

# *Fourth International*

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

Volume 7 No. 3

Price 25 pence

Spring 1972

**Editorial: Class War and the  
Mass Party**

**Draft International Perspectives  
of the Fourth International**

**Early English  
Materialism**

**Lenin's  
'Imperialism'**

**Lukacs  
(part II)**

**Ulster**

**Bangla Desh**



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EDITORS: TOM KEMP, CLIFF SLAUGHTER

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# EMPIRE POOL WEMBLEY

SUNDAY MARCH 12 1972



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# EDITORIAL

AS WORLD CAPITALISM lurches into ever deeper crisis one thing becomes clear: the ruling class of every country must go to war on its own working class. This was made still more imperative by President Nixon's August 15 measures which finished off what was left of the Bretton Woods monetary arrangements and broke wide open the relationships between American imperialism and the rest of the capitalist world which had been maintained since the Second World War. By the same stroke, by intensifying the trade war and the economic depression, Nixon obliged the ruling class everywhere to break up the old compromises which had been operative during the boom.

Over the past 25 years the world working class has grown in size and in strength, has forced improvements in wages, and in a period of high levels of employment has developed a fighting capacity unparalleled in its history. This has been seen in country after country; from 'affluent' America to fascist Spain the working class has shown an offensive spirit which sets the ruling class new problems. In France, in 1968, the question of the revolutionary overthrow of the regime was posed, only to be brushed aside by the Stalinist apparatus which once again showed that it had passed definitely to the side of the defence of the bourgeois social order.

In Britain the strength of the working class and the crass betrayals of its leaders have reached the point where the launching of the revolutionary party, the party of world socialist revolution, of the Fourth International,

has become the central immediate political question. This had been amply demonstrated in the first 18 months of the present Conservative Government, a government which immediately went to war on the working class with an attack on the unions, a drive to force down wages, and a systematic attempt to dismantle the gains made in the field of social security after the Second World War. Heath well understood and publicly stated that the main danger confronting capitalism was not war between nations but civil war. In Northern Ireland the techniques of civil war, prepared for use against the working class, have been given a demonstrative testing out.

The long and bitter struggle of the miners, which brought them the support of the entire working class, drove back the Tory offensive and created a new political situation in Britain. Only the craven leaders of the union bureaucracy and the bipartisan politics of the Labour leadership prevented the strike from bringing about the resignation of the government. What is clear is that these leaders well understand, and deeply fear, the prospect of such a political victory. At all costs they want to avoid a repetition of 1926 which would face them with the responsibility of actually taking power.

With unemployment in Britain well over the million mark and still rising, the working class understands the prospect of a return to the 1930s, a period of demoralization and defeat for the working class. The first lesson of that decade, which Trotsky drew in the 'Transitional Programme', was that the period was one of a

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historical crisis of revolutionary leadership of the proletariat. The task of building an alternative leadership has now taken on the most immediate urgency, because the objective conditions have developed to the point where, unless the working class takes power, its organizations will be broken up and its conquests taken away by a ruling class trying desperately to prolong its existence.

The struggle for the revolutionary party is now being taken forward in Britain in a most decisive way, as has been shown by the Conference of the All Trades Unions Alliance on November 6, 1971 and the Right-to-Work campaign and mass rally of the Young Socialists in the Empire Pool, Wembley on March 12, 1972. The transformation of the Socialist Labour League into a revolutionary party has begun. To deal with all the philosophical and political problems involved in this historic step will be the task of future issues of the *Fourth International*.

It is not surprising that as the Socialist Labour League in Britain has taken up the struggle for dialectical materialism and the launching of a new revolutionary party it should have come into conflict with the French 'Organization Communiste Internationaliste'. The circumstances under which this split took place have been explained in public documents of the International Committee and are discussed in the Draft Resolution for the Fourth Conference of the Fourth International (in this issue of *Fourth International*). This Conference takes place in April 1972. Future issues of *Fourth International* will carry further material concerned with the split with the OCI, as well as contributions to the Conference discussion.

It is not at all surprising that the basic questions which have emerged in the split with the OCI are directly related to the new stage reached in the struggle between the classes internationally, and particularly in the advanced capitalist countries. The OCI concentrates everything on the so-called 'united working-class front' precisely at the time when all the emphasis needs to be *against* the illusion that the existing strength and combativity of the working class will suffice to defend its gains. If we discuss the content of the miners' strike in Britain and the terms on which it was settled, the issues become clear. The Socialist Labour League, long before the strike began, warned that it would be a strike directly against the government, in a situation where the policy of that Government internationally and for the future would be staked on defeating the miners; therefore the greatest danger came from the trade union leadership, including that of the miners. The political implications of the strike became clear to the rank and file in the first weeks of the dispute, and the most vital task

of the Socialist Labour League was to raise the question of power posed by the strike, with the inseparable question of alternative revolutionary leadership. The OCI, however, wags its finger at us and says that it was incorrect to insist that winning the miners' strike involved bringing down the Government. For the OCI, it would have been sufficient to 'encourage' the strength of the miners, understanding the political implications which would naturally emerge from such a victory. This is of course the classical 'tail-ending' of the working class against which Bolshevism was built. A 'common-sense' hindsight into the result of the strike, in which the 'wage norms' laid down by the Tory Government were smashed, appears to confirm this impressionistic view. After all, did not the miners win a 20 per cent wage increase without bringing down the Tories? Was it not 'sectarian' and 'ultimatic' to raise the question of bringing down the Government?

This is the difference between reformism and revolutionary politics, and it reflects directly the differences over the question of dialectical materialism. The meaning of the settlement of the miners' strike cannot be understood in the 'common-sense' way which the OCI would like. Behind the miners' strike and the Tory Government stands the intensifying economic crisis. A wages concession won by the miners does not prove that others can follow the same pattern of struggle and get the same result. Quite the contrary! The miners' strike was one battle in a class war. The retreat forced upon the Tories, and the shock given to the reformist bureaucracy, throws these forces into more desperate crisis, and brings nearer their day of decision to engage the working class in decisive struggles which will inevitably raise the question of state power itself.

Clarity on these lessons is surely the first prerequisite for a Trotskyist party in Britain today. Next in line in the struggle against the Government come 3 million engineering workers, the very core of the working class and the trade unions in Britain. For the ruling class, everything, literally everything, will depend upon the ability of the leaders of the engineering unions to prevent the development of political consciousness among the engineers and thus prepare a crushing defeat. The wage claims and struggles of all other workers in Britain will be determined in their development and outcome by this overriding consideration. The task of Marxists is therefore one of political leadership, not of waiting upon events. The engineers' battles will not be an exercise in the testing out of the strength of the classes for some future trial of strength. On the contrary, following on the miners strike, these battles will be treated by the ruling class as decisive ones along the necessary road provided by the post-war finan-



cial settlements, they can maintain their power only by such steps, inflicting real defeats upon the working class.

In the course of making this turn, the ruling class must try to overcome many weakness and divisions within its own ranks. But these must be seen in perspective. If the SLL had concentrated in the miners' strike on the possibility of a wage victory, and taken the tactical divisions in the ruling class as merely a favourable portent for such a victory, this would have amounted to a rejection of revolutionary responsibility. The ruling class is not gradually worn down in a series of economic or reformist battles. With that kind of outlook militant trade unionism becomes an adjunct of reformist gradualism. Faced with the loss of everything, the ruling class will grudgingly give concessions, but these concessions hasten the process by which it must resolve one day or another its internal differences to remove the threat from

the working class. We shall now get from our 'left' trade union and Labour leaders, just as from the right wing, a frantic round of bargaining with Heath, and the argument that, as against the threat from the extreme right, he is the lesser evil. Without the *political* break made in the construction of the alternative leadership, therefore, the mere encouragement of militant trade union struggle exposes the working class to the gravest dangers.

As the draft resolution published in this issue makes clear, it is this question of leadership which now predominates in every aspect of crisis of capitalism and the international class struggle. The whole history of the Fourth International has been centred round the struggle on this question. The sections of the International Committee, their strength based on this struggle against revisionism, are now confronted by the opportunity of building mass parties of the Fourth International.

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL STATEMENT

# THE ULSTER CRISIS—FOR A GENERAL ELECTION DOWN WITH DIRECT RULE

**THE INTERNATIONAL Committee of the Fourth International condemns the imposition of direct rule by the Tory government over N Ireland.**

This reactionary measure — supported by almost every left-wing Labour, Republican, Nationalist and Independent MP, as well as by a section of the Provisional IRA leaders—threatens the democratic rights of Protestant and Catholic worker alike.

We urgently warn British and Irish workers that the slightest

support for direct rule is a vote of confidence in a regime that has tortured, interned and murdered hundreds of Irish workers in the last 20 months.

Support for direct rule has an inexorable and sinister logic. If the Tory government decides to suppress Protestant workers with the same means that were used in Derry by the paras, what will the Republicans, Nationalists, revisionists and Stalinists do then?

To ask the question is to answer it. It was not an accident that these opportunists supported the despatch of British troops to Ulster in 1969!

What the imperialists could not preserve with baton, bullet, CS gas and noise machines they now hope to keep by a negotiated political solution, conducted under the mantle of 'direct rule'.

Under the convenient subterfuge of replacing the hated Stormont regime the Heath-Wilson gang are preparing an even more sinister attack against Irish workers' rights, through a coalition of Republican and Orange capitalists, backed by the armed forces of the S and Britain.

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Partition will stay, sectarian divisions will be exacerbated and the hated system of low wages, unemployment and speed-up will continue—if direct rule is effected.

The major burden of 'direct rule' will fall on the backs of the Protestant workers who have been led by their clerical and Tory-Unionist leaders into the blind alley of sectarian politics.

The unity of Protestant and Catholic workers—a precondition for a successful struggle against British imperialism—demands an uncompromising struggle to tear this section of workers from the reactionary influence of Orangeism. This can be done only by revolutionary policies which stress the essential unity of the Irish working class in a common struggle to defend basic democratic rights, preserve the independence of the unions, defeat Toryism and establish a socialist government throughout Ireland.

The nationalization of land, banks and industry under workers' control and without compensation is the only way forward for the Irish working class.

We categorically denounce the Wilson leadership's collaboration in this macabre Heath plan.

In the same way as the miners' leaders saved the Tory government from a political defeat at the hands of the mineworkers so, too, the Labour traitors obligingly help the Tories in their moment of greatest weakness.

In the meantime the Tory press cover up, or play down, the sinister conspiracy, by exaggerated and speculative reports of a possible 'Protestant backlash'.

Without Wilson and the Labour 'lefts' 'direct rule' would be impossible, or at least ineffective. Wilson's support for direct rule is in line with his support for internment and the ghoulis techniques of the army and police interrogation.

The International Committee of the Fourth International calls on all 'left' MPs, as well as the Irish opposition MPs, to vote against this reactionary and dictatorial Act.

The silence of these MPs, or their equivocal attitude to 'direct rule', will only provide testimony to their political bankruptcy, their fear of the Irish workers and their failure and refusal to face up to the alternative to direct rule.

We say that there is an alternative to direct rule and that it can and will be achieved. It is the joint struggle of the British and Irish workers to force the Tory government to resign and to elect a Labour government which will withdraw all troops from Ulster and help secure self-determination and unity for Ireland.

The struggle for such a Labour government can be secured only through the defeat and expulsion of the right-wing Labour traitors. These men, in their own way have already betrayed the British workers to the monopolists in the Common Market.

Acceptance of direct rule by Labour will inevitably strengthen the extreme right wing in Ulster and in Britain.

At the same time it has thoroughly exposed and refuted the middle-class fallacy of the Republican Provisionals that terror is the most effective route to self determination.

Far from leading to real independence and liberation their exclusive reliance on terror and their opposition to Marxism and the revolutionary party have now resulted in a rotten compromise; a belated echo of the wretched 1922 Agreement.

For the second time in 50 years Republicanism has revealed the bankruptcy of bourgeois nationalism and the utter weakness of the Irish middle class.

The revisionist and Stalinist civil rights protestors also bear a responsibility for the confusion and division in the working class because their policies of reform offered no way out for the Protestant workers and strengthened Paisleyism.

The present opposition of the Civil Rights Association to Westminster's 'initiative' is totally unprincipled and recognizes the power

of Britain to dictate policies to Ulster.

The opposition of the International Socialism revisionists, the International Marxist Group and the Stalinists to a campaign to force the Tories out of power and their tail-ending of Republican-nationalism have strengthened sectarian divisions in the working class and alienated the Protestant workers.

By separating the struggle against internment and for democratic rights from the struggle against the Tory government these reformists act as a political rearguard for imperialism.

The present crisis in Ulster demonstrates again the absolute necessity to expose and smash revisionism and build the Marxist revolutionary Party in Ireland.

Similarly those who rely on emotion and radical phrasemongering are singularly silent when the Tory trap of direct rule is sprung.

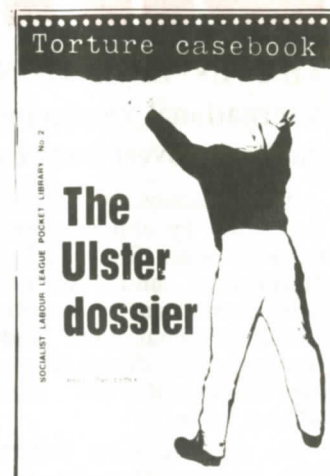
What unites all these groups is their desire to keep the working class from participating as an independent and conscious force in the national liberation struggle. The International Committee of the Fourth International calls on the class conscious militants in Ulster and in the Republic to learn the lessons of the last four years' struggle, to reject the bankrupt and treacherous labour and nationalist leadership and build the revolutionary Marxist leadership in Ireland, League for a Workers' Vanguard, the Irish section of the International Committee of the Fourth International.

- Long live the Irish workers!
- Down with imperialism and its Labourite and nationalist agencies!
- Withdraw the troops immediately!
- Force the Tories to resign!
- Release all internees!
- For a General Election!

March 25, 1972

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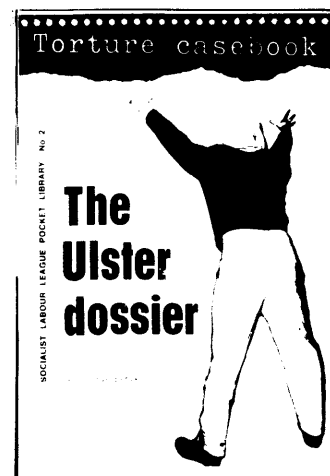
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# International perspectives

DRAFT RESOLUTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL SUBMITTED FOR DISCUSSION IN PREPARATION FOR THE FOURTH CONGRESS OF THE I.C. OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

## **I—Introduction: Our tasks in 1972, in relation to the founding of the Fourth International in 1938.**

THE STRUGGLE to found the Fourth International in 1938 was undertaken in order to ensure the continuity of revolutionary leadership and of Marxist theory, from the first four Congresses of the Communist International, the work of Lenin and the Bolsheviks in the Russian Revolution, and the work of Marx and Engels. It had to be carried through in conditions created by a generation of great defeats for the international working class. This fight for the continuity of Marxism was a struggle against every form of adaptation to these defeats. It meant a fight to the death against the Stalinist bureaucracy which first ensured the defeats and then battered on their fruits. The opposition voiced by all those centrists who stood aside from the Fourth International of Trotsky was an adaptation to the bureaucracy, through the medium of which came an adaptation to imperialism. The founding conference of the Fourth International defined our epoch as one of capitalist decay, in which the historical crisis of humanity is concentrated and which must be resolved in the crisis of revolutionary leadership of the working class. Those who rejected, and still reject, the continuity in struggle of revolutionary Marxism with the Third International and the Russian Revolution, in fact reject the revolutionary role of the working class. Only the orientation to this class, whatever the temporary defeats, could provide the basis for the development of Marxist theory. Trotsky wrote: 'The laws of history are stronger than the bureaucratic apparatus.' The Fourth International, on this granite foundation, has continued to exist, and is being built today, only in constant struggle against all revisionism, which seeks to accept and adapt to the defeats of the inter-war years and the dominance of the bureaucracy, treating these as unalterable historical facts.

These theoretical foundations have been under continuous attack since the birth of the Fourth International. In the years conditioned by defeats, and with the capitalist class able, through the collaboration of the Stalinists, to implement

policies of relative class peace, the defence and development of Marxist theory could only be a slow and difficult task, the responsibility of a handful of comrades who were to a great extent isolated from any mass movement. Those conditions have now decisively changed. But we shall get a development of Marxism and the building of revolutionary parties only by starting from the gains of the long struggle for revolutionary continuity in the Fourth International. The profoundly revolutionary character of the contradictions underlying the surface phenomena of capitalist and bureaucratic 'containment' of the working class since 1944 could be grasped only through a conscious struggle for dialectical materialism, against all enemies. In place of dialectical materialism, revisionism in the Fourth International put subjective impressionism. For many years, they accepted the inevitability of bureaucratic control of the workers' movement. The working class was considered only as an unconscious 'pressure' creating centrist and even revolutionary developments within the bureaucracy. In the course of the years of struggle against Pablo, Germain, and later the SWP leadership, it was necessary above all to uncover, underneath the capitulation to bureaucratic and petty-bourgeois nationalist leaderships, the theoretical roots of revisionism. These were: the abandonment of the Marxist theory of knowledge, of the relation between consciousness and reality, between theory and practice; capitulation to the idealist philosophy of the bourgeoisie. The struggle against this ideological pressure from the class enemy is the only foundation for training the cadres of our revolutionary parties. At the same time, the revisionists find themselves undermined by the objective developments: capitalist world crisis and the explosion of the 'neo-capitalism' myth; revolutionary struggles in the advanced countries since 1968; political revolution in Eastern Europe; exposure in struggle of the petty-bourgeois leaderships, particularly in Cuba and Algeria.

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THE STRUGGLE to found the Fourth International in 1938 was undertaken in order to ensure the continuity of revolutionary leadership and of Marxist theory, from the first four Congresses of the Communist International, the work of Lenin and the Bolsheviks in the Russian Revolution, and the work of Marx and Engels. It had to be carried through in conditions created by a generation of great defeats for the international working class. This fight for the continuity of Marxism was a struggle against every form of adaptation to these defeats. It meant a fight to the death against the Stalinist bureaucracy which first ensured the defeats and then battered on their fruits. The opposition voiced by all those centrists who stood aside from the Fourth International of Trotsky was an adaptation to the bureaucracy, through the medium of which came an adaptation to imperialism. The founding conference of the Fourth International defined our epoch as one of capitalist decay, in which the historical crisis of humanity is concentrated and which must be resolved in the crisis of revolutionary leadership of the working class. Those who rejected, and still reject, the continuity in struggle of revolutionary Marxism with the Third International and the Russian Revolution, in fact reject the revolutionary role of the working class. Only the orientation to this class, whatever the temporary defeats, could provide the basis for the development of Marxist theory. Trotsky wrote: 'The laws of history are stronger than the bureaucratic apparatus.' The Fourth International, on this granite foundation, has continued to exist, and is being built today, only in constant struggle against all revisionism, which seeks to accept and adapt to the defeats of the inter-war years and the dominance of the bureaucracy, treating these as unalterable historical facts.

These theoretical foundations have been under continuous attack since the birth of the Fourth International. In the years conditioned by defeats, and with the capitalist class able, through the collaboration of the Stalinists, to implement

policies of relative class peace, the defence and development of Marxist theory could only be a slow and difficult task, the responsibility of a handful of comrades who were to a great extent isolated from any mass movement. Those conditions have now decisively changed. But we shall get a development of Marxism and the building of revolutionary parties only by starting from the gains of the long struggle for revolutionary continuity in the Fourth International. The profoundly revolutionary character of the contradictions underlying the surface phenomena of capitalist and bureaucratic 'containment' of the working class since 1944 could be grasped only through a conscious struggle for dialectical materialism, against all enemies. In place of dialectical materialism, revisionism in the Fourth International put subjective impressionism. For many years, they accepted the inevitability of bureaucratic control of the workers' movement. The working class was considered only as an unconscious 'pressure' creating centrist and even revolutionary developments within the bureaucracy. In the course of the years of struggle against Pablo, Germain, and later the SWP leadership, it was necessary above all to uncover, underneath the capitulation to bureaucratic and petty-bourgeois nationalist leaderships, the theoretical roots of revisionism. These were: the abandonment of the Marxist theory of knowledge, of the relation between consciousness and reality, between theory and practice; capitulation to the idealist philosophy of the bourgeoisie. The struggle against this ideological pressure from the class enemy is the only foundation for training the cadres of our revolutionary parties. At the same time, the revisionists find themselves undermined by the objective developments: capitalist world crisis and the explosion of the 'neo-capitalism' myth; revolutionary struggles in the advanced countries since 1968; political revolution in Eastern Europe; exposure in struggle of the petty-bourgeois leaderships, particularly in Cuba and Algeria.

