the cases were heard on written evidence from absent witnesses for the prosecution.

Almost all the accused were sentenced. Fines and penalties of between 1500 and 5000 zlotys were meted out, or some dozen hours of unpaid 'social' work or suspended imprisonment. After 48 hours most of the accused were sent home.

On Monday June 28th, workers who had been set free resumed work though some had to stay at home suffering from shock from the beatings. After a few days the motor works terminated without notice contracts of employment of all those workers who had been arrested, citing as legal grounds Article 52, para 1 of the Penal Code. Those of them who had accommodation at the workers' hostel were ejected from their lodgings the following day.

It was primarily those who had been arrested that were dismissed from work. Nevertheless a much wider group was subject to dismissal. Dismissals were handed out on the basis of photographs taken by the militia and on the basis of statements made by some of the managers and by informers. In the course of this workers' rights were blatantly violated. Here are some examples:

- a worker who had been off sick for a long period and had a medical certificate of exemption from work, had his contract of employment terminated without notice; on June 25th this worker had not even been at work on account of illness;
- another worker's contract was similarly terminated though he was on holiday at the time and had not even been at work on that day.

Since on June 25th almost everyone at Ursus had been on strike, the management could dismiss anyone they themselves or the supervisory staff did not like. The total number of dismissed at the Ursus plant is not known. Various figures are quoted. One quite frequent estimate puts the figure at 250 and another at about 1500. This divergence has hitherto not been clarified - one should expect confirmation of the second rather than the first estimate.

Between July 4th and 6th, those of the workers who had been sentenced to fines were served summons to the Ursus police station. They presented themselves thinking that only formalities of some sort were required. However, they were arrested and taken to Warsaw to the police HQ on Rakowiecka Street (this included persons who had paid their fines). It turned out that the militia's Warsaw Command had ordered a revision of the earlier sentences which it considered too lenient. The courts of summary jurisdiction were directed to re-hear all cases and return sentences of absolute imprisonment. That was indeed the way that matters went and now almost all sentences came to three months' imprisonment. Some of the cases were tried with complete disregard for the principles laid down by the Code of Penal Proceedings. Thus for example, statements by an absent witness (Witness Dynda) were cited at the trial which alleged that the accused had attacked militia men. The court gave no credence to denials by the accused and based their verdict just on the written evidence of the prosecution witness who was not present at the trial. Often use was made of an indirect witness of the prosecution (Witness Dabek) who had merely put on record at the police station personal details of those arrested and cause of arrest as stated by the militia escort. Since Witness Dabek had not recorded personal details of the militia escort, there was no way of checking the credibility of the information. It happened too that witnesses confused various of the accused and did not know at all well where they had made their arrest.

After hearing their sentences workers were transferred to the Bialoleka Prison. Many of them submitted appeals, unsuccessfully as a rule, because the second hearings had confirmed the earlier verdicts. The court also made no reaction to statements by workers that they had been beaten by the militia.

When the first month was up some of those sentenced (about 40 in number) were offered suspension of the remaining two months of imprisonment for a period of six months. Thus about 40 people were released from prison at the beginning of August. It is worth noting that those who had earlier paid up their fines and had then been sentenced again (to three months' imprisonment) have still not received their money back. They were thus punished twice for the same actions.

All those workers who faced reprisals (this applies both to those who had only been dismissed from work as well as those who had been tried) can find no employment anywhere. State employers, co-operatives and even private

employers have been banned from accepting them into employment (private employers were threatened with suspension of their licences). The Warsaw Employment Bureau does not even agree to interview workers dismissed from work after the events of 25th June. In some cases workers who have been accepted (despite the ban) were dismissed from their jobs. The Area Review Committee in Pruszkow as of now still takes a negative view of applications for a review of dismissal decisions. Workers are convinced that they will be re-employed after a break of three months, for then they will have lost continuity of employment and related rights.

On July 16th and 17th, the County Court in Warsaw tried seven workers accused of derailing a locomotive. Five of them worked at the Ursus motor factory, one at the nearby Pruszkow machine tool factory and one was a truck driver and managed a newspaper kiosk for 'Ruch'. None of them had any previous convictions. The youngest was not quite 21, the eldest was 42 years old. They were officially assigned legal counsel. The only evidence available were photographs. Sentences were handed out of 5 years, 4½ years, 4 years and 3 years imprisonment. The highest sentence was given to the youngest of the accused. Most of the families of these accused are in dire financial straits:

- Grzegorz Zielonka (aged 42) left a wife with two adopted children aged 7 and 8; the wife has to look after a sick and disabled mother, so she cannot take up employment; the family thus has no means of support;
- Czesław Milczarek (aged 27) left a wife and two children (1 and 3 years old); the wife looks after a mother who suffers from severe asthma; nevertheless she has decided not to stop working;
- Wojciech Czarniecki left a mother who recently underwent a partial gastrectomy; the mother received a pension of 900 zlotys.

In August two trials were held at the Pruszkow Court of persons accused of distributing eggs and sugar from the smashed delivery vans. Altogether 12 people were sentenced to jail for from a 1-year suspended sentence to between 3 and 5 years imprisonment. The families of those convicted are also suffering severe material hardship.

The number of workers still detained remains unknown. It is thought the number reached 50. Some of these (10 persons) are the subject of an investigation regarding derailment of a locomotive. Some of their families experience severe material difficulty:

- a family with a large number of children (aged between 4 and 15); the wife cannot seek employment for health reasons; they do not have any means of living and receive some, though inadequate, help from relatives;
- aged parents, both gravely ill (mother blind and suffering from severe diabetes, father with bilateral hernia); their elder son came out of prison after 6 weeks of arrest and still faces proceedings; he is severely ill; distorted spine, diabetes and this year suffered three heart attacks (in May, June and also early July during beatings at the police station in Ursus); the younger son was sanctioned by the Public Prosecutor on October 1st, and is in Pruszkow Prison; as a result of beatings by the militia he sustained fractures in two places;

young boy who is mentally retarded and has been receiving medical treatment since infancy, is being held in detention (since the beginning of investigation.

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Help from places of work and local Social Security offices is feeble. Allowances which a place of employment is legally bound to pay and which were approved at the lower administration level (sectional) were rejected by an over-riding authority (managerial). Also, local social workers refuse help when approached, Since for the most part families were in the keep of the present victims of the reprisals, they are now themselves deprived of medical care.

Note

The above account contains names of only those who have so far been tried in cases reported by the press. Names of other persons mentioned are known to the authors of this account. The names are not disclosed here for fear of further reprisals that might be applied to the persons concerned.

Translated by the Association of Polish Students.