The Fourth Conference of the International Committee now takes place under new conditions. The maturing of the imperialist crisis, signalled by Nixon's measures of August 15, 1971, marks the beginning of a new stage of the crisis of leadership. The conditions for the development of Marxist theory by the revolutionary vanguard are now being transformed, as the masses in all countries are thrust into revolutionary struggles by the disruption of their conditions of life. The task of our Fourth Conference is to grasp the decisiveness of the change implied in these conditions, to politically equip all our sections with the basis for winning leadership of the working class. The greatest mistake today would be to

ignore or underestimate the change, to carry on with the same perspectives and methods to which sections have become accustomed in the period since 1938. Such conservatism holds the gravest dangers of descent into centrism and opportunist adaptation. The objective conditions have now reached a stage where, on the firm basis of our long struggle for the continuity of Marxism, we can resolve the crisis of revolutionary leadership. Trotskyism has been forced to go through a long period of isolation, in which it was necessary to beat back every influence from the pressure of imperialism and Stalinism. The real history of Trotskyism, as the force to resolve the crisis of revolutionary working-class leadership, begins

## II—The capitalist crisis

With the decisions of the American ruling class to remove the gold backing for the dollar, to impose import surcharges, to end the system of fixed parities, and to impose controls on wages, the basis has been removed for all the political relations through which the bourgeoisie has ruled since the Second World War. The post-war betrayals of international Stalinism had made possible the restoration of capitalist order in Europe, and thereby on a world scale. Despite the gigantic contradiction between the productive forces and the capitalist mode of production manifested in the Second World War, capitalism was able to survive, but only because of these betrayals. The Bretton Woods agreement of 1944, the new institutions like the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, and the inflationary Keynesian policies pursued in the advanced capitalist countries, were possible not because of some new-found strength of the capitalist system, but only because of the control of the working class's strength by the Stalinists, assisted by the reformists and the trade union bureaucracy. Now the intensified contradictions of capitalism have finally broken through these relations, which constituted essentially a retreat before the working class, and the class issues must inevitably be fought out. The dollar crisis can only mean a succession of struggles for power by the working class of the capitalist countries.

In the years before the Second World War, the capitalists had used fascism to smash the working class of Germany, Japan, Italy and Spain. But fascism, once in power, had threatened the major capitalist powers, and they were compelled to prosecute a world war which, as always, brought revolutionary crises all over the world. There ensued a series of major defeats for capitalism, in Yugoslavia, in China, and in the loss of Eastern Europe. The establishment of deformed workers' states in these countries was subordinated to the Stalinist strategy of international class-collaboration, but it meant the loss of a vast portion of the world to capitalism. In Western Europe and the United States, the capitalists confronted a working class recovered from the depression of the 1930s. The history of capitalism

since 1944 has been one of adaptation to the strength of this working class. Until 1971, the capitalists' guiding strategy has been to find ways of avoiding an all-out clash with the proletariat. Since the middle 1960s, the capitalist class has been forced to recognize the need to take back from the working class all its historical gains, but so far it has continued to try and do this above all through the reformist and Stalinist leaders. Nixon's August 1971 speech was the high point of the rapid developments since the gold crisis and the French struggles of 1968, a period in which the capitalists have been preparing to go on to the attack, as with the return of the right-wing Tory government in Britain.

But the war had also accelerated other changes in the relationships within the world capitalist system, changes which have been determining factors in the subsequent development of the class struggle.

The inter-war period had seen the emergence of American imperialism as the dominant economic power. The First World War, followed by the economic and financial collapse of the 1930s, had dealt especially severe blows to British capitalism. The United States, enjoying all the advantages of a late start in economic development, unencumbered with feudal survivals, together with a wealth of natural resources and a large internal market, took over the role which had been Britain's in the nineteenth century. The decline of Britain was, however, part of the general decline of Europe, a decline which was accelerated by the Second World War. For capitalism to survive after 1945, it had to depend upon America in the economic as well as the military and political spheres.

Given the decisive betrayals of the Stalinist bureaucracy, it was largely on the basis of American aid that Western Europe was able to reconstruct its shattered economy after 1945. In the form of Lend Lease, then Marshall Aid, huge sums were directed into Europe by the US imperialists in a desperate attempt to control the social crisis which then threatened the whole of European capitalism after the war. This American state aid was followed and accompanied by large

injections of private capital from American firms seeking the easy profits which a devastated Europe offered. This private and public capital has played a critical role in the European economy since the late 1940s, being closely connected with the tensions which have existed between Europe and America as well as with the subsequent development of monetary crises and now the chaos precipitated by Nixon's August measures.

This American capital was one of the main bases for expansion after 1945. It was closely associated with another: the series of technical changes which occurred in branches of industry both during and after the war. Stimulated by the needs of war, a series of new processes and even new industries appeared in this period: in electronics, engineering, synthetic fibres, computers, etc. These new, expanding sectors of the economy provided a profitable outlet for the large volume of capital which had previously either been tied up in the old declining, unprofitable industries of the 1930s, or had simply lain idle. The state, particularly in Britain, was to play an important role in effecting this transfer of capital. Under a Labour government, several backward industries, notably coal and rails, were nationalized, their ex-owners heavily compensated, and state funds devoted to the restoration of these previously bankrupt industries so that they might provide cheap services and raw materials for the capitalist system. These changes were possible only because of the very depth of the crisis of the 1930s, a crisis which capitalism survived solely through the betrayals of Stalinism.

The so-called 'defence' industries were the centre for these technical and organizational changes. Expenditure on arms was to play an important role, along with a series of other changes, in the relative expansion which capitalism knew after the war. This was so particularly in the Korean War and the increased arms expenditure of the early 1950s. Through its state budgets, capitalism provided, often at very high rates of profit, a ready outlet for the commodities of the firms receiving defence contracts, and this tended to stimulate activity in related sectors of the economy.

These changes both in the overall structure of capitalism and in the relative weight between the capitalist economies were first reflected in the post-war monetary arrangements arrived at in the 1944 Bretton Woods Conference. It was at this Conference that the dominant role of American finance-capital and the dollar was formally recognized. For although sterling retained an important role in world monetary arrangements, it was a role which was now clearly acknowledged to be completely subordinated to that of the dollar. At Bretton Woods, it was agreed that all leading currencies should have their price fixed directly in terms of the dollar and that these prices should be fixed in fairly rigid limits which could only be altered through agreement with the leading capitalist countries and, in particular, with America. The basis of the system was the tying of the dollar to a fixed quantity of gold, at \$35 an ounce.

These arrangements did not represent merely the attempt to find new technical arrangements to overcome the contradictions of the old-style gold standard which had collapsed with the sterling devaluation of 1931. There was little new of a technical nature agreed at Bretton Woods, except that the dollar should replace the pound as the basic currency in international trade and finance. What was new was the recognition that another crash on the scale of the 1930s would endanger the whole capitalist system, and the decision by the capitalists to embark on a deliberately inflationary course which they hoped would bring sufficient social stability to appease and contain the militancy of the working class. Bretton Woods was an indication of the weakness and not the strength of capitalism, and, in particular, the growing loss of confidence which the capitalist class had in the very future of its own system. It has been in retreat before the working class, particularly the working class of Western Europe, since 1945 and must now pay a heavy price for this retreat.

The post-war settlement defined clearly a new stage in the relations between the major capitalist powers. While the politics of the capitalist world in the inter-war years developed in the framework of historical rivalry between Europe and America, there now began a period of definitive American dominance, though of course this did not mean that inter-imperialist rivalries disappeared. Revisionists took this dominance of the United States as a factor of capitalism's strength in its ability to survive and to deal with the working class. In reality, it prepared the eruption of capitalism's contradictions in even more violent and universal form, as has now become clear.

The capitalist class of the United States was compelled to take on its own shoulders the concentrated weight of the contradictions of world capitalism. Certainly America has a superiority in industrial technique, in scale of industrial organization, and in material and capital resources, which Europe will never equal under capitalism. But this unassailable lead is established at the time of decline of the capitalist system, so that the leader must take on all the insoluble symptoms of a world system in its death agony. US imperialism has been forced to take responsibility for attempting to suppress the revolution in South-East Asia, and has done so only at the cost of precipitating profound social and ideological crisis in the United States itself. The stimulus which the American capitalists were forced to give to Europe and Japan in the post-war years has, similarly, led inevitably to a situation where these capitalist powers have forced America into a full-scale trade war in order to correct an impossible imbalance of payments and loss of gold reserves.

It is clear that in the actual evolution of the crisis since the Second World War the late 1950s represent a decisive turning point. It was in this period that the American balance of payments deficit began to assume considerable proportions and arouse increasing fear about the stability and



future of the dollar. The continual outflow of government and private capital in the 1950s, together with expenditure on arms in Europe and elsewhere, was by this time beginning to produce a situation where the claims against the dollar were rising at a rate which threatened the American gold holdings. In 1949, at the outbreak of the Korean war, America possessed roughly \$30 billion of gold in reserve. This has fallen to less than a third of that level, while foreign claims against the dollar—the cumulative result of the rapidly growing American deficit—amount to some four times the present gold figure. Yet the stability of post-war capitalism's international monetary management rests upon the guaranteed price of gold at \$35 per fine ounce, the figure first established in 1934, since which time domestic American prices have increased threefold. Throughout the period of the 1960s, American economic policy has been dominated by an attempt to deal with this payments crisis and at the same time bring the rate of price inflation under control.

The early 1960s saw some attempt to solve the emerging crisis at the expense of the colonial and semi-colonial countries. It was at this time, under Kennedy, that the American aid programme was drastically reduced and some attempt made to stem the flow of capital into the 'backward' countries. While these measures made little impact upon the foreign payments deficit, they had disastrous consequences for the economic and political stability of the colonial and semi-colonial countries. Under the impact of these changes many regimes which had earlier been able to balance between imperialism on the one hand and the Kremlin bureaucracy on the other, toppled—Algeria, Ghana, Indonesia and elsewhere—to be replaced with regimes more directly and immediately subservient to the interests of American imperialism. But it was clear that so unbalanced was imperialism at this stage of its decline that these measures alone were inadequate. Thus Kennedy, and later Johnson, had to extend their measures to cover Europe, and plans were announced again aiming at reducing the outflow of capital, limiting expenditure abroad on tourism, making some cuts in military commitments, tightening up the conditions for the granting of foreign aid.

Thus the stage was now set for the squeeze to be put on Europe. But it would be wrong to think that the American imperialists embarked upon this phase of their policy with any great confidence or with any firm unity amongst the capitalist class. They sensed, particularly in relation to the problems of British capitalism and sterling, that any major crisis in Europe economic or financial, could under certain conditions reverberate throughout the capitalist system and threaten its entire stability. So while driven increasingly into this conflict with European capitalism, the Americans also desperately tried to limit its immediate consequences, especially in the financial sphere. From 1964 onwards, after the election of the Labour government in October, until the very end of 1967 they threw all their resources into a defence of sterling. Although

Bretton Woods had established the supremacy of the dollar, it had been impossible completely to remove the importance of sterling as the major world reserve currency. British capitalism still retained enough of its nineteenth-century resources to make this impossible, and in any case, American imperialism would have been unable to sustain its world role without some assistance from the City of London. So for the Americans, the defence of sterling was an international question. And the depth of the crisis, even at this stage, is indicated by the fact that with the November 1967 sterling devaluation their rescue attempt proved a failure, despite the huge injections of capital made available to the Wilson government throughout the period.

The circumstances of the 1967 devaluation contain another important lesson in terms of the relation between the class struggle and the economic crisis. For it is clear that the real origin of this particular phase of the crisis is to be located in the period beginning in 1962. It was at this time—under Macmillan's Conservative government—that the British ruling class made its first, if indecisive, attempt to deal with its mounting economic problems. This was the period of the Selwyn Lloyd 'pay pause' and the deliberate creation, in the winter of 1962-1963, of considerable unemployment in an attempt to make the policy effective. In fact, the British Conservative government, meeting violent resistance from the working class, was forced to retreat in the period immediately prior to the 1964 election, they were once more forced into a policy of reflation and credit expansion, even though this produced a record £800 million balance of payment deficit and plunged sterling into a major crisis which the Labour government inherited on taking office.

In the same way, all attempts by the American ruling class from the late 1950s onwards have been frustrated by the powerful American working class, a working class which all the revisionist groups have tried to write off in the post-war period. Despite its low level of political development and the absence up to now of its own independent political party, the American working class, organized through its unions, has been the decisive factor preventing Kennedy, then Johnson and now Nixon, from making any impact on the level of inflation. The working class has been able to maintain and even advance its living standards throughout the 1960s despite continually rising prices. Not only has this undermined all anti-inflationary policies, it has increasingly called into question the competitiveness of sectors of American capital in world markets.

It is this strength of the working class, culminating in the automobile and steel contracts won in 1970-1971, which has finally driven Nixon and his advisers to precipitate the breakdown of the entire post-war capitalist order. The great pressure from the US working class had already necessitated a massive flow of capital from America to Europe, seeking higher profits, and this led to an impossible pressure on the US balance of payments. The steel wages settlement would have been a fatal blow to the competitive-

ness of US steel (already 20 per cent dearer than some imported steels) and of the many industries dependent on steel purchases. The August measures of Nixon were no 'technical adjustment', and they are not open for negotiation. They are a life-and-death matter for US capitalism, and this struggle for survival will now dominate politics throughout the world. Brought to a head by the class struggle, focusing more and more on the US working class, this crisis will be resolved only after titanic class struggles, struggles for state power.

In France, the struggles of 1968 had already demonstrated that the working class retained all its strength and fighting capacity, despite decades of betrayals. The General Strike threatened the very foundations of capitalist power. In 1945 in France a weak and discredited bourgeoisie had confronted a strong, militant and armed working class, which was held back from state power only by the Stalinists. Within a few years, French imperialism was driven out of Vietnam and challenged in Algeria by a powerful national liberation struggle, but the Stalinists refused to mobilize the working class against these colonial wars, and did not take advantage of the crisis which they provoked for the French ruling class. In 1958 the reactionary forces in France combined with the revolt of the settlers to threaten military rule. With the open collaboration of the Stalinists and social-democrats, the bourgeoisie was able to call on de Gaulle, who established a Bonapartist form of dictatorship. Through a devaluation of the franc and other measures, with world capitalist economy still booming, French capitalism held down wages and was able to resume expansion in the early 1960s. But the miners' strike of 1963 showed that the working class was far from broken, despite its leaders. The Stalinists held back from any struggle under de Gaulle because his foreign policy suited the Soviet bureaucracy. But the 1968 General Strike, with the real threat of revolution, showed that a more definitive defeat of the working class than anything achieved under de Gaulle was necessary if the French bourgeoisie was to survive the coming crisis, heralded by the gold crisis of March-April 1968. This was true not only for France. Ever since the war, even in times of class 'peace', the workers of all the advanced countries continued to vote for the traditional working-class parties in a confused striving for power.

The chain of events opened up in 1967-1968 (sterling devaluation, gold crisis), which has now culminated in the August 15 measures of Nixon, brought capitalism face-to-face with its basic contradictions, but in a more threatening and acute form than ever before. This time the inevitable economic breakdown manifested itself first in the monetary system, would have to be tackled with a working class strong and unbroken. Nothing fundamental was settled by the two-tier gold system imposed in 1968. In effect the open recognition of the collapse of the gold and dollar system was only delayed. The inflation of the post-war years left the dollar three times overvalued, and its devaluation was inevitable. Typically, the British Labour

government was doomed after May 1968, caught in this great contradiction: on the one hand, the need to handle the crisis produced by inflation; on the other, to face a working class which had strengthened itself through the period of inflation to a point where the ability of the reformists and Stalinists to control it had been stretched to its limits.

Mandel and other revisionists, even at this advanced stage of the crisis, find rationalizations to keep the working class tied to its reformist and bureaucratic leadership. They forecast capitalism settling down to a 'slower cycle of growth', and argue that a crisis in the field of money (the dollar) is a mere reflection of 'real' economic developments. In point of fact the tying of the whole world's economy through the dollar to gold was the most acute expression of all of the contradictory nature of United States dominance, and it was no mere accident or 'appearance' that the world crisis developed in this sphere. Money is not just a means of exchange, a way of technically arranging the system, not just 'liquidity'. It is the universal equivalent, it is materialized abstract labour, reflecting in a developed capitalist economy the total socialization of labour. To the accumulation of money as capital, the whole system is subordinated. Money is 'the individual incarnation of social labour, the independent form of exchange-value, the universal commodity'. And, '... in a crisis, the antithesis between commodities and their value-form, money, becomes heightened into an absolute contradiction' (Marx). In the crisis of the dollar, a crisis in which there remains no stability of values, we find the most consummate expression of the basic contradictions of the whole epoch, between socialized production and private capital. Within the inflationary framework of dollar domination in the 1950s and 1960s, the basic strength of the working class remained unaltered. Inflationary policies became more and more necessary, and less and less possible. Far from capitalism having entered a new 'slower cycle of growth' (Mandel), it has in fact come to the point, with the collapse of the Bretton Woods agreement, where loss of confidence becomes predominant, and slump results. It is not a question of some sort of cyclical development on the higher plane of 'neo-capitalism', but of the most acute class struggle, as the monopolists strive to wipe out surplus capitals and to destroy vast productive forces, including millions of productive workers.

Against the revisionists, it was necessary to reaffirm the characterization of our epoch. Capitalism as a mode of production is historically doomed because the further development of mankind's productive forces is barred by capitalist property relations. Revisionists reject this basic definition of the period in which we live: they characterize it as a period of 'neo-capitalism' which has been capable of producing a new industrial revolution. This question is fundamental. If neo-capitalism has succeeded imperialism then it was wrong to define imperialism as the last, highest stage of capitalism, the epoch of the proletarian revolution, which must lead to

the construction of the new, necessary, socialist mode of production. Consequently, it would become a question of rejecting the revolutionary role of the working class. Revolutionism would become either a moral question or would have to be based on a sociological analysis showing what revolutionary forces are produced by neo-capitalism. Mandel's 'theory' is in fact an ideology, an inverted version of his real position, which is to justify the role of the new petty bourgeoisie, including the 'bureaucracy' of the working class in its pressure on the working class. This middle class certainly does have an important role in monopoly capitalism today, extending from business management to the state power, to the opportunist manipulation of the workers' movement, to the new forms of domination (including genocidal war as well as formal independence) over the oppressed nations, and to the imperialists' relations with the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Just as the revisionists' picture of the relation between their 'theory' and the petty-bourgeoisie is an inverted one, so their explanation of capitalism's 'development of the productive forces' is the opposite of the objective situation. It represents the bourgeoisie's own interests in relation to the productive forces: viz, that all developments in technique, science, in being used for the augmentation of profit, must be turned against the principal productive force, the working class, against the capacity of mankind to control its destiny through the co-ordination of all productive capacity in the battle with nature. Monopoly capitalism undergoes many different phases of development: sometimes, on the basis of wars and counter-revolution, a period of expanded reproduction takes place; at others, a period of contracted production, overall destruction of means of production and the wiping out of many capitalists, is necessary. Within world imperialism there is uneven development, with different national capitalisms advancing to the detriment of others. In the competition between monopolies, in the conflict between nation-states, particularly

in war, and in the reaction of the imperialists to the revolutionary gains made by the proletariat (the October Revolution, the third Chinese Revolution), there is a stimulus to technological and scientific innovation. But these developments are, in their origin, their life and their destiny, destructive of the productive forces, even though they express in contradictory form the potential satisfaction of human need under socialism. It is for the destruction of the working class, as the repository of human labour power, and for war, that these developments take place and which they serve.

Every development in technology and science therefore deepens the contradiction between the social relations of production under capitalism and further growth of the productive forces. International division of labour under a plan is a necessary condition of this further growth; the rivalry between the nation-state interests of finance capital and the monopolists therefore constantly prepares economic, political and military convulsions. Planned economy, with the abolition of private capitalist ownership, is an essential requirement of the growth of the productive forces: the primary necessity for the owners of capital, the finance capitalists and monopolists, on the other hand, is to harness technique only to the protection of their rate of profit. For these reasons, the technical and scientific elements in the productive forces are turned, in this revolutionary epoch, not against nature, as productive forces, but inwards, against society itself, to become forces of destruction of society and its productive forces. Far from capitalism having achieved a new lease of life, performed another 'industrial revolution', advanced the productive forces and become 'neo-capitalism', its continued existence has posed even more urgently the alternative 'socialism or barbarism'. August 1971 was a shattering verification of the Marxist struggle against revisionism: it created conditions where this alternative—socialism or barbarism—will be fought out.

### III—The relationship of class forces and the tasks of revolutionary leadership.

What political conclusions flowed in the recent period from our stress on the economic crisis? Inevitably these conclusions were the direct opposite of the political line of revisionism, which starts from the apparent stabilization of capitalism and the control of the working class by its bureaucratic agents. Revisionism, in the course of the post-war period, arrived at the 'strategy' of structural reforms of the capitalist societies and self-liberalization of the Stalinist bureaucracy. In the Belgian General Strike of 1960-1961, Germain and the Pabloites advocated a coalition of the Socialist Party with the bourgeois Christian-Democrats on a 'structural reform' programme. It was the counterpart of this treachery to advise the Hungarian workers in 1956 to follow the Polish example and accept a 'realistic' centrist-Stalinist policy such as that of Gomulka, returning to the control of the Kremlin

bureaucracy. The entry of the LSSP majority leadership into the coalition of Mrs Bandaranaike in Ceylon in 1964 was part of the same abandonment of the revolutionary role of the working class and capitulation to imperialism, despite all the 'theories' about the 'epicentre of the revolution' being in the Third World. Algeria and Cuba were to prove that this talk of epicentre of revolution was only the 'left' face of petty-bourgeois opposition to the building of independent working-class leadership, abandonment of the building of independent revolutionary parties of the working class.

The economic problems of the United States, Japan and the European capitalist powers produce an acute political contradiction. All the techniques of adjustment through the use of social-democratic, Stalinist and trade unionist working-class leadership (collaboration of unions with the state, social-

democratic and coalition governments, inflationary policies, etc.) have since 1967-1968 become for the capitalists not merely temporarily inappropriate but dangerous because they conflict with the need of capitalism to attack all the gains of the working class. Forced on by the economic crisis, the capitalist class, while utilizing to the last ounce the class collaborationist services of the Stalinist and social-democratic apparatuses, must actually drive towards an open clash with the working class: civil war and the preparation of corporatist forms of rule are on the agenda of history. The 'democratic' path is not a 'parliamentary, peaceful road to socialism', as the Stalinists claim, but a phase during which the elements of civil war are prepared. The institutions of this phase are not those of 'advanced democracy', but of an advanced stage of capitalist decay which has totally rotted capitalist democracy from within. Behind the face of 'advanced democracy' brutal suppression is planned. This contradiction is the dominant feature in the class struggle throughout Europe, and more and more in America.

But the Stalinist bureaucracy and its Communist Parties, together with the trade union apparatuses and the social-democrats and centrists of all types in the labour movement, are not spent forces. They are active and deadly agents of counter-revolution. Their betrayals are an essential instrument of the preparations of the imperialists. They play this role all the more consistently because the revolutionary wave of working-class struggle threatens their own very existence, and they act in full consciousness of their solidarity with the imperialists. Whatever the incidental phases of speech-making and demagogy by their leaderships, they will not in this period become the expression of leftward-moving forces, but on the contrary will be mobilized, together, or in rapid succession, or with a division of labour, to break up or head off the upsurge of the working class.

The undefeated proletariat is rapidly testing out, working through and exhausting the forms of struggle familiar within its established organizations. The role of the social democrats, centrists, Stalinists, and their revisionist apologists, is at all costs to restrict the working class to these forms, to perpetuate the fatal illusion that a quantitative build-up of pressure through these forms will achieve the workers' aims. Such a political line leaves intact the bureaucratic leadership (with perhaps a few 'left' modifications or infusions from the Stalinists, the centrists, and the revisionists themselves, as in the Belgian General Strike, the administration of Ben Bella, the British Pablotites' services to the 'left' trade union bureaucrats, etc.). In fact, of course, the 25 years since 1945, in which the bourgeoisie—and particularly US imperialism—have used to the utmost these compromise forms of control, have covered over the accumulation of contradictions which require an entirely opposite solution. The role of revolutionary leadership is to give direction to the mounting workers' struggles in such a way as to prepare for the real perspectives of capitalist

development. The essence of this preparation has been to fight to give independent leadership in the struggle of the working class, to break the working class from reformist and Stalinist leadership of all kinds, to take advantage of the last period's upsurge in the class struggle, to differentiate before millions of workers the revolutionary leadership of Trotskyism from the capitulation of the revisionists.

There has been a new revolutionary wave in the struggle of the international working class, especially since 1968. This new wave, coming after a long period without major defeats, has provided the basic changed conditions in which the Fourth International, founded necessarily in the period of catastrophic defeats of the 1930s and growing up under the heavy blows of fascism and Stalinism, will be built as the international revolutionary leadership. But this success will come only out of a theoretical and practical overcoming of all the contradictions of the development of the class struggle, of the crisis of working-class leadership and of the struggle against revisionism within the Fourth International. In the situation of preparation of struggles of revolutionary magnitude, there is inevitably the threat of counter-revolution on a massive and bloody scale. This threat is concealed behind the screen of reformism, Stalinism and revisionism, defending the mechanism of class compromise.

The workers' own experience brings them into actual conflict with the mechanisms of reformism and Stalinism but it cannot by itself break through them. On the contrary, the last 25 years encourage the illusions in trade union militancy and reform measures by mass reformist and Stalinist parties. *The working class is in danger, therefore, of being driven to the very brink of the struggle for power while still being reinforced in reformist illusions.* To smash through this contradiction, to prepare the conscious vanguard within the working class for this struggle for power, this is the essence of the fight against revisionism since the 1940s, of the construction of the parties of the Fourth International.

These were the elements of a qualitative change in the international relationship of class forces accumulated by the end of the 1960s. The revolutionary struggles of the French and Czechoslovak workers in 1968 were the first major battles to express the breaking up of the post-war political class relations. These struggles had already been anticipated by the turn of the situation in Greece. There, even a return from the post-civil war repressions to limited 'democracy' with the direct collaboration of the Stalinists in 1966 had proved impossible, and had ended in the imposition of military rule. Since the 1968 struggles, the continuous strike movements in Italy, paralleled by the resurgence of fascism, the 1970 martial-law measures in Canada, and the virtual civil war in Northern Ireland, together with the return of the right-wing Tory government in Britain, have all indicated very concretely the qualitatively new dimension of the class struggles inevitably prepared by the gathering economic crisis which has now struck.

In every one of these countries—and in all others, for the capitalist economy is now more than ever before an inter-connected whole, in which the law of uneven development makes the situation more explosive, rather than providing sectors which will escape the main trends—this new dimension is the preparation of confrontations between the classes on the decisive question of state power. In industrial trade union struggles, workers will proceed as if the old forms of organization and consciousness, the old mistrustful coexistence with opportunist leaders, remain as effective as during the boom. Great dangers confront the workers' movement because this conservatism enters into the sharpest contradiction with the objective political developments at national and international level. The bourgeoisie, with its state power and its agents within the labour movement, prepares consciously to break the working class and to behead its revolutionary leadership. The ruling class senses, from the vantage-point of all its economic and political requirements, the need to impose entirely new forms of rule, and it proceeds very deliberately to act.

The decisive role of the Trotskyist movement has been and must be to develop political consciousness, Marxist theory, in order that the conscious preparation of the proletariat can defeat that of the class enemy. This can be done only on the basis of a correct appreciation of the economic crisis, and of the inevitable break-up of the reformist compromise.

#### IV—Leadership and the fight against revisionism.

Whilst the rapidly deepening recession and collapse of the world monetary system drive the capitalist class to the right, the Fourth International has the responsibility of answering the ruling class in a way which concentrates everything on the central issue of resolving the crisis of leadership, defeating the Stalinists and the reformists, taking advantage of the insoluble crisis in their ranks. Such a task can only be accomplished by parties which start from the most profound analysis of the historic tendencies of the world capitalist crisis, and which have based themselves completely on the long struggle against revisionism in the Fourth International.

The political essence of this revisionism was liquidationism. During the post-war period and the boom of the 1950s and 1960s, this liquidationism led to wholesale treachery, in which the Pabloites in one country after another collaborated with reformists and Stalinists, in many cases directly against the Trotskyists of the International Committee. In Ceylon and Algeria they collaborated openly with the bourgeois governments, even entering the coalition of Mrs Bandaranaike. In every case they worked with counter-revolutionary forces against the construction of independent revolutionary parties. The cadres who fell into this revisionist trap were told to adapt themselves to the supposedly inevitable appearance of left

If these were the rapidly maturing elements of the change in the world political situation, then the August 1971 measures of the US government, acting for the great monopolies and banks, made inevitable by the same basic economic developments, had the role of crystallizing these elements into that changed situation: a situation characterized by struggle for state power. In the class battles leading up to the conquest of power the working class, because of its political backwardness, will in some cases be able to march forward only after the shock produced by sectional or temporary defeats, in which reformist illusions must be shattered only by the actual new experiences in the class struggle. And only through the independent intervention by the revolutionary forces before, during and after such actions, can the necessary lessons be learned. The working class has demonstrated beyond any doubt that it is capable of fighting stubbornly and tenaciously, but there is no way of escaping the legacy of reformist and Stalinist leadership: it must be faced up to and combated through every experience of the working class in struggle. This is what places such a heavy responsibility on the Trotskyist forces. The sections of the International Committee will have to consist of cadres trained in the basic theory and history of the Marxist movement, able at every stage, through upsurges of the class as well as through setbacks, to wage the struggle against Stalinism and reformism, at the same time boldly advancing the policy and programme on which the working class must fight to defeat the ruling class.

centrist trends within the bureaucratic apparatuses. In the period which has now opened up, such liquidationism and capitulation to opportunism and centrism becomes even more deadly.

The evolution of N. M. Perera and the LSSP in Ceylon is only a mild anticipation of this process. From 'united left front' they went to a bourgeois coalition government, and thence, via the 'peaceful road to socialism', to the brutal suppression and incarceration of thousands of worker and peasant youth. In the situation now entered into by the workers of the advanced capitalist countries, any capitulation to centrism, any compromise with theories that revolutionary parties can be developed naturally out of the radicalization of the working class, or through the regrouping of 'leftward-moving' forces, will be treachery, with fatal results. *Everything* now depends on the training, in practice and theory, of a cadre which understands that it is the independent leadership of the Fourth International alone which can provide the pole of attraction for all the best elements of the working class and the youth, who are driven towards revolutionary consciousness by the crisis, because of the decisive breaks in the old relations, but who cannot attain that consciousness except in a struggle between our own forces and the Stalinists and reformists. This must predominate

over all tactical considerations in our work in the labour movement. It is only the assembling and educating in struggle of such revolutionary parties which can provide the real possibility for the working class to win to its side the best forces from the intellectuals and the middle classes and peasantry. Centrist waiting and spontaneism of any kind is a direct assistance to the ruling class and the Stalinist bureaucracy, facilitating their conscious day-to-day work of breaking up every manifestation of the growth of revolutionary consciousness.

In the United States, the inevitable concentration of the economic crisis on the dollar means that the American working class moves to the centre of the political stage. Insulated to a certain extent from the accumulating international contradictions in the recent period, so long as these were covered up by the incessant inflation of the dollar, the US working class is now exposed to the shock waves of all these contradictions at a new level. Yet this working class is equipped with only economic organizations and individualistic trade union consciousness adequate to the boom and the days of undisputed US world domination. Nowhere more sharply than here, therefore, is the question of revolutionary leadership posed.

The revisionists of the Socialist Workers' Party have played a treacherous role in obstructing the revolutionary preparation of a cadre in the United States. When the Socialist Workers' Party in 1963 broke relations with the International Committee and openly returned to Pabloism in the so-called United Secretariat, they evaded all principled questions of the continuity of the Marxist movement, and proceeded from the appearance of agreement on the immediate 'concrete' issue of the Cuban revolution. Far from being, as was claimed, a turn towards revolutionary developments, this was the very opposite. By accepting the theory of an epicentre of world revolution in the colonial countries, the SWP was writing off the American working class.

By welcoming Castro's regime as a workers' state and Castro as a 'natural Marxist', the SWP waged a frontal attack on the very fundamentals of Marxist theory and on the building of independent revolutionary parties. The SWP's Cuba campaign was actually a turn to the liberals and the middle class through the 'Fair Play for Cuba Committee'. Their telegram of condolences to Mrs Kennedy was the crude but true expression of this reactionary course.

Such an orientation could only produce a party and a youth movement, the Young Socialist Alliance, which was dominated by the politics of middle-class protest, suppression of the independent programme of the working class, and open hostility to Marxist theory. It was from this standpoint that the SWP, along with the whole United Secretariat, developed the 'analysis' of sectors of radicalization: of the youth, of the Negroes, of women, etc. They worked in these spheres, and in the anti-war and student movements, as conscious opponents of any turn to the working class, and they opposed all attempts to

develop the independent line and organization of the working-class revolutionary leadership. In every case the independent demands of the working class were subordinated to the preservation of alliances with the middle class, and this was excused by references to the dangers of sectarianism and the need for a truly mass movement. The fight for the American Labour Party, the building of revolutionary fractions in the trade unions, the training of a force of young Marxist revolutionaries to carry this struggle into every sector of the labour movement—this was left to the Workers' League, in collaboration with the International Committee, which has been built through a consistent fight against the opportunism and anti-internationalism of the SWP.

The verbal opposition of Hansen and Peng in the recent period to the line of Germain-Maitan-Frank is not a departure from these revisionist politics, but a further development of them. According to Hansen, it is now necessary to turn away from the Germain-Maitan thesis of guerrilla struggles, particularly concentrated in the colonial countries. Hansen draws attention to the disorientation of the Latin American revolutionary forces by Castroism and guerrilla-ism, and calls for a return to the 'orthodox' Marxist positions on the urban struggle, on the central role of the proletariat, and on the revolutionary youth. Not only was Hansen the chief agent imposing these disastrous theories on the revolutionary cadres in Latin America in 1961-1963, but his own party, the SWP, has also shown in its politics that Hansen's 'orthodoxy' is but a cover for consistent disorientation of the youth into the camp of petty-bourgeois radicalism.

Most important of all, Hansen himself proposes to 'correct' the course of the United Secretariat without any political and theoretical accounting. To do so would mean an objective analysis of Hansen's own role in 1963, the essence of which was to engineer an unprincipled unification without any theoretical or historical discussion. The SWP's original 1953 break with Pablo had remained at a purely empirical and national level, without going to the class roots and the theoretical essence of Pablo's tendency. Now the SWP has turned full circle after a tortuous 20-year-long empirical blundering. Hansen once again asserts 'orthodox' Trotskyism against the crudest Pabloism, having himself been the creator of the very situation in the world movement which he seeks to change. The development of the world Trotskyist movement can in no circumstances take place along the road of compromise or fusion with this anti-theory tendency, but only by the most implacable theoretical and political struggle against it. A generation of Trotskyists will be trained in the United States only through a determined struggle to turn to the working class and consciously develop dialectical materialism against pragmatism and against this disastrous leadership of the SWP. The building of the Workers' League, fighting on the programme of the International Committee, is therefore at the centre of the tasks of the IC. From this development will come the source, for the international

movement, of a qualitative leap in Marxist consciousness, precisely because in the tasks of the American proletariat are concentrated in highest form the international contradictions.

Nixon's measures of August 15, 1971, denote the beginning of an entirely new stage in the class relations in the United States, not only in the long term but immediately. Industrial struggles, through Nixon's insistence on wage control, are brought into the centre of politics. The imperialists now restrict cheap imported goods, reduce the purchasing power of the dollar through devaluation, and step up an intensified exploitation for competition abroad. Inevitably this means direct attacks on the living standards of American workers. It means that the resistance to these attacks, beginning as trade union struggles, is immediately answered by the ruling class as sabotage of the national interest. The US imperialists are forced in the direction of political reaction, and must strike blows against the working class of a type not experienced by a whole generation. This will be a rude shock to millions of workers with reformist illusions bred by the boom. These struggles will be the framework within which Marxists must develop in the United States, as in all the advanced capitalist countries.

The student, Negro, and anti-war movements of the late 1960s in the US, like the anti-Vietnam war protests and the 'student power' manifestations in Europe and Japan, were not, as the revisionists claimed, the first wave of a new type of revolutionary anti-authority movement springing out of the specific contradictions of 'neo-capitalism'. On the contrary, they were but the heat-lightning flashes anticipating the entry on to the scene of the working class all over the world.

The petty bourgeois and the student youth are moved by various separate expressions of the crisis, expressions in the ideological and political super-structure. But these elements can never produce the decisive class force for the socialist revolution. The proletariat will also from time to time reflect the developments in the super-structure, but great changes in the mass movement, the indispensable prerequisite for revolution, derive from the shocks produced by the contradictions in the very economic foundations of the capitalist order. The only correct orientation for the radicalized youth of the 1960s was a turn to prepare the resources and cadres for the great working-class struggles now placed on today's agenda by the economic crisis. This was the meaning of the IC's struggle for Marxist theory against impressionism, for the building of revolutionary parties against liquidation into middle-class protest movements, for the theory and programme of struggle against imperialism and bureaucracy, against the revisionist theories of a new stage of capitalism with new types of basic contradictions and new revolutionary elites. The training of cadres is not a formal task of education plus organizational experience, in preparation for deepening crises and intensified struggles. The revolutionary leadership must constantly struggle to integrate all the effects of the historical crisis,

not only as they appear in the experience of the working class but also in the objective relations between all classes, and in the reflection of these relations in the consciousness of all classes.

Marxist theory must be developed through intervention in all these spheres, and in struggle *against* the existing level of consciousness in the working class. The spontaneous consciousness of the effects of the crisis in the working class is an inadequate and conservative consciousness. Not only is it restricted by the objective limits of the workers' experience, but it is all the time subjected to the developments in bourgeois ideology and its agencies in the workers' movement. Only a conscious fight for dialectical materialism against this ideology at every point can be the basis for the training of cadres.

Revisionism in the Fourth International has always been directly opposed to this conception. Pabloism abandoned the revolutionary party and attributed a revolutionary role to sections of the Stalinist bureaucracy and the nationalist petty bourgeoisie. It is just as dangerous to proceed, as the OCI does, on the basis of elaborating a programme to 'correspond' to the aspirations of the working class. This mechanical and anti-Marxist approach to the question of consciousness actually leads to a capitulation to existing opportunist trends in the labour movement. It assumes that the experience imposed on the workers by capitalism will bring about a growing rejection of the Stalinists and reformists, leaving scope for a 'regroupment' around the revolutionary party. The politics arising from this false theory are called, wrongly, the working class united front.

The fruits of this revisionist approach have now been seen at the international level. The OCI's 'reconstruction' of the International amounts to a series of organizational blocs with centrists and opportunists in opposition to the Trotskyists of the IC majority. Essen was the open manifestation of this, to be followed by the OCI's declarations on the Bolivian revolution. The real construction of the FI must proceed by the assembling and training of the most advanced workers and youth into independent revolutionary parties, and not on such 'regroupments'.

Since 1944, the national-liberation struggles of the colonial peoples have occupied the front line of the direct struggle of the masses against imperialism. This colonial revolution, which the military oppression of the imperialist powers has failed to stop, has however remained isolated from the struggle of the proletariat in the metropolitan countries. In this, the counter-revolutionary role of Stalinism in all its treachery is most thoroughly exposed. Whether in its Soviet or Chinese forms Stalinism has claimed to give solidarity and support to the colonial peoples but has in fact played a decisive role in disciplining the workers of the advanced countries while the capitalists pursued compromise Keynesian policies. Vietnam, Cuba, Indonesia, Korea, and the Latin American, African and Asian liberation struggles of the last 27 years—all have received verbal and even limited military support from Stalinism. But the essence has been that Stalinism has been the

principal obstacle to the international mobilization of the only force, the working class, whose struggle can guarantee the completion of the process of permanent revolution and resolve the problems of the colonial masses. 'Peaceful co-existence' means in fact the maintenance of brutal military oppression and the eventual success in some cases of extreme right-wing accessions to state power which they use to suppress the masses. These are the tendencies expressed from Vietnam to Algeria, from Indonesia to Egypt, from West Africa to Cuba and Latin America.

The role of the revisionists was to serve as an accessory of counter-revolutionary Stalinism in these great struggles. Not only did Pabloites join the Ceylon coalition in 1964, and Pablo serve as Ben Bella's official adviser; they conducted the protests against the Vietnam war in such a way as to deliberately obscure the counter-revolutionary role of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Leninism was vulgarized and trampled on. The protest movement was justified, in the words of the Pabloites themselves, by an appeal to quotations from Lenin to the effect that the first duty of a revolutionist in an imperialist country is to support the liberation struggles of the colonial peoples. Behind this vile deception, alliances with liberals and Stalinists were placed higher than the independent interests of the working class and the building of the Fourth International. In the name of Lenin and Trotsky, the essence of their work, the building of independent proletarian parties, was rejected, and the colonial peoples were stabbed in the back yet again.

Inside the colonial and semi-colonial countries, revisionism again directly assisted the Stalinist bureaucracy and the nationalist agents of imperialism, by accepting petty bourgeois nationalist leaders as the revolutionary representatives of the masses. They completely rejected the essence of Lenin's position and the theory of Permanent Revolution: the construction of independent proletarian parties, leading the working class at the head of the oppressed peasantry, as the only force able to resolve the tasks of the democratic revolution and go beyond them to the workers' power, as part of the international proletarian revolution.

The prospects for the proletariat in the colonial revolution now undergo a transformation, as the working class of Europe, America and Japan is inevitably drawn into the battle for state power by the precipitate development of the economic crisis. The struggles in the colonial countries, having raged since 1944, now come together with the revival of the revolutionary struggle in the metropolitan countries at an entirely new level. But this coming together of the struggles poses the most acute contradictions and dangers. Imperialism hastens to impose its crisis, so far as possible, on the colonial masses. It impels a brutal swing to the right in the Sudan, Egypt, and throughout the Middle East and it seeks the direct collaboration of the Chinese as well as the Moscow Stalinists to impose military dictatorship in India and Ceylon. The Stalinists' support of the junta in Peru and the right-wing coup in Bolivia

are proof that the same class relationships have matured in Latin America. The end of the boom has meant a quick end to the middle-of-the-road role of sections of the nationalist bourgeoisie, and everything now depends on the independent role of the working class, which can be exercised only under the leadership of parties of the Fourth International. The sections of the Fourth International in the colonial countries will therefore be faced with mobilizing the working class to repel the attacks of reaction, to lead every new mass struggle produced by the convulsions of the economic crisis, and to participate consciously in the building of 'the international revolutionary leadership. Above all it is necessary to orientate completely along the line of the independent revolutionary party against Stalinism and petty-bourgeois nationalism. These are the lessons of the whole post-war period and of the fight against Pablo revisionism, confirming all the basic positions of Lenin, Trotsky and the Third International. If these lessons are not learned now, then the new period we have entered holds the gravest dangers.

Latin America, with the Cuban question at the centre, similarly manifested the decisive issues in the world class struggle and in the fight to build the Fourth International. In 1963, the 'reunification' of the Pabloite forces led by Frank, Mandel, Germain and Maitan with the Socialist Workers Party, was effected primarily on the supposed establishment of a Cuban workers' state by a petty-bourgeois leadership under Castro, which had thereby become Marxist or Trotskyist through a process of natural evolution. Here was to be found the concrete historical expression of the long-advocated liquidation of the Fourth International in favour of spontaneous development from the 'new world reality'. The 'reunification' also held out the prospect of Algeria following in the footsteps of Cuba and becoming the first workers' state in Africa, with Ben Bella 'another Castro'. The International Committee was condemned as sectarian and blind to the 'facts' of Cuba's supposed break with imperialism. *Dynamics of World Revolution Today*, published in June 1963 as the document of the 'reunification' said:

'The emergence of mass revolutionary forces led by parties or tendencies which have developed outside the realm of Stalinist control (Cuba, Algeria) has introduced a most powerful disintegrating element into international Stalinism, favouring the development of a revolutionary left wing.' (Page 15.)

From Cuba the conclusion was drawn that the revolution could succeed in colonial countries 'even with a blunt instrument' (page 5). Fidel Castro's purging of the Escalante group in Cuba was welcomed as a critique of bureaucracy in the tradition of Lenin and Trotsky! (page 35.)

In drawing up the balance sheet of these political positions, it is above all necessary to emphasize the method of constructing the Fourth International that is at stake, and to draw the lessons today. The International Committee proposed then, as it proposes in a different context and a different form today, a discussion of all



outstanding political questions which embraces all sections attached to both the International Committee and the Pabloite Secretariat (now the 'Unified Secretariat'). It is, of course, no accident that Ceylon, for example, is missing from the 1968 and 1969 documents of the Unified Secretariat's World Conference. In 1963, the Ceylon section was mentioned in *Dynamics of World Revolution Today* as the only mass party in the Fourth International—only one year before this party entered a bourgeois coalition! 'Unification' was effected in 1963 only on the basis of *suppressing* discussion of differences and excluding the International Committee from the discussion. Ben Bella was imprisoned by the Boumedienne regime, which imposed a more right-wing nationalist regime in Algeria. Algerian militants under the influence of the revisionists, especially Pablo himself, were blinded by the theory of 'blunted instruments' and became the victims of the right-wing coup, as against any supposed 'left' development. The FLN produced no revolutionary development and drove no Stalinist party in a 'revolutionary direction'.

In Cuba the Castro movement, already merged with the Cuban Stalinists, moved completely into the policy orbit of world Stalinism. As foreseen by the analysis of the International Committee, the Castro government, through its control of the state offices and its alliance with counter-revolutionary Stalinism, entered upon the course which eventually will increase the dependence of Cuba on world imperialism and deprive the working class of many of the conquests won in the last ten years.

Castro began in 1966 his open assault on Trotskyism in Latin America; the Guevara adventure in Bolivia collapsed; the 'Castroite' guerrilla strategy failed in one country after another. Loyal to the Stalinist bureaucracy which guaranteed prices for the sugar crop, Castro kept silent on France May-June 1968 and then supported the Warsaw Pact intervention in Czechoslovakia. Under pressure from the Soviet bureaucracy to restore good relations in Latin America, the Castro regime did not support the persecuted students of Mexico. Now, as the Stalinists welcome the Peruvian junta as a 'revolutionary' government, so does Castro abandon any pretence of fighting a Latin American revolution and seeks agreements with the so-called 'left' governments of these countries.

Undoubtedly the US investments of the past decade in Latin America have encouraged an upsurge of the workers' and peasants' movements. This rise of the *working class*, which gives the real hope to the historic struggle of the rural poor, continuing throughout the continent, requires Trotskyist leadership; requires proletarian revolutionary parties able to oppose the Stalinists' collaboration with imperialism. This upsurge of the working class, together with the inescapable problems of trying to build up an autonomous Cuban economy on the basis of sugar-culture, is the forcing-house behind Castro's inevitable acceptance of the Stalinist bureaucracy's pressure to move back to the American imperialist camp, via closer relations with Peru and then with the

Organization of American States. The Castro government, far from being the leadership of a revolutionary party at the head of a workers' state, was on the contrary a Bonapartist caretaker for the Cuban bourgeoisie, holding the masses in check.

Just as the militants, particularly youth, coming forward in struggle in the advanced capitalist countries can go rapidly through the experience of exhausting the traditional leaderships and testing out centrist tendencies, so in Latin America the 'Castroite' appearance of an alternative to Stalinism has had to show its true nature. In both cases it is the depth of the world crisis which has forced this development. Revisionism's crisis naturally reflects directly this rapid exhaustion of the centrist and petty-bourgeois layers upon which it depends.

Castro now follows the Kremlin bureaucracy in hailing the regime of the military junta in Peru as 'revolutionary'. What the junta represents is a bonapartist dictatorship, directly subservient economically to US imperialism, but politically able temporarily to control sections of the masses through measures of so-called 'nationalization'. This will more and more be the pattern in Latin America. Brutal suppression of the peasant masses in their struggle for land accompanied by 'land reform' benefiting a better-off minority; a period of relative expansion and 'reform' in industry through new relations negotiated with the US monopolists; integration of the trade unions into the state machine; preparations for repression of all independent working-class organization; 'revolutionary' nationalist demagoguery of the bonapartist rulers, supported by the Stalinists. Castroism, aided by the revisionists, has become the apologist for this development, poisoning the development of all those militants it could influence among the workers, the youth and the poor peasantry.

The election of Allende in Chile holds the same dangers. His 'Marxism' represents the immediate needs of US imperialism: to lull the masses to sleep while the best conditions are created for the expansion of US investment. The Stalinists and Castroites, behind the deception of a unity against the most reactionary forces, support such regimes and use them to strike out against the building of independent revolutionary parties based on the strategy of the permanent revolution and the programme of the Fourth International.

The Pabloite revisionists inevitably enter an insoluble crisis in Latin America at this point. It is the very entry of the proletariat as the decisive force, now needing a leadership and strategy to lead the poor peasantry behind it and armed with the programme of Trotskyism, that makes necessary the changed political nature of those Latin American regimes. This, and not adaptation to the new regimes, provides the basis for the development in Marxism in Latin America, and already produces the determined elements who are fighting to build the Fourth International in Latin America around the International Committee.

The lessons of Bolivia, following on Ceylon, Algeria and Cuba, bring home with the greatest urgency the necessity of parties of the Fourth

International fighting on the basis of the Permanent Revolution. Necessary above all else, after the accession to power of Torres, was to build a party which was proletarian and revolutionary in programme and composition, able to lead the masses on the question of land reform. But the workers' organizations were subordinated to the centrist policy of conditional support for Torres. The way was left open for the right-wing militarists and fascists to win time and support in the countryside and effect a successful coup d'état. Support for Torres could only have this outcome. Caught in the illusion of a 'dual power' which could effect a gradual transition through struggle against reaction, the revolutionary vanguard was politically disarmed, and this meant the working class was disarmed. While the masses laboured under this illusion, the right wing prepared the counter-revolution. The resistance of the workers and students was soon overcome because there was no independent revolutionary preparation.

The regroupment of Trotskyist forces in South and Central America will take place only if the lessons of the Bolivian events, and the lessons of the Pabloite capitulation to Castroism, are learned. The only road is: the construction of

independent proletarian parties as part of the building of the Fourth International.

In Asia, the people of Vietnam are now directly joined in struggle by the masses in Ceylon and in Bengal. But this new upsurge of the colonial masses coincides with the deepest crisis in the advanced countries. For this reason the Stalinist bureaucracy, in Peking as well as Moscow, turns more resolutely to the imperialists. When the bureaucracy supports reaction in Pakistan against Bangla Desh, and supports the Bandaranaike government in Ceylon, it is betraying the future interests of the Vietnamese revolution as well as building up for massive repressions in India and Ceylon. But this is a natural consequence of the Stalinist bureaucracy's policy since 1968. They betrayed the revolution in France and brutally suppressed the Czech workers, they helped break the Spanish miners' strike, they shot down the Polish workers in 1970. The fact that Mao's as well as Brezhnev's counter-revolutionary role is more and more expressed in these first stages of the economic crisis of capitalism can constitute a great advantage to the Trotskyist movement, provided we fight everywhere to train the independent leadership through the struggle against these betrayals.

## V—The tasks of building revolutionary parties.

The Stalinist bureaucracy senses very well that the insoluble imperialist crisis means mass revolutionary struggles. These struggles, with power as their perspective, threaten every basic premise of the bureaucracy's relations with imperialism, and open up to the workers of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union the prospect of a united international revolutionary struggle, for the social revolution against capitalism, and for their own political revolution against the bureaucracy. It is for this reason that the bureaucracy turns on the one hand to the imperialists and on the other to sharper repression at home.

It was always true that the bureaucratic-military means to which the bureaucracy restricted the defence of the USSR actually defeated their object, because they operated as part of an overall strategy which strangled the only real force able to defend the gains of October, i.e. the international working class. Thus today, the collaboration of world Stalinism with imperialism, far from making it more 'peaceful', actually opens the door to the growing right-wing and militaristic tendencies which always arise at times of capitalist crisis. The capitalists are driven by necessity in the direction of re-conquest of the USSR, Eastern Europe and China, and the Stalinist betrayals are calculated to divide and weaken the working class within each capitalist country which must fight for its own power if capitalist reaction is to be halted. As part of the international role of Stalinism, Stalinist parties will undoubtedly lead workers in some cases to defeats.

There will be no short cuts around these experiences as the working class goes through its preparation for the decisive struggle for power.

The working class will test out its existing leaders and organizations, and the IC sections must find every way of breaking the masses in action from the Stalinists and reformists, posing always the question to all those who still command the allegiance of the working class: take the state power, break with the bourgeoisie.

However, the new crisis after August 15 will very soon have effects in which the time taken to pass through some of these experiences is greatly reduced. Sections of workers will be placed in situations where they will learn more in a few weeks than in a lifetime. But this does not mean a pleasant educational exercise under 'favourable' conditions. Rather, it involves profound shocks in the whole way of life and thinking of the working class. Only Marxists who struggle to develop their understanding of dialectical materialism, of the real development of consciousness, will be able to break from routine, from formal expectations and propaganda methods, and instead find new ways of extracting new knowledge from the objective changes, and from this developing theory and programme for the next stage of the practical revolutionary struggle. It is in this sense that only parties trained in a conscious struggle to develop dialectical materialism against all enemies, all forms of idealism, will be equipped for the approaching struggles.

The crisis is fundamentally one of revolutionary leadership. Our task is by no means just to find adequate expression for the developing moods and demands of the masses as they are spontaneously driven into action. It is to give leadership *against* the centrist traps into which these spontaneous movements will fall. The initial struggle will

shatter the existing relationships and conceptions, but left to itself the result will merely be a co-existence of militancy and 'left' thinking with the existing reformist and Stalinist leadership. The Trotskyists must conduct an all-round political and theoretical struggle against capitalist ideology in all its forms in order to break the ideological domination imposed by the bourgeoisie through reformism, Stalinism and revisionism. This means a conscious fight to start from the building of the independent revolutionary cadre in every country, at the same time studying with the greatest care the actual development of the working class, but in no case confusing the latter with its pale reflection in sectors of the apparatus.

In the course of development of the new phase of capitalist crisis centrism will appear at every major turn. In appearance it corresponds to the level reached by sections of the working class just breaking from reformism. Given the independent intervention by Trotskyism against centrism, then we can expect the enormous tension created by the economic crisis to provide conditions in which the centrists will be very rapidly exposed for the opportunists they are. But here lies great danger: the capitalist class needs every new upsurge of the working class to be broken in its early stages, and it relies on the centrist leaders to carry out the necessary betrayal. To combat and defeat this centrism is not therefore a propaganda task, but a life-and-death matter for the working class. It can be dealt with only by a party whose cadres are trained on the whole body of Marxist theory.

What flows, therefore, from our theoretical analysis of the present economic and political situation, and from all the basic experience of our movement, is the paramount need to struggle on the basis of dialectical materialism for the independent development of our own revolutionary party in every country. This, the creation of a decisive pole of attraction for the best elements driven forward by the crisis, and not some centrist adaptation to 'new forces', is the fundamental requirement of the working class and the youth. To go deeper and deeper into the masses, as the new stage of the crisis requires, is a task that cannot be undertaken except through the most decisive concentration on the development of Marxist theory.

The Third Conference of the International Committee in 1966 adopted a resolution based on the report of the Conference Commission on 'Rebuilding the Fourth International and the Tasks of the IC'. Asserting the continuity of the Fourth International since 1938 in struggle against Stalinism and against Pabloite liquidationism, this resolution emphasized above all else the building of independent revolutionary parties in every country. Such parties can only be built in opposition to all tendencies to syndicalism and spontaneity. In the epoch of wars and revolutions, and especially in the period since the early 1930s where the crisis of revolutionary leadership predominates, all such tendencies quickly fall prey to centrist treachery. The very fact that the imperialist crisis forces more and more millions of the masses into conflict demands precisely that

a leadership is forged which can establish the political independence of the working class.

The proletariat will not abandon its traditional trade union and political organizations immediately to take the road of revolution. It will first act while still within the framework of these organizations, producing a crisis within them. The resolution of this crisis is a conscious task which can be undertaken only by parties of the Fourth International. The cadres of the Fourth International fight within the mass organizations of the working class to defend the trade unions from the capitalist state; they conduct a political struggle to remove the opportunist and Stalinist leaderships as the basis of the fight for proletarian democracy within the trade unions. All sectarianism, turning away from the mass organizations, must be resolutely opposed. It is essentially in this fight against the opportunist leadership, intervening on all the basic questions confronting the working class to win cadres and build the revolutionary party, that the struggle to unite the working class takes place. In this period of the crisis of revolutionary leadership, the struggle to build the independent centralized revolutionary leadership is a fundamental, principled issue. To the building of the party all tactical questions are subordinated in the direct sense that every aspect of work—in the unions, in the youth movement, in propaganda, etc.—is planned and controlled from the party, with its perspectives worked out from the standpoint of building the party necessary to lead the working class to power.

The role of a daily party newspaper in this fight is indispensable. It is the organizer of the party, constantly struggling to create a political homogeneity of the work and consciousness of all members of the revolutionary party. It gives the party the necessary striking power in reacting to the sharp political turns characteristic of this revolutionary period. It takes to a new level the struggle of Trotskyism against Stalinism and all the agents of capitalism within the working class. It is the concrete realization of the perspective of resolving the crisis of leadership, enabling the fight for revolutionary consciousness to be conducted on the political, the economic and the theoretical fronts in a way which is enriched and unified by the daily necessity of intervention in the class struggle.

The Third Conference of the International Committee also decided to set up a youth commission working under its direction. This youth commission undertook the immediate tasks placed before it—organization of mass participation in the Liège demonstration against NATO and the Vietnam war in October 1966, and convening an international conference of revolutionary youth organizations (begun as the International Youth Assembly, summer 1967). There is no doubt that the radicalization of youth in the 1960s was, as always, the anticipation of a renewed revolutionary upsurge of working-class struggle. For this reason, the orientation of the sections of the International Committee towards the youth was correct and of great importance. It has strengthened the cadre of the IC sections in preparation for the great class

battles which began in 1968. This new revolutionary stage of the class struggle provides qualitatively new conditions for a mass Trotskyist youth movement. The youth can now march forward no longer comparatively isolated from the adult workers, but on the contrary, given strength and confidence by the actions of large sections of the working class.

The political development of the revolutionary youth is greatly facilitated by this relationship and the struggle against all forms of opportunism and adventurism in the youth can be carried through under very favourable conditions. Naturally the youth come into the struggle with no experience of the fundamental clash between imperialism and the proletariat. Their enthusiasm and energy, so essential to the building of the revolutionary party, have to be tempered and given greater force through the absorption of all the lessons of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat. These lessons can only be learned in the school of Lenin and Trotsky, in the building of parties of the Fourth International. There is thus no separation whatsoever between the building of the revolutionary party and the building of the mass revolutionary youth organization and youth International. The International Committee thus has a primary responsibility for the development of an international youth organization which places itself clearly and openly under the banner of Trotskyism, of the Fourth International.

The history of the Fourth International, as of the Third International set up under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky, proves beyond any shadow of doubt that the laying down of a correct programme, even with the most impeccable historical forbears and preconditions, does not provide automatic sureties of the development of revolutionary leadership. Not complacency, but the most vigilant, combative and scrupulous attention to theoretical questions, checking on every perspec-

tive and every development, constantly turning the cadres of every section towards fundamental theoretical questions, will build the revolutionary party. This is the most decisive lesson of the history of the Fourth International and the struggle against the revisionists. Development will not come from any combination of adherence to programme with the enthusiasm of the youth and the influx of fresh forces from the struggle of the working class. It will come from the battle to develop and deepen Marxist theory against every pressure from bourgeois ideology. The deeper the crisis of imperialism, and consequently of its bureaucratic agencies in the labour movement, the more pressing the tasks posed before the revolutionary leadership, the sharper is the pressure of all forms of idealist thinking inside the revolutionary party. There is no road to the building of the revolutionary party, no road to workers' power, except this one. It is precisely the possibility, under today's conditions, of building the Fourth International into the world leadership at which Trotsky aimed, that poses the task of deepening dialectical materialism in the conflict against all forms of revisionism, of negating the whole period since 1938. The struggle against revisionism is the essence of preparation. It prepares the revolutionary party to fight for the leadership of the working class in overturning all the defeats and obstacles placed in its way by imperialism and the Stalinist bureaucracy.

The essential task before the Fourth Conference of the International Committee is the theoretical and political preparation of all its sections, and of all those now coming towards the International Committee, to establish in the immediate future parties which will successfully challenge the Stalinist and reformist leaderships and lead the struggle for workers' power.

December 1971.



This is a polemic against Radek in 1928. Trotsky examines the arguments against his pre-war theory of the permanent revolution (as expounded in *Results and Prospects*) and takes up the history of his differences with Lenin before 1917, of which Stalin and his henchmen made so much. Trotsky shows that it was Lenin's criticisms of his attitude to the centralised Marxist party, which he afterwards understood and accepted, that kept them apart, and not their differences on the permanent revolution.

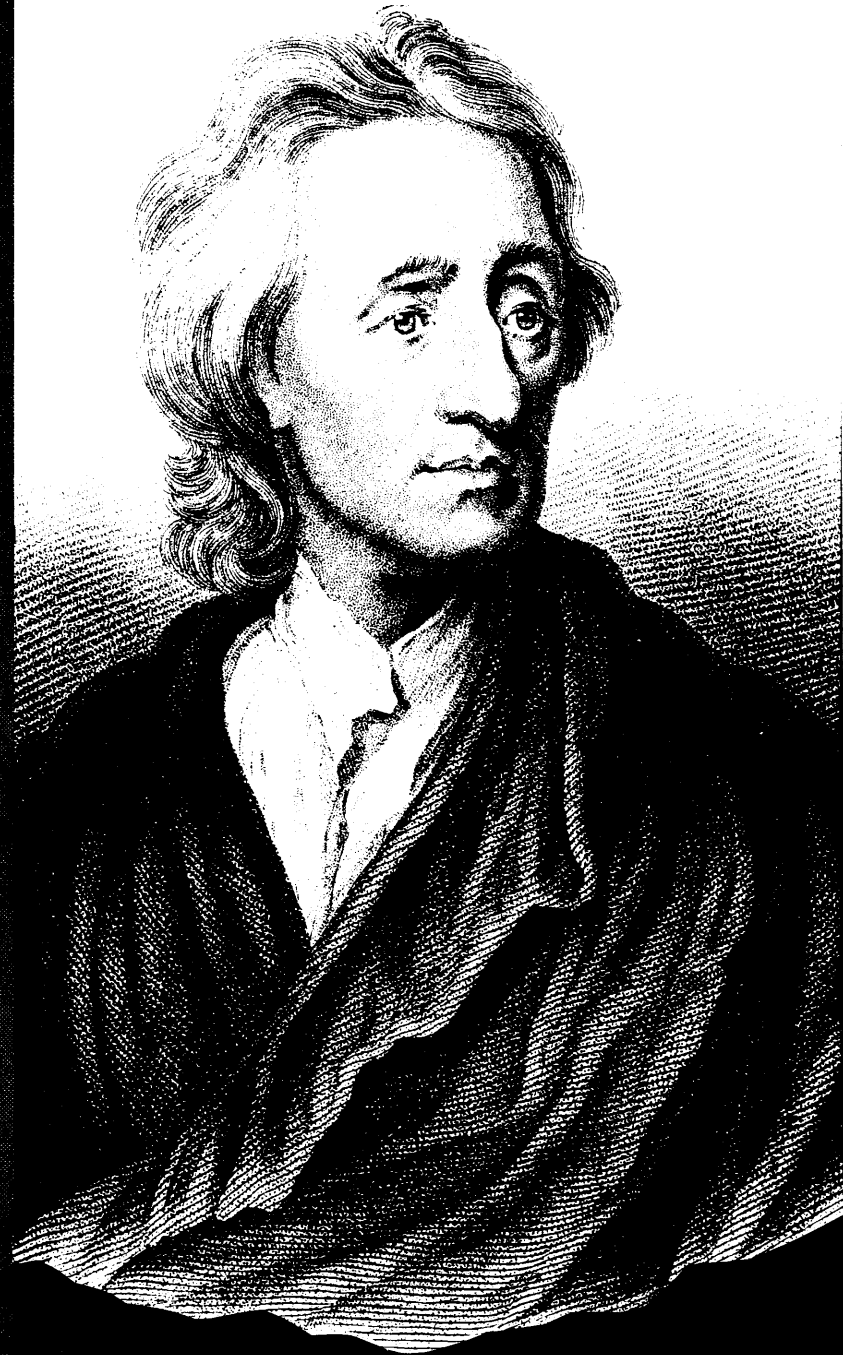
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HOBBS



LOCKE



# EARLY ENGLISH MATERIALISM

BY CLIFF SLAUGHTER

IN THE OPINION OF Marx and Engels, the philosophical materialism which existed before the mid-19th century had severe limitations.

It was mechanical, knowing only physics among the natural sciences, and therefore able to conceive of man himself only as a machine; and it could not conceive of the world in its development, as a continuous historical process; indeed even motion was considered as essentially static, constituting the re-establishment of equilibrium. These limitations had two sources: the underdeveloped character of the natural sciences, lack of knowledge of evolution, earth history etc.; and 'the metaphysical, i.e., anti-dialectical, manner of philosophizing connected with it'. No scientific basis existed for a *historical* view of nature; therefore all mobility, change, development seemed due to the work of 'mind'.

In the study of the history of mankind, the same metaphysical view predominated. From the fall of Rome to the Renaissance era was merely 1,000 years of darkness, giving way to a renewal of the creative human spirit. The actual interconnections and changes were not seen. Engels says that the great theoretical task was to bring the science of society '... the sum total of the so-called historical and philosophical sciences, into harmony with the materialist foundations (natural history), and of reconstructing it there-upon'.

This would give 'the science of real men and of their historical development', which began with Marx's *The Holy Family* 1845 (see Engels: *Ludwig Feuerbach*).

## Early English philosophers and bourgeois consciousness

The English philosophers of the 17th century had been especially important in pre-Marxist materialism. Although Bacon preceded them in the advocacy of materialism, it was Hobbes and Locke, at different stages of the bourgeois revolution (Hobbes around the Civil War of 1640 and the Commonwealth, Locke working on the basis of the class compromise of the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688) who presented the most systematically worked-out expression of the social outlook of the rising class, the bourgeoisie. These thinkers were part of the great historical process whereby the classes of modern society, capitalism, in Britain were assembled in their present basic relations. These relations are essentially economic (wage-labouring workers and capitalists) but must also be understood in their ideological and political forms. It is precisely the bourgeois domination of those ideological and political forms which provides the particular historical framework for the rule of the bourgeoisie in each country. These bonds must be broken for the proletariat to remove the bourgeoisie as a class when the crisis of capitalism demands revolutionary solutions, as now in the epoch of imperialism.

We can put the question in another way. Lenin insists that socialist consciousness is brought to the working class 'from the outside', i.e. from the

scientific and philosophical development to which we have referred.

The experience of the working class by itself can produce only 'trade union consciousness'; and this trade union consciousness, Lenin insists, is *bourgeois consciousness*. It accepts the framework of the bourgeois social order. And it accepts it *in the given ideological and political forms of the particular society*. Thus the English labour movement is dominated by bureaucratic, 'labour-aristocratic' and middle-class strata whose outlook is precisely that of English bourgeois society. So long as the organized working class remains under the domination of these strata (represented by reformism, Fabianism, Stalinism, varieties of radicalism, etc.) it has *bourgeois* consciousness, however strong or militant its trade union organization.

## The fight for Socialist consciousness

The analysis of the fabric of bourgeois ideology, and of the historical character of its formation and development in Britain, is important for the central struggle in Britain: to make the break, in conflict, from trade union (bourgeois) consciousness to socialist (Marxist) consciousness. The grip of middle-class agencies on the socialist and working-class movement in Britain is an indispensable pillar of the domination of the ruling class; its foundation-stone is the trade union bureaucracy, which must at all costs confine the organized strength of the working class's trade unions within the framework of bourgeois legality and bourgeois consciousness. Socialist consciousness has to be deliberately fought for and developed on Marxist foundations, in continuous battle with these 'national' bourgeois forms of consciousness: the revolutionary working-class party has the purpose of training and welding together from the working class (and those intellectuals who *join* it) the force which develops this socialist consciousness. The daily paper and press of the revolutionary party has *exactly* this purpose and no other. There is no such thing as 'working-class culture' developed out of the daily life of the working class under capitalist domination. The idea of such a culture is a myth of the petty bourgeoisie, who wish precisely for the working class to stay where it is. Everything depends on the conscious elaboration of the alternative Marxist world outlook, the incorporation and analysis of every social development of every new working-class experience, and particularly the experience of its conscious vanguard, from the standpoint of Marxism. 'Without revolutionary theory, no revolutionary movement' (Lenin, *What Is To Be Done?*).

Trade union (bourgeois) consciousness in Britain has its roots deep in the history of the English bourgeoisie. Marxism has until now not established a sufficiently strong basis in sections of the working class to be able to challenge the hold of the individualistic and empiricist outlook of the bourgeoisie which came to full power in the 17th century. Trotskyism and the daily Trotskyist news-

paper are now able to begin this struggle on a conscious theoretical base for the first time since Marx's intervention in the British section of the First International.

The purpose of this article is not to give the outline history of the establishment of the bourgeois order and its forms of class domination—that is a task which must be undertaken jointly by Marxists in Britain—but to consider one remarkable contribution by a bourgeois scholar, not a Marxist but a liberal political philosopher influenced by Marxism, C. B. Macpherson. This Canadian academic published a book in 1962, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke*. (Since then he has developed his liberal ideas in *New Worlds of Democracy*, 1967, a view of the development of 'democracy' in more recent history and in the contemporary world.) Macpherson had anticipated this work in a paper of 1954, where he 'suggested that English political thought from the 17th to the 19th centuries had an underlying unity which deserved notice. I called the unifying assumption "possessive individualism" and suggested that the central difficulties of liberal-democratic thought from John Stuart Mill to the present might be better understood if they were seen to have been set by the persistence and deeprootedness of that assumption.' (Quoted in Macpherson 1962 p. vii.)

According to Macpherson's analysis, then, the 'democratic' and individualistic political theory, which in various forms has reigned supreme in Britain since the 17th century, works on certain assumptions which have to be unearthed in order to understand the origin, development and contradictions of this theory. These assumptions amount to the acceptance of what Macpherson calls modern 'market society', i.e., capitalist society. It follows from Macpherson's argument that the principles of 'democratic' bourgeois political theory are not timeless truths of universal validity, but are limited to a particular set of historical conditions, those of the capitalist epoch, beginning in the 17th century and ending in our own.

### A liberal view of the capitalist social order

It is clear at the start (and we explain below in detail) that Macpherson's interpretation is close to Marxism in certain ways. It challenges the fundamental assumption of bourgeois ideology, viz., that the capitalist social order we know is 'natural', conforms to 'human nature', and works according to the highest, absolute values, human rights, etc. But it is of great interest for Marxists that Macpherson remains politically a liberal reformist and not a revolutionary, even after his own detailed analysis. This cannot be explained simply by noting that academics in Canada, as elsewhere, are isolated from the working class. More fundamental questions are involved. Marxists can learn a great deal from Macpherson's book; but above all, they must ask the question: 'What is there in Macpherson's analysis that allows him to

draw "liberal" conclusions?' If this question can be answered, it may give some valuable indications to resolving the major questions with which we began. Until now, middle-class groups advocating socialism have in Britain served only as an assistance to the conservative bureaucracy and aristocracy of labour. They have seen 'socialism' as an extension of radicalism or 'liberal' democracy, not as the product of revolutionary theory and of the modern proletariat and the anarchy of capitalist production. Consequently the consciousness of the organized workers has remained at the level of trade union consciousness, not challenging any of the assumptions laid down by the whole ideological superstructure of capitalism. In Macpherson we see even the most advanced middle-class theorizing, even to the point of using much of Marx's analysis, still unable to break this barrier. If this *limit* to bourgeois thought can be demonstrated we shall get a clearer view of where the kernel of the question is, see more exactly on what point of the development of theory we must concentrate in the building of the revolutionary movement in Britain. The essence can only be brought out if we give a fairly lengthy summary of parts of Macpherson's case in *The Political theory of Possessive Individualism*. At various points we indicate the closeness or indebtedness of Macpherson's conclusions to those of Marx on the same questions, and at others the decisive differences.

### The base of Liberal-democratic theory

The individualism upon which liberal-democratic theory is based begins with Hobbes, writing in the 1640s and 1650s, i.e., during the English bourgeois revolution. Hobbes aimed to throw aside all traditional notions and assumptions about rights, justice, etc. and to deduce political rights and obligations from the essential characteristics and needs of individuals. In different forms, this individualism permeates all bourgeois political thought. But within it is another assumption: it is not just a question of assuming the individual's well-being to be the aim and purpose of the social order; bourgeois theory assumes a *possessive* individual, the *proprietor*, independently of anything bestowed upon him by society, or his person and his capacities, and it is this *property* which assures his *freedom*. Hobbes and the bourgeois political philosophers who followed him explained 'civil society', the bourgeois order, as the result of the coming together of men with these characteristics and interests. Macpherson shows that the real process was the reverse.

'The relation of ownership, having become for more and more men the critically important relation determining their actual freedom and actual prospect of realizing their full potentialities, was read back into the nature of the individual. . . . Political society becomes a calculated device for the protection of this property and for the maintenance of an orderly relation of exchange.' (p. 3.)

Clearly, Macpherson assumes the ideology (in this case, bourgeois political theory) to be a reflec-

tion of the economic structure of society, and follows Marx at this point in showing that the consciousness is an 'inverted one' in that it turns upside down the actual relationship.

Macpherson's book shows that these possessive assumptions lay behind the political theories of radicals like the Levellers as well as of Hobbes and the theorists who followed him.

### A 'materialist' view of the nature of man

In rejecting all past assumptions about political, natural or divine right, Hobbes based himself upon a *materialist* view of the nature of man. He tried to introduce into his thinking the latest conquests of scientific thought, i.e., the physics and beginnings of scientific method of Galileo. From the understanding of man as an individual which this gave him, he deduced the nature of society. 'The standpoint of the old materialism [i.e., of the materialism of thinkers like Hobbes, C.S.] is that of the isolated individual in civil society' (*Theses on Feuerbach*). Marxism, dialectical materialism, is a qualitatively different world outlook, adopting the standpoint of 'socialized humanity'.

What was Hobbes' theory of the nature of the human individual? Previous philosophers considered man's behaviour as the result of qualities bestowed or rules imposed upon him by God, so that political behaviour must be judged by the moral law given from God. Hobbes assumed instead that '...men are self-moving systems of matter which equally seek to maintain their own motion' (Macpherson). From this Hobbes thought *equal rights* in society flowed logically. He argued further that if men are self-moving and self-directing systems of matter, then, following Galileo, the continued *motion* of each of them is *equally* necessary for their existence. Given consciousness, the individuals in society would subject themselves to those moral rules of the social order which served to allow this necessary motion to continue, i.e., those rules which make sure motion does not stop, and which prevent collisions.

At first sight, says Macpherson, this argument seems to flow logically from the natural-science premises about individuals as self-moving systems of matter. But Hobbes' conclusion actually brings in *another* assumption. For the social-moral rules to become necessary, in his argument, we must assume that the free play of the interest of each separable individual is *opposed* to that of others at certain points. This 'equality of insecurity', and of equal subordination to objective (market) standards is an assumption based on the characteristics of a 'market', i.e., possessive, competitive society, and does not flow from the nature of *individuals*. Thus Macpherson's 'logical' analysis, concerned here to show the relation between philosophical mechanical materialism and bourgeois political theory, fully confirms Marx's early insight: 'The standpoint of the old materialism is that of the isolated individual in civil society.' (*Theses on Feuerbach*.)

Hobbes' work reads as if he deduces the social

order from the characteristics of man, with certain pre-existing psychological characteristics. But in fact he brings in assumptions about men seeking power over others and needing to have this limited. Hobbes assumed these particular historical features of man to be 'natural' and 'human' (i.e., material), because 'civil' society had made them such all-pervading and everyday matters.

The pre-social 'state of nature' which Hobbes refers to in his analysis is therefore *not* the description of men as they were (or might be) before civilized society, but rather:

'The state of nature is the hypothetical condition in which men as they are now, with natures formed by living in civilized society, would necessarily find themselves if there were no common power to overawe them all' (Macpherson, p. 19).

The 'sovereign' is necessary not because of anything in the nature of individual man as a self-moving system of matter but only the basis of certain social systems. (Here we need Marx.) The limit of the old materialism was clearly demonstrated then. It could explain a minimum about the existence of individual men as material objects. But, once brought into the explanation of men in their real relations in society and history, it had to be buttressed with unstated assumptions about the society, society considered completely unhistorically and unmaterialistically. The real world of men was thus left outside of materialism; the 'active side' of history, as Marx put it, was left to idealism, where it is considered only abstractly, as pure thought.

### 'Mechanical' materialism and 'historical' materialism

It was the *unhistorical* and metaphysical nature of Hobbes' view which caught him out. He was all the more convinced he had arrived at an objective political theory because he recognized that in fact all values between men are regulated objectively and relatively by a common standard independent of each of them qualitatively and individually—the law of the market. His critics would want to object to a purely individualistic basis for a theory of politics and justice, on the grounds that political and legal principles, by their nature, are supra-individual and objective. Yes, said Hobbes, but this objectivity and standard of value is provided in reality by the market without having to invoke any divine or moral law from outside. The facts are enough. *Again* we see that this explanation is satisfactory *within the limits of bourgeois (civil) society*, i.e., it cannot begin to explain the law and politics of non-bourgeois societies, because it can have no conception of them.

(Mechanical materialism must be superseded by *historical* materialism which, from the standpoint of the revolutionary working class, of humanity 'socialized' by capitalism, develops a world outlook based on man as a material force acting on the world through his productive forces and production relations.)

(At this point, let us note: mechanical materialism, empiricism, which had to be superseded by



Marx's dialectical, historical materialism, is directly associated with the essential *social* assumptions of bourgeois society. Those today who in *philosophy* do not break from mechanical to dialectical materialism will not be able consistently and in a revolutionary way to struggle for the *overthrow* of bourgeois society.)

### A direct and consistent thinker

If we look in Hobbes' work for his demonstration of what human nature is like, we find it confirmed that he draws his judgement of this from *social* behaviour. In his *Philosophical Rudiments concerning Government and Society* (written in Latin in 1642), Hobbes is on some pages very insistent that he deduces the nature of society from the nature of individual men. But his demonstration shows the opposite. The following passage is a truly remarkable description of human behaviour as created by bourgeois relations, showing that ruthless clarity of observation and objectivity which made Hobbes too direct and consistent a thinker for the bourgeois of the 1688 settlement later in the century; for that the more flexible Locke was more suitable.

### Human behaviour as created by bourgeois relations

How, by what advice, men do meet, will be best known by observing those things which they do when they are met. For if they meet for traffic, it is plain every man regards not his fellow, but his business; if to discharge some office, a certain market-friendship is begotten, which hath more of jealousy in it than true love, and whence factions sometimes may arise, but good will never; if for pleasure, and recreation of mind, every man is wont to please himself most with those things which stir up laughter, whence he may (according to the nature of that which is ridiculous) by comparison of another man's defects and infirmities, pass the more current in his own opinion; and although this be sometimes innocent and without offence, yet it is manifest they are not so much delighted with the society, as their own vain glory. But for the most part, in these kinds of meetings, we wound the absent; their whole life, sayings, actions are examined, judged, condemned; nay, it is very rare, but some present receive a fling before they part, so as his reason was not ill, who was wont always at parting to go out last. And these are indeed the true delights of society, unto which we are carried by nature, that is, by those passions which are incident to all creatures. . . . So clear is it by experience to all men who a little more narrowly consider human affairs, that all free congress ariseth either from mutual poverty, or from vain glory, whence the **parties met**, endeavour to carry with them either **some benefit**, or to leave behind them that **same** *εὐδοκίμειν* **some esteem and honour with those, with whom they have been conversant. The same is also collected by reason out of definitions themselves, of will, good, honour, profitable.**' (Quoted in Macpherson, pp. 26-27.)

What Hobbes is describing here is the individualistic 'human nature' formed by bourgeois society, in which all social relations and values are distorted to the individual's false consciousness of his own independence and the augmentation of his possessions, including his own person and reputation. Hobbes showed at length in the later 'Leviathan', writing about 'valuing and honouring', that social status and the relative values of men were not an outgrowth of any individual, natural or God-given qualities, but of the objective mutual economic relations between men. Thus:

'The Value, or Worth of a man, is as of all other things his Price; that is to say, so much as would be given for the use of his Power; and therefore is not absolute; but a thing dependent on the need and judgement of another. . . . And as in other things, so in men, not the seller but the buyer determines the Price. For let a man (as most men do) rate themselves at the highest Value they can; yet their true Value is no more than it is estimated by others.' (Quoted in Macpherson, p. 37.)

It is obvious that Hobbes accepts as 'a fact' the rule of the market in deciding the relative worth of men and their products. When he talks about 'power' he assumes without question that it is bought and sold on the market. He considers power always as something acquired in exploitation-relationships of superiority or command over other men and *never* as the power acquired by men due to their association with other men in the struggle to transform nature. In noting this point, Macpherson undoubtedly has in mind Marx's *Capital*, in which the universality of the value-form under capitalism is contrasted with the relations of production in primitive society, feudalism and socialism, where the social relations are more 'transparent'.

### A breakdown of possessive market society

In all these as in other matters he considers, Macpherson borrows from the Marxist position, and his detailed demonstration of Hobbes' argument and assumptions deepens our understanding. He has filled out Marx's aphorism that materialism of the old type adopts the standpoint of the isolated individual in civil society.

But now we come to a peculiar stage in the argument. Having shown that Hobbes is constantly making unstated assumptions about the 'market' character of society, and can conceive of men only as products of such a society, Macpherson sets down (pp. 46 ff) his 'model' of 'developed (or possessive) market society' (i.e., capitalist society) as contrasted with other world societies ('customary or static society', 'simple market society'). His purpose is to show that *only* this 'developed market society' corresponds to all Hobbes' assumptions. In this he is undoubtedly correct.

'By possessive market society,' says Macpherson, 'I mean one in which, in contrast to a society based on custom and status, there is no authoritative allocation of work or rewards, and in which, in contrast to a society of independent producers, who exchange only their products in the market, there is a market in labour as well as in products.'

If a single criterion of the possessive market society is wanted it is that man's labour is a commodity, i.e., that a man's energy and skill are his own, yet are regarded not as integral parts of his personality, but as possessions, the use and disposal of which he is free to hand over to others for a price. It is to emphasize this characteristic of the fully market society that I have called it the *possessive market society*. Possessive market society also implies that where labour has become a market commodity, market relations so shape or permeate all social relations that it may properly be called a market society, not merely a market economy.'

### 'A fair day's pay for a fair day's work'

There is an inconsistency in Macpherson's own presentation which is quite remarkable. For one who has obviously some acquaintance with Marx's work, he makes an elementary 'mistake'. Although from time to time he talks about man's 'capacity to labour' being bought and sold as a commodity, he most often refers to *labour* as a commodity and fails to distinguish between *labour* and *labour-power*. Now here we are at the nub of the question. Marx 'negated' bourgeois political economy because his theory reflected scientifically the position of the proletariat, which is created by the fact that it must sell its labour-power. Marx therefore had to reject the bourgeois theory that wages were the price of labour, and that profit and rent were the rewards of capital and land for their participation in production. He went so far as to say that the most basic illusion of capitalist society was to see wages as the reward for labour, instead of as the price of labour-power. And this is, in quintessential form, the difference between *trade union consciousness* (bourgeois consciousness because it accepts the bourgeois view of the labourer as free possessor and seller of his property—'labour'—in a free market, with its accompanying equality before the law and political democracy! Trade unions will fight for 'a fair day's pay for a fair day's work'!) and *socialist consciousness*. This socialist consciousness starts from the scientific understanding that the worker sells *labour-power* at its value, and that *all* revenues arise out of the *surplus-value*, the difference between wages and the value added by labour. Labour is the *sole* source of new value. The working class as a *class* must overthrow the social system of capitalism, to create the conditions in which the 'associated producers confront nature, instead of conditions where each individual enters social production through an act of sale.

Macpherson says however:

'If a single criterion of the possessive market society is wanted it is that man's labour is a commodity, i.e., that a man's energy and skill are his own, yet are regarded not as integral parts of his personality but as possessions, the use and disposal of which he is free to hand over to others at a price.'

Now, for Macpherson's own purposes of analysing the implicit assumptions of bourgeois political

philosophy, this definition remains of great value. Its stress on the 'possessiveness' of the individualism involved, and on the alienability of men's powers, pinpoints the things he needs for his analysis. But his analysis will not see within bourgeois society that force, the working class, which must *overthrow* the social basis of Hobbes' assumptions. That movement of the working class, said Marx, is the real 'criticism' of capitalism and its ideology, to which he gave theoretical expression in *Capital*.

That Macpherson has not grasped this very essence of Marx's theory emerges very clearly from his own explanation of his 'model of the possessive market society':

'The concept of possessive market society is neither a novel nor an arbitrary construction. It is clearly similar to the concepts of bourgeois or capitalist society used by Marx, Weber, Sombart, and others, who have made the existence of a market in labour a criterion of capitalism, and like their concepts it is intended to be a model or ideal type to which modern (i.e., post-feudal) European societies have approximated. It differs from theirs chiefly in that it does not require any particular theory of the origin or development of such society. It is not concerned about the primacy or relative importance of various factors such as Marx's primary accumulation, Weber's rational capital accounting, or Sombart's spirit of enterprise. It does not require acceptance of the whole of any of these contentious theories. And it may claim the positive merit of drawing attention directly to two essential features of such society, the pre-eminence of market relations and the treatment of labour as an alienable possession.' (Macpherson, pp. 48-49.)

### The most 'contentious' point of all

Marx of course writes about labour-power as a commodity and not about labour as a commodity. Had Macpherson understood *Capital* he would have known that this is the most 'contentious' point of all! On this point turns the existence of the proletariat as an exploited, propertyless class, and not as individuals confronting other individuals on a free market. This class cannot be explained except by understanding the historical process by which it was rendered propertyless and the social wealth was concentrated as capital in the hands of the bourgeoisie—the process of primitive accumulation. Outside of these historical considerations, the capitalist system and its relations cannot be understood except as a fixed system, just as Hobbes and then the classical political economists saw it.

Macpherson is not a Marxist, but a 'political philosopher'. He sees his business as the analysis and explanation of political ideas, their contradictions, their hidden assumptions. However deep this takes him in clarifying the internal structure of the thought of bourgeois thinkers like Hobbes and Locke, he remains trapped, as they were, in the

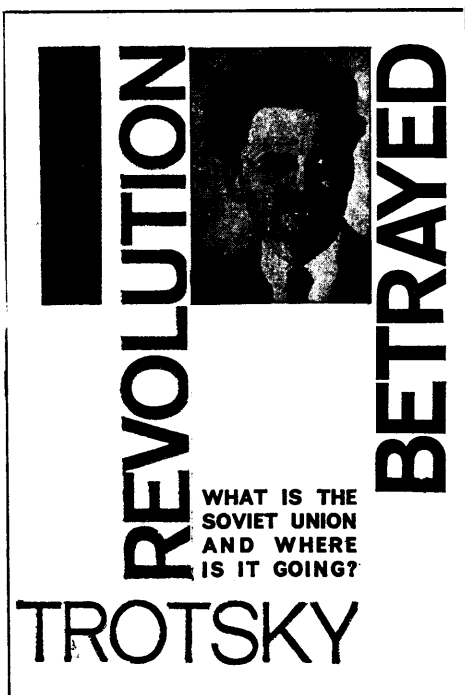
vice of accepting capitalist society as a *natural* system, not as one which is abolished, its progressive conquests carried forward, by the proletarian revolution. This is because he does not break from the theory of knowledge of bourgeois philosophy. For him, thought (his own thought) is the sole instrument for exposing the contradictions of the bourgeois world outlook. To go beyond explanation to actually *changing* the world, that is the step to dialectical materialism, which can develop only through the struggle of the working class to overthrow capitalism. Marx's theory of value is the scientific expression of the role of the

class not just as an *exploited* class, but as a *revolutionary* one.

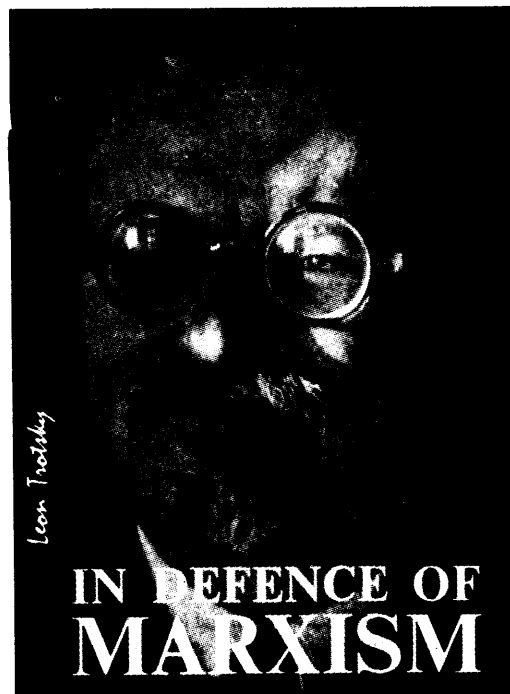
Macpherson's work and its limitations illustrate that there is an indissoluble connection between three things: the illusion that the worker sells his labour, not his labour power, which is the basic idea of trade union consciousness; the contemplative, non-dialectical character of empiricist (mechanical materialist) thinking, which Macpherson shares with Hobbes; and bourgeois liberalism.

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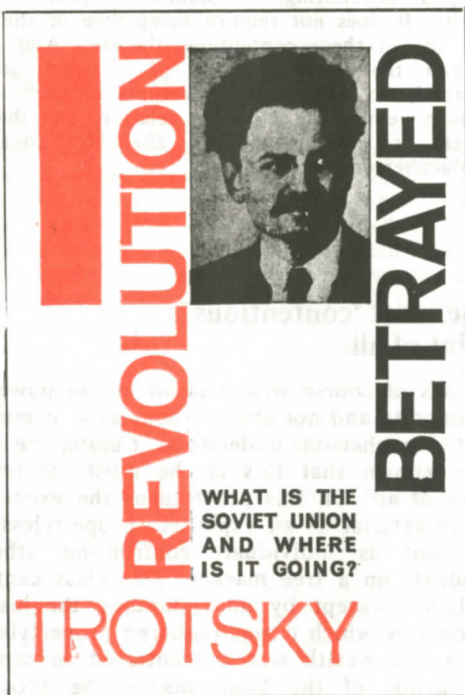
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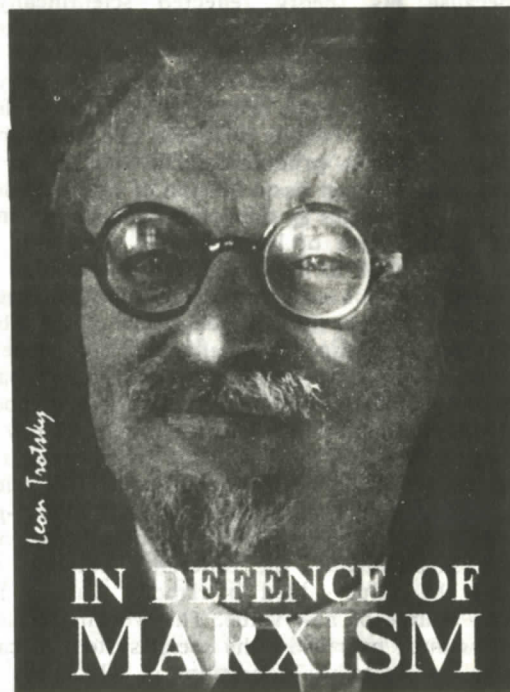
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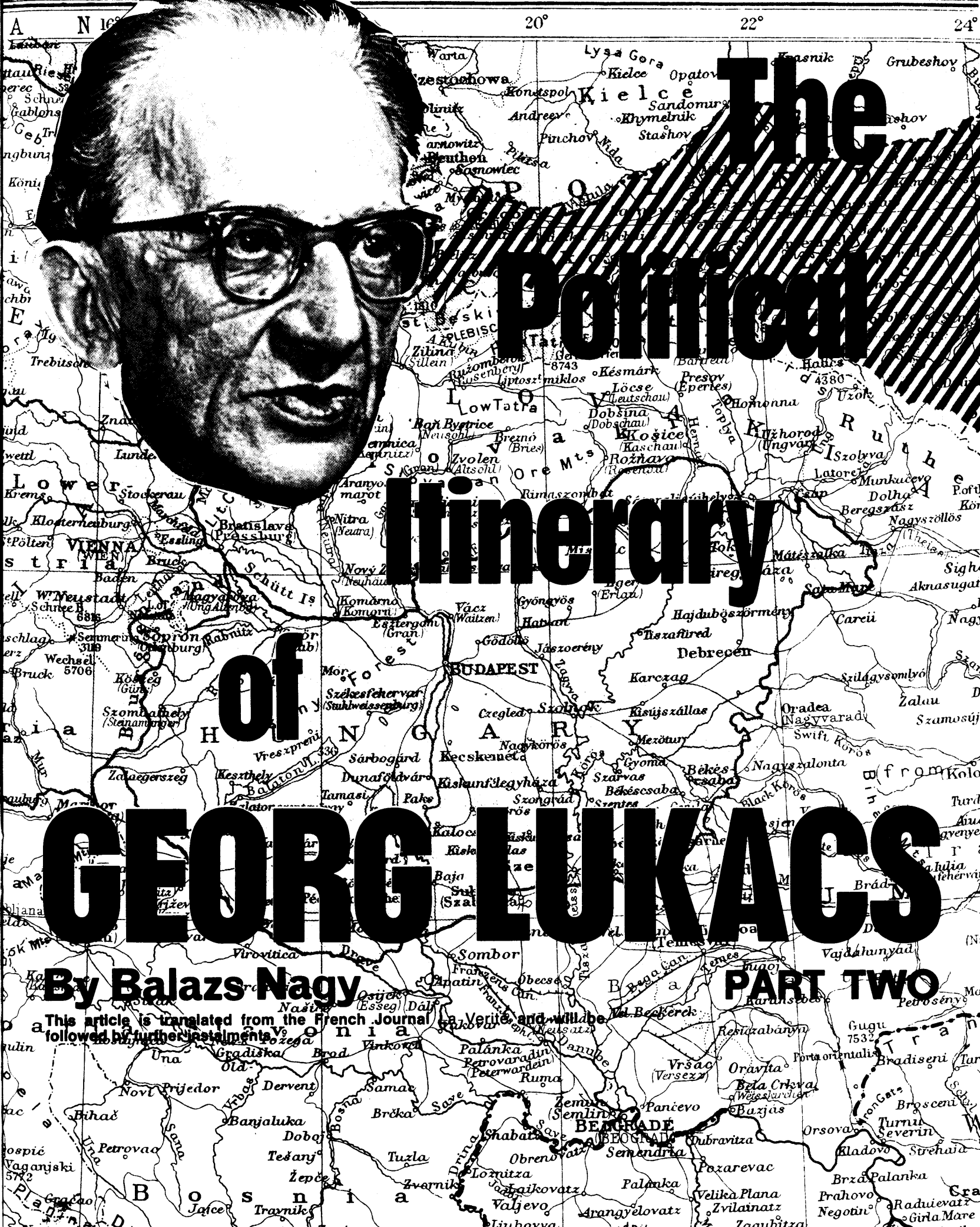


# The Political Itinerary of GEORG LUKACS

By Balazs Nagy

PART TWO

This article is translated from the French Journal *La Verité* and will be followed by further instalments.



# The Political

# Itinerary

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**IN THE previous article, I tried to follow Lukacs' development up to his joining the Hungarian Communist Party. This was marked essentially by a bookish assimilation of theories and social problems, and consequently by a separation of theory and practice, and a very distant attitude to the working class in general. These fundamental traits of the young Lukacs will continue to mark him.**

# ***In the Hungarian revolution of 1918-1919***

This revolution imprinted a new orientation on the life and thought of Lukacs, although beneath his new 'communist' skin he retained the main characteristics formed previously in the school of 'posthumous abortions of classical German philosophy'.

At the end of October 1918, revolution broke out in Hungary. But, because it had only a social-democratic party which joined the government led by the liberal bourgeoisie, the working class was unable to take power. Lukacs, rejecting Bolshevism for reasons of bourgeois morality, remained at first in the ranks of the so-called progressive intellectuals. With his friend Karl Mannheim, he joined the National Council, supreme organ of bourgeois power, on October 29. This intelligentsia's position on a whole series of political problems still churned along in the wake of the bourgeoisie. Thus, for example, on the national question it stood on the bourgeoisie's 'defencist' policy in the name of the territorial integrity of the old Hungary.

But before the revolution, particularly since October 1917, a more and more intense struggle had developed for the founding of a revolutionary party, against reformist social-democracy. It grew enormously from the first days of the revolution, uniting those left-wing socialists breaking from Social-Democracy. The most important anti-militarist youth and the group that had joined the Bolshevik Party in the 1917 Revolution came back in November. After several more or less isolated attempts, the founding of the Hungarian Communist Party was proclaimed on November 23, 1918.

It was this struggle for the building of an organized vanguard of the proletariat that determined the process of political differentiation within the progressive intellectuals. This powerful current towards a revolutionary party, expressing the revolutionary shift in the working class, also swept Lukacs into the new party. Just a few weeks after condemning Bolshevism, Lukacs joined that party

which, by applying the Bolsheviks' tactics, was rapidly winning the leadership of important numbers of workers. Tension mounted between the working masses and the government. The revolution moved forward. Terrified, the bourgeoisie counter-attacked on a world scale. In January, the assassination of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht marked the determination of capital to check the development of the revolution, whatever the cost. On February 20, 1919, helped as in Germany by social-democracy, the Hungarian bourgeoisie itself unleashed an offensive. After a campaign of provocations it banned the Communist Party and arrested its Central Committee members. But such were the conditions in the young, scarcely formed and inexperienced party that the intellectual Lukacs, only yesterday still an anti-communist, was elected to the second central committee, which was elected at once.

He published the first leaflet announcing the formation of the second central committee, and which ought to have given clear directives to the masses. To characterize this leaflet, we need only point out that it contained no call for struggle, set out no perspective, nor even less a form of action against the government and the ban on the party. Terribly abstract, it was impregnated with declarations as follows:

'Great poets, the real judges of the human spirit, have often shown of what men are capable to liberate themselves from the torments of a guilty conscience; how they immerse themselves in the inextricable tangle of lies that they offer to themselves and to others, how they founder in the swamp of the most terrible crimes in order to silence the rebukes of a bad conscience. If people succeed in convincing themselves that what they hate, because it embodies their own bad conscience, does not represent the principle in which that conscience is embodied; if they succeed in convincing themselves that it is something quite different, that its own betrayal and cowardice is but a legitimate defence against the wickedness of the other, then,

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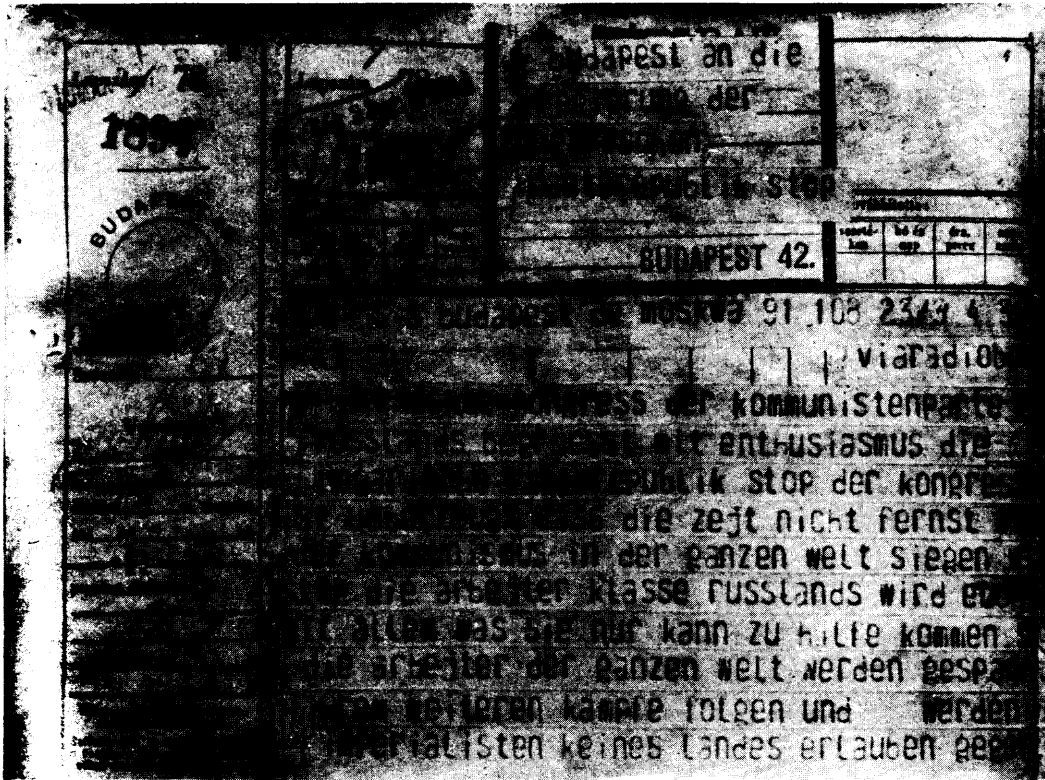
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Lenin's telegram of congratulation to the Revolutionary Governing Council of the Hungarian Republic on March 21, 1919

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And so on in this mumbo-jumbo. The revolution is in danger; Lukacs, whose elastic conscience will later lead him to support and justify Stalin's crimes, has only one thought; to assert his petty-bourgeois, intellectual state of mind in a hopeless search for norms of an abstract morality. From this example, militants can draw up an exact idea of the abyss which was always to separate Lukacs from the labour movement. Thus, it is easily understandable that the growth of the party in the revolution and the assertion of its influence were not due to the work of such a 'leader', but to that of the members and other leaders of the party, who led the struggle, at that time, along the line of Bolshevism.

As for the 'leader' Lukacs, he was obsessed with moral problems. But with this difference; as a member of the party, he poses his ethical problems from the standpoint of 'pure' communism, but at the same time as problems of the 'individual'. During the revolution, his main preoccupation consisted of publishing a pamphlet, *Tactics and Ethics* in which, among other things, he writes:

'The class struggle of the proletariat is not just a class struggle . . . but the means for the liberation of humanity . . . Every compromise obscures this aspect of the struggle, and for that reason . . . it is fatal for that real final end.'

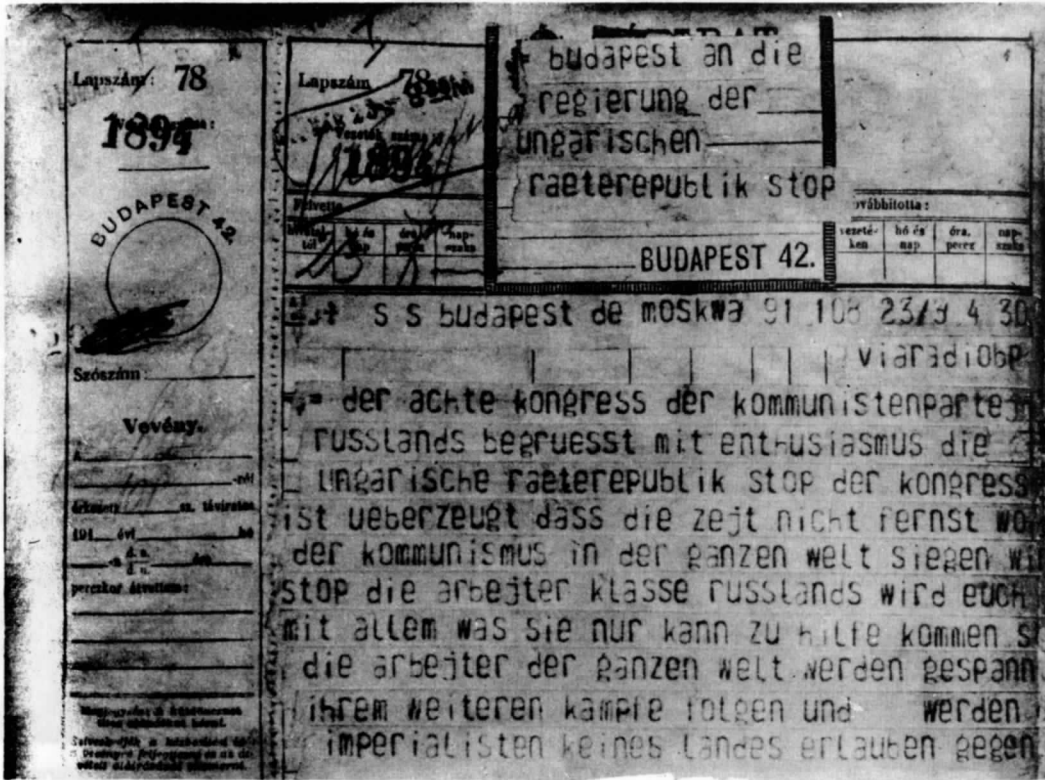
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We cannot here deal with all the fundamental problems of the 1918 Soviet Republic, however rich its lessons. We must, however, define Lukacs' attitude in relation to the central problem, that of the party.

The proletariat's seizure of power was the result of the total inability of the bourgeoisie to satisfy democratic demands. Further, the bourgeois government withdrew in the face of the ultimatum from the imperialist powers. Its extreme weakness was revealed in the fact that, faced with this ultimatum, it handed over the power to the proletariat without a struggle. The social-democrats, then, faced with the need to take power, turned towards the communists. Dumping the extreme right of the party, they asked the communists to take power with them, on the condition that the two parties united. Bela Kun, who led the unification negotiations, drew up the conditions for this, summarizing



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**Hungary 1919: Red soldiers in action against counter-revolutionary troops**

them in the programme of the dictatorship of the proletariat, but without even consulting the Communist Party leadership. Yet there was a fairly strong tendency in the Party, led by Rudas (one of the leaders of the opposition which had fought in the social-democratic party since 1903, and one of the founders of the CP) which was opposed to it, preferring a coalition of the two parties (See L. Rudas *Abenteurer und Liquidatorum. Die Politik Bela Kun and Die Krise der KPU*, Vienna, 1922, p. 279). So the unification done in a putschist manner by Bela Kun faced the party with a *fait accompli* and completely dissolved it in the Social Democratic morass. From the first days of the dictatorship, relations between the Social Democrats and the communists began to deteriorate with regard to the essential problems of the dictatorship, posing the need for an independent regrouping of the communists. In the discussion, militants more and more had to recognize the need to cut themselves off from the reformists and centrists. Each clash with them over some problem developed the struggle to set up an authentic communist party.

From the beginning of May, faced with a new ultimatum from the imperialist powers, and their military attack (enemy troops were 30 km from the capital) when the Social Democrats called for the resignation of the dictatorship, Bela Kun himself began to understand the terrible error committed by an unprincipled unification. Mobilizing the proletariat in defence of the dictatorship, he began to

take up the clarification of the problem of the party, although in an inconsequential manner.

Whilst the communists were looking for ways and means of splitting from the reformists and centrists by building a communist faction, and then organization, the newcomer Lukacs became the mouthpiece of a liquidationist tendency. This 'idealist philosopher', as Bela Kun called him in 1932 (See Bela Kun, *La Republique hongroise des Conseils*, Budapest, 1962, in French, p. 415) represented that tendency which held that the fusion of the two parties represented the unity of the proletariat and, consequently that class had no longer need of a party. In the fourth chapter of *Tactics and Ethics* already quoted above, entitled 'Party and Class', Lukacs developed this 'theory' of the party. Making an abstraction of the dialectic, he claimed that, within capitalism, the dialectical contradiction is between on the one hand, the action of the class, and on the other, that of the party. By thus opposing, mechanistically, the party to the proletariat, he necessarily arrived at the conclusion that the solution to this contradiction is the dictatorship of the proletariat, when the party becomes superfluous.

This was also the opinion of some of the German KAPD leftists whom Lenin stigmatized in *Left Wing Communism*. From such a mechanistic opposition of the party to the proletariat, which obviously can be covered up by phrases about the dialectic, can also result the inverse error, namely



**Recruiting Red Soldiers at the outbreak of the revolution**

the substitution of the party for the activity of the masses. This inversion of the same error will later be Lukacs' attitude, especially after 1924 at the time of his definitive adaptation to the nascent and triumphant bureaucracy. In his *Memoires*, Victor Serge remarked that at that time (1924-1925) Lukacs demanded, for example, that history only be written by Central Committee members of the Party. In the first case, as in the second, is found Lukacs' organic inability to grasp the dialectical relationship between party and class. There is a break from the dialectical unity of the party and the class in which unity gives place to identification or, inversely, rigid and mechanical opposition, but in which the interaction of these opposites, their interdependence and reciprocal conditioning, are totally absent.

The theoretical source of these two positions, liquidationist opportunism and ultimist leftism, is idealism, which represents the basis of their organic relationship. This idealism consists in detaching the dialectic from its material essence, in this case the labour movement, and making it into a philosophy in itself, ready to discover 'contradictions' or 'totality' here, there and everywhere. This is the general position of *History and Class Consciousness*.

Let us return to 1919, and particularly to 'Party and Class'. For the liquidator Lukacs, the unification of the two parties was of historical importance, for the dictatorship of the proletariat was thus possible, making the organization of any party superfluous. Moreover, this is even more important since, according to Lukacs, the party,

under capitalism is corrupted because it must fight on the same plane as bourgeois society. For the Communist Party, Lukacs continues, it is no sacrifice to 'renounce its party organization, for its entire existence was built on the negation of the old forms of party'. In this position we can easily recognize the mixture of leftism with its natural twin, opportunism. But Lukacs was soon to go further still.

He raised to the level of a universal virtue the terrible mistake of the Hungarian communists not to follow through to the end the fight against centrism and reformism. For him, the Bolsheviks' fight against the Mensheviks and the Socialist Revolutionaries was a rather unfortunate 'fratricidal struggle'. In fact, contrary to the Russian revolution, 'the Hungarian revolution showed that revolution is possible without a fratricidal struggle of the workers'.

Here, he goes much further in opportunism than Bela Kun, identifying the proletariat with its official leadership whether it be centrist, reformist, or—later—Stalinist.

This was the first attempt on his part to repudiate, although still very prudently, the universality of the lessons of the Russian revolution with regard to opportunism.

This liquidator, who became People's Vice-Commissar of National Education and Cultural Affairs, took no part in the most important discussions and struggles in which the Communists came to grips with the reformists, centrists and their own mistakes. Whilst bitter struggles were taking place around vital problems of the dictator-



**Mobilization of the proletariat in defence of the dictatorship**

ship of the proletariat, such as the defence of the dictatorship and military affairs or agrarian policy (the alliance of the proletariat with the peasantry), his name is not to be found, even in the last struggle waged, towards the end of the Council Republic, for a new communist party. In short, on all these questions Lukacs was an opportunist observer, busying himself mostly with relations with writers and artists, and culture in general.

The only sphere in which he appeared as a political leader was in organizing the youth, given that it was already connected with the Commissariat of National Education. Already, this fact shows the incomprehension of all the leadership with regard to the revolutionary policy to adopt in the ranks of the youth. That suited Lukacs. His conception of the youth came out in his speech at the Young Communists' conference in 1919. This speech was conceived entirely in the liquidationist spirit. Lukacs explained in it the necessity for the youth to understand the 'change of function' of struggle, because, he said 'the struggle for culture, self-education and study must be the centre of the work of the working-class youth'. He did not put forward this education as did Lenin, who of course gave the Young Communists the aim of studying communism but, precisely, in and through struggle. Instead of that, Lukacs calls for 'pure' study, for according to him, the economic and political struggle ceased with the seizure of power.

Even later, in 1921, when the emigré party published Lenin's speech to the YCL III Congress, Lukacs wrote in his preface:

'In his profound and monumental speech, Com-

rade Lenin brings study right to the fore, as the principal task of the working-class youth after the conquest of power . . . The study of which Lenin speaks will be the new front of the class struggle. In order to accomplish it we must overcome difficult struggles. Everyone knows that the task of the working class is to occupy the front rank of the vanguard of the revolutions.'

Again, he mechanically separates study—after the seizure of power—from struggle—before the revolution.

In an armed struggle to the death against imperialist intervention and in the middle of all sorts of difficulties, Lukacs said nothing on the vital problems of the revolution. His theoretical preoccupations were entirely detached from it. In March he wrote *What is Orthodox Marxism?* and in June *The Changing Function of Historical Materialism*. These two studies, with slight modifications, were to become constituent parts of his book, which appeared in 1923, *History and Class Consciousness*. I shall return to an analysis of this book. It should, however, be remembered that these studies, striking in their abstract nature, were written in the middle of a bitter struggle of the revolution, in which, as we have pointed out, all the fundamental problems of the revolutionary party and the dictatorship of the proletariat were posed.

Whether Lukacs was a capable organizer of cultural life, or rather a utopian (as he wrote himself in 1967) is of secondary importance. What is important here is to show that the halo later built around the head of Lukacs, 'leading Marxist' of the dictatorship of the proletariat, is simply a mendacious legend.

# ***The struggle of the Comintern for the formation of Communist Parties and Lukacs position***

AFTER THE FALL of the Council Republic in Hungary, Lukacs went to Vienna with other leaders of the dictatorship. The reorganization of the party began in difficult conditions in a state of illusions, and in the isolation of internment, many militants lost hope. Even among the communists, 'God-Seekers' appeared, Tolstoyans, all sorts of mystics. In such confusion, Lukacs naturally became one of the leaders of the reorganized party. The political basis of this reorganization was supplied by Bela Kun's pamphlet *From Revolution to Revolution* which appeared in Vienna in January 1921. (In French, Bela Kun op cit.)

In this pamphlet, Kun begins by not recognizing the defeat suffered by the Hungarian working class:

'Even if the Hungarian workers have lost [the republic] . . . they have lost it only from the standpoint of the international class struggle.'

He fixes as the immediate task nothing more or less than preparing to take power:

'The next historical task of the working class is the conquest of state power.'

Then he draws these conclusions:

On the one hand, 'the white terror and democracy are not, in the last analysis, obstacles, but stimulants to the extension and deepening of the revolutionary workers' movement.'

On the other hand he refuses to use the framework of legality, for it is 'impossible and futile for a labour movement to work within the framework of legality.'

According to him, the immediate conquest of power must be prepared.

'However, to carry this through is not the business of the whole working class . . . but of the revolutionary elite of that class (which) will organize the elite troops of the revolutionary class struggle and will galvanize the more or less indifferent masses.'

As we see, the ultra-leftists of today have invented nothing. This ultra-leftism was not peculiar to the Hungarian communists. It was rife throughout Europe. The Comintern had created two bureaux: one, at the beginning of 1920 in Amsterdam for the western countries, the other in September 1919 in Vienna for South-East Europe. Both bureaux were in the hands of ultra-lefts: the first led by the Dutch 'Tribune'

group Pannekoek, Gorter and Roland-Holst, the other by the Hungarian emigres Bela Kun, Pogany-Pepper, Varga and Lukacs. These two centres contributed enormously to reinforcing the ultra-leftism that was already strong in Germany with the KAPD splinter party, in Italy with Bordiga and his group, in England with Sylvia Pankhurst, etc. It is interesting to note here that Lukacs had already been influenced during the war by the Dutch ultra-left Roland-Holst, a poetess whose socialism was mainly stamped by moral and ethical considerations. The revue of the South East-Europe bureau in Vienna, *Kommunismus*, was the hotbed of the ultra-lefts, having special relations with the Amsterdam Bureau.

Whilst it was fighting opportunism in the new parties, the Communist International had to attack its corollary, ultra-leftism, not just once but from its creation and throughout the period of the first four congresses. The main attention of the International, particularly its real leaders Lenin and Trotsky, was centred on the education of the young communist movement, explaining to them the necessity of winning the decisive forces of the proletariat, and consequently, of the ways and means of doing so. In April 1920 the ECCI dissolved the Amsterdam Bureau, whose work was transferred to Berlin. In June of that year, Lenin opened fire with his fundamental work, *Left Wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder*, and on June 12, he addressed a letter to the revue *Kommunismus* which openly criticized Bela Kun and Lukacs. His criticism of Lukacs was particularly sharp, as his article went further in ultra-leftism than even Bela Kun. Firstly, Lenin stated that the revue 'contains an article by Comrade G.L. entitled *On the Question of Parliamentarism*, which the editors designate as controversial, and from which Comrade B.K. directly dissociates himself (fortunately), i.e., declares that he is in disagreement with it.'

'Among other things, we find in this article, "Parliament is the oldest weapon of the bourgeoisie, and can therefore only be a defensive arm of the proletariat", or again, "Thus, the admission of parliamentary activity signifies for communist parties the consciousness and admission that revolution is inconceivable in a more or less foreseeable future".' (Lukacs, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 97.)

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'However, to carry this through is not the business of the whole working class . . . but of the revolutionary elite of that class (which) will organize the elite troops of the revolutionary class struggle and will galvanize the more or less indifferent masses.'

As we see, the ultra-leftists of today have invented nothing. This ultra-leftism was not peculiar to the Hungarian communists. It was rife throughout Europe. The Comintern had created two bureaux: one, at the beginning of 1920 in Amsterdam for the western countries, the other in September 1919 in Vienna for South-East Europe. Both bureaux were in the hands of ultra-lefts: the first led by the Dutch 'Tribune'

group Pannekoek, Gorter and Roland-Holst, the other by the Hungarian emigres Bela Kun, Pogany-Pepper, Varga and Lukacs. These two centres contributed enormously to reinforcing the ultra-leftism that was already strong in Germany with the KAPD splinter party, in Italy with Bordiga and his group, in England with Sylvia Pankhurst, etc. It is interesting to note here that Lukacs had already been influenced during the war by the Dutch ultra-left Roland-Holst, a poetess whose socialism was mainly stamped by moral and ethical considerations. The revue of the South East-Europe bureau in Vienna, *Kommunismus*, was the hotbed of the ultra-lefts, having special relations with the Amsterdam Bureau.

Whilst it was fighting opportunism in the new parties, the Communist International had to attack its corollary, ultra-leftism, not just once but from its creation and throughout the period of the first four congresses. The main attention of the International, particularly its real leaders Lenin and Trotsky, was centred on the education of the young communist movement, explaining to them the necessity of winning the decisive forces of the proletariat, and consequently, of the ways and means of doing so. In April 1920 the ECCI dissolved the Amsterdam Bureau, whose work was transferred to Berlin. In June of that year, Lenin opened fire with his fundamental work, *Left Wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder*, and on June 12, he addressed a letter to the revue *Kommunismus* which openly criticized Bela Kun and Lukacs. His criticism of Lukacs was particularly sharp, as his article went further in ultra-leftism than even Bela Kun. Firstly, Lenin stated that the revue 'contains an article by Comrade G.L. entitled *On the Question of Parliamentarism*, which the editors designate as controversial, and from which Comrade B.K. directly dissociates himself (fortunately), i.e., declares that he is in disagreement with it.'

'Among other things, we find in this article, "Parliament is the oldest weapon of the bourgeoisie, and can therefore only be a defensive arm of the proletariat", or again, "Thus, the admission of parliamentary activity signifies for communist parties the consciousness and admission that revolution is inconceivable in a more or less foreseeable future".' (Lukacs, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 97.)

Lukacs crowns this ultra-leftism with the statement, 'wherever a workers' council is possible, parliamentarism is superfluous.' (Ibid p. 104.)

In these lucubrations can be found the 'arguments' of the ultra-left majority of the foundation Congress of the German Communist Party of December 1918, which against the advice of Rosa Luxemburg, for example, came out against participation in the parliamentary elections.

This is the paragraph from Lenin's letter on Lukacs article:

'G.L.'s article is very Left-wing and very poor. Its Marxism is purely verbal; its distinction between "defensive" and "offensive" tactics is artificial; it gives no concrete analysis of precise and definite historical situations; it takes no account of what is most essential (the need to take over and to learn to take over all fields of work and all institutions in which the bourgeoisie exerts its influence over the masses, etc.).'

A pitiless critique. Lenin's tone is very hard, much different from that used against Bela Kun's article, although he made no concessions to him either. In Lenin's short sentences, there is a complete characterization of Lukacs. There is nothing surprising that in this letter Lenin excludes Lukacs from the ranks of Marxists, as his 'Marxism' is only nominal, and will remain so throughout his later life. It was in the spirit of struggle against ultra-leftism that the Executive Committee prepared the Second Congress of the International, held from July 17 to August 7, 1920. The fight was mainly devoted to consolidating the new parties and, within this framework, to the struggle against both opportunism and ultra-leftism. The fact that it turned its fire against the hangers-on of reformism (e.g. by the 21 Conditions of Admission) must not let us forget the struggle against ultra-leftism. To this end, the congress stressed that the principal task was to win the majority of the working class from the reformists and centrists, stressing the decisive importance, from this point of view, of work in the trade unions and participation in parliament.

During the congress, Hermann Gorter, the spokesman for the Dutch and German ultra-lefts, published his *Reply to Lenin* (Hermann Gorter, *Reply to Lenin on 'Left Wing Communism'*, Librairie Ouvrière, Paris 1930, p. 112, reprint.) Gorter challenged the validity of the Bolsheviks' experience for the more developed western countries, refused to work in the trade unions and use parliament, basing himself solely on activity and the education of a 'pure' organization, as opposed to the proletariat which was infected with bourgeois and reformist ideology. He just stops short of accusing Lenin and the Bolsheviks of being backward peasants who, according to him, are in search of the masses. The Communist International had to intensify its fight against ultra-leftism. All the more so as the imminence of the revolution shown, *inter alia*, by the advance of the Red Army on Warsaw (the delegates to the 2nd Congress followed it enthusiastically on a map), seemed to justify the ultra-lefts. Among the delegates Bela Kun echoed Gorter's conception loudest.

In November, there was an extended session of the Executive Committee where Gorter personally defended his position. It was Trotsky, not Lenin, who replied to him. Criticizing the whole of Gorter's conception, he saw its sources in 'fear of the masses', which led him to speak 'in such an arrogant way of the Third International in search of the masses . . . (because) he lacks confidence in the material base of the revolution—the working class.'

Trotsky asks:

'What does Comrade Gorter propose? What does he want? Propaganda! This is the gist of his entire method. Revolution, says Comrade Gorter, is contingent neither upon privations nor economic conditions, but upon mass consciousness; while mass consciousness is, in turn, shaped by propaganda. Propaganda is here taken in a purely idealistic manner, very much akin to the concept of the eighteenth century school of enlightenment and rationalism. If the revolution is not contingent upon the living conditions of the masses, or much less so upon these conditions than upon propaganda, then why haven't you made the revolution in Holland?'

He goes on:

'What you now want to do amounts essentially to replacing the dynamic development of the International by methods of individual recruitment of workers through propaganda. You want some sort of simon-pure International of the elect and select, but precisely your own Dutch experience should have prompted you to realize that such an approach leads to the eruption of sharpest divergences of opinion within the most select organization.'

Trotsky does not release his grip.

'According to him [Gorter] we must begin anew and start off with—the head, i.e., with select groups, who, separate and apart from the old forms of organization, will carry unadulterated truth to the proletariat scrub it clean of all bourgeois prejudices and, finally, spruce it up for the proletarian arrogance of this type is the obverse side of the profoundest scepticism.

'The bond between the party and the class is fixed—according to Gorter—through a purely pedagogic interrelation between a small propaganda society and the proletariat infected with bourgeoisification. But it is precisely in organizations of this sort, organizations where the fear of the masses reigns, where there is no confidence in the masses, where members are recruited individually through propaganda, where activities are conducted not on the basis of the class struggle but on the basis of idealistic enlightenment—it is precisely within such organizations that the leaders are bound to play a disproportionate role. (Trotsky, *First Five Years of the Communist International*, Vol. 1, pp. 137-152).'

We have had to quote Trotsky's reply to Gorter at length, as it shows up all the mechanism of the ultra-left position. The analysis is fully justified and applicable to the majority of the Hungarian group in Vienna with Bela Kun and Lukacs. Before the meeting of the executive committee, immediately after the second congress of the International, there was a conference of 3,000 Hungarian Communists in Moscow. It did not manage to sort out ultra-leftism, but a part of the leadership who were already doubtful about the correctness of Bela Kun's and Pogany-Pepper's position, such as Landler and Rudas, had begun to take up





the struggle to correct these errors. The fight between the two factions broke out at the beginning of 1921. After the unfortunate 'March Action' in Germany, 'Bela Kun's act of stupidity' as Lenin called it, it took on a virulent form. We must stop at this episode for a moment in order to get a better grasp of Lenin's and Trotsky's conception and of the significance of the faction fight in the Hungarian Party and Lukacs' position.

In March 1921, Bela Kun as Zinoviev's emissary in Germany played a dominant role in unleashing the March Action, which led the revolutionary workers into an insurrectionary struggle without the Communists having been able to tear the majority from the reformists and centrists. The lessons of the 'March Action' clearly showed the futility of ultra-leftism—its negligence with regard to the masses of the proletariat, its criminal abandonment of seeking ways and means of winning the majority of the class, a majority which still followed the reformists and centrists. Much later, in *The Third International After Lenin*, Trotsky wrote of the March Action.

'In March 1921, the German Communist Party made the attempt to avail itself of the declining wave in order to overthrow the bourgeois state with a single blow. The guiding thought of the German Central Committee in this was to save the Soviet republic (the theory of socialism in one country had not yet been proclaimed at that time). But it turned out that the determination of the leadership and the dissatisfaction of the masses do not suffice for victory. There must obtain a number of other conditions, above all, a close bond between the leadership and the masses and the confidence of the latter in the leadership. This condition was lacking at that time.' (Vol. 1, p. 186 French ed.).



**Top: Joseph Pogany addressing troops in 1919. Above: Bela Kun in his study; Hungarian emigrés who enforced the ultra leftism that was already strong in the German KAPD and in Italy and England.**

It was necessary to march 'towards the conquest of power by previous conquest of the masses in their daily life and struggle'.

Lukacs' opinion is quite different; however, after Lenin's sharp letter and the second Congress of the International, he quickly splits from Bela Kun and joins the faction led by Landler and Rudas.

In his article 'Organizational Questions of Revolutionary Initiative', he wrote:

'It is not correct to say that the action of the German Communist Party was wrong, given that it was not grasped by the mass of the proletariat and, therefore the party was again led into isolation . . . The great weakness of the March Action (not in its "idea" but rather in its application) rests rather in this that it was not grasped rapidly, sufficiently by the revolutionary vanguard itself.' (*Werke*, op cit pp. 148-149.)

The contradiction between the ultra-leftists and Lenin and Trotsky is obvious. Whereas Trotsky stresses the necessity of politically winning the majority of the working class, what is essential for Lukacs is the understanding by a vanguard of the need to launch an assault for power. There we put our finger on the fundamental difference. From a revolutionary situation, the ultra-lefts, falling into a mechanical objectivism, conclude the inevitable victory of the revolutionary party, thanks to its determination and propaganda; whereas Lenin and Trotsky insisted that revolutionary victory is the work of the majority of the proletariat on condition that the revolutionary party conquers that majority by political means and not by simple propaganda.

In these conditions, the third Congress of the International, from June 22 to July 12, 1921, sharpened the struggle against ultra-leftism and the young parties' incomprehension of the struggle to win politically the working masses. The Congress generalized on the experience of the fight against ultra-leftism, making an important step forward with the elaboration of the strategy of the united front of the proletariat, as a method of winning the masses in conditions where the majority still followed the reformist and centrist leadership. Lenin and Trotsky led an implacable struggle for the united front against the ultra-left majority at the congress, one of whose leading spokesman was Bela Kun, with the German Thaelmann. Finally the Congress majority voted for Lenin's and Trotsky's line, and in the 'Theses on Tactics' declared:

'From the first day of its foundation, the Communist International gave itself the aim, clearly and without equivocation, not of forming tiny communist sects seeking to exercise their influence over the working class solely by agitation and propaganda, but to take part in the struggle of the working class, to guide this struggle in the communist sense and in the process of the struggle to build big revolutionary communist parties.'

It can be said without exaggeration that the battle against ultra-leftism—particularly for the young parties to go out to win the masses instead of mechanically concluding from an objective revolutionary situation the victory of the revolution and the party—this was one of the greatest that the International led by Lenin and Trotsky

had led. Of course, warning against opportunism, that other weakness of the young parties, Lenin and Trotsky did not speak of winning the masses at any price. As Trotsky later stated in the 'Third International After Lenin', the 'Third International did not simply say "Towards the masses", but "Towards power through the previous conquest of the masses" '.

In the course of the first four congresses of the International, the struggle to assimilate this line took on a more and more elaborate and generalized form. The second Congress stressed the importance of work among the masses in the trade unions and the use of parliament. The third Congress elaborated and adopted the strategy of the united front. And we must add at once that the fourth Congress was to adopt a resolution on the task of elaborating a transitional programme for the International.

In this resolution, we read :

'The theoretical foundations of all transitional partial demands must be formulated within the general programme. The fourth Congress is as resolutely against the attempt to represent the introduction of transitional demands into the programme as opportunism as it is against the attempt to tone down or replace fundamental revolutionary objectives by partial demands.'

This resolution of the fourth Congress was later to be buried, and only realized by Leon Trotsky elaborating the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International in 1938 which is, from this point of view, too, the continuation of the first four congresses of the Communist International.

Let us return to the struggle at the time of the Third Congress. Even during the congress, Trotsky wrote an article in *Pravda* where he characterized ultra-leftism and the review *Kommunismus* in the following way :

'A purely mechanical conception of the proletarian revolution—which proceeds solely from the fact that capitalist economy continues to decay—has led certain groups of comrades to construe theories which are false to the core: the false theory of an initiating minority which by its heroism shatters "the wall of universal passivity" among the proletariat. The false theory of uninterrupted offensives conducted by the proletarian vanguard, as a "new method" of struggle: the false theory of partial battles which are waged by applying the methods of armed insurrection. And so on and so forth. The clearest exponent of this tendency is the Vienna journal *Communism*. It is absolutely self-evident that tactical theories of this sort have nothing in common with Marxism.'

At the congress of the Youth International, on July 14, 1921, he continued :

'You are probably aware that there was advanced the so-called theory of the offensive. What is the gist of this theory—Its gist is that we have entered the epoch of the decomposition of capitalist society, in other words, the epoch when the bourgeoisie must be overthrown. How? By the offensive of the working class. In this purely abstract form it is unquestionably correct. But certain individuals have sought to convert this theoretical capital into corresponding currency of smaller denomination and they have declared that this offensive consists

of a successive number of smaller offensives. Thus arose the theory, whose clearest exponent is the Vienna journal *Communism*—the theory of pure offensive owing to the revolutionary character of the epoch.' (*First Five Years*, Vol. 1, pp. 296-303).

The faction struggle that was raging in the Hungarian party, particularly after the 3rd Congress of the International, was obstructing its work. In August 1921 the International had to intervene. The Executive Committee, after calling together the representatives of both factions, passed a resolution in accordance with the 3rd Congress, and then appointed a provisional central committee of five members, three of whom supported Bela Kun, and two from Landler's tendency, laying down for the party the struggle to apply the resolution on the basis of democratic centralism. Then, in the autumn, the faction struggle developed to the point where an opposition was formed which repudiated Bela Kun's leadership and founded its own journal. Its viewpoint was developed in Rudas' book, already cited, which was published in January 1922.

If in the early period, as a reaction to their opportunism in relation to the problem of the party in 1919, the Hungarian Communists had fallen into the inverse error of ultra-leftism, the struggle of the International was to develop a tendency against the incorrigible ultra-left adventurism of Bela Kun and Pogany-Pepper. Rudas' book, however, and the subsequent evolution of the party show that even this faction did not grasp the essence of the problem.

Bela Kun and his faction set out to build in the immediate future a mass communist party, leading whole sections of workers into offensive actions leading to large-scale arrests of party organizers, at the same time imposing a tactic which led to their expulsion from the trade unions. Rudas violently attacked this liquidationist and adventurist tactic. With the Landler faction, he advocated setting up illegal cells of communist workers, working in the trade unions and entering the legal social-democratic party where a strong opposition had, indeed, begun to form. Beyond a doubt, this conception, taken abstractly, was correct.

The arguments of this faction, however, remained typically ultra-left, in another form. Its proposed tactic was justified by the fact that in Hungary after the defeat, there was not an immediately revolutionary situation, and that for this faction the slogan 'conquest of the masses', along with the united front, was only applicable in a so-called defensive situation, at the time of the ebb of the revolution. This was precisely the position of Gorter, who in his pamphlet declared that work in the trade unions, the use of parliament and joining the legal workers' parties are only justified in conditions of illegality of the revolutionary party. (See his pamphlet op cit p. 85.) In short, this particular ultra-leftism held that

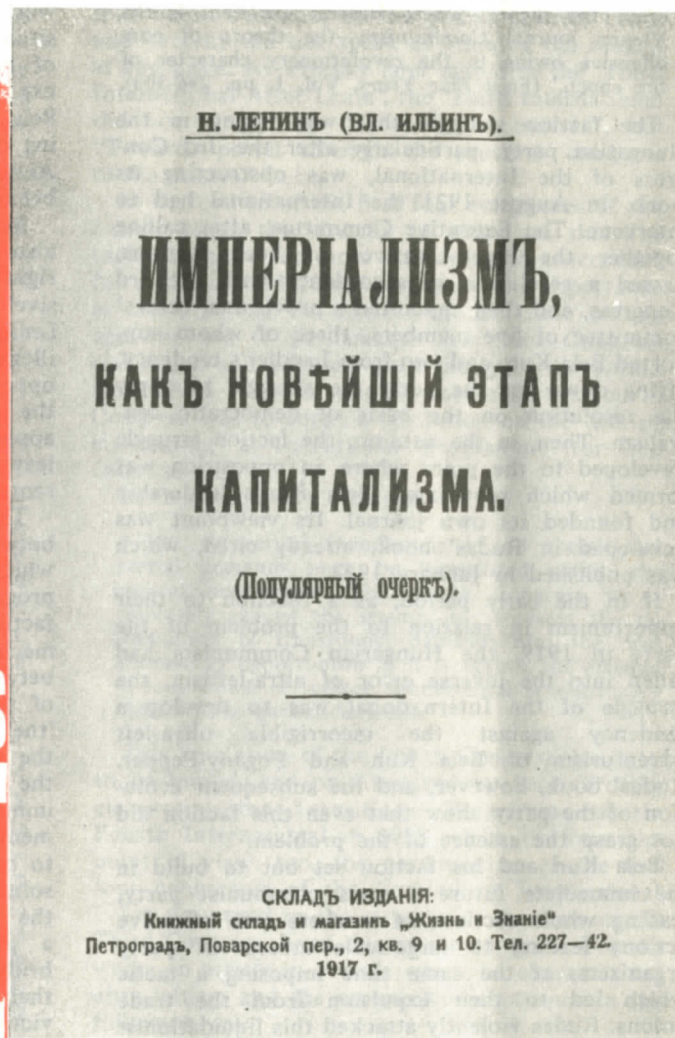
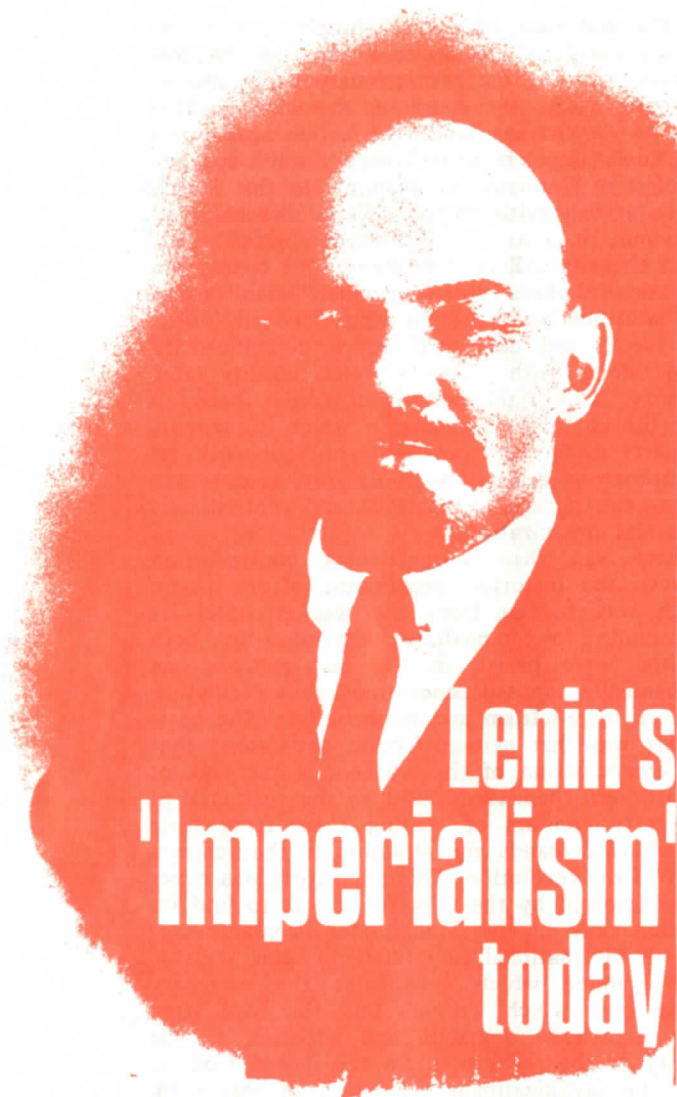
the 'material base of the revolution' is not 'the working class' as Trotsky said, but the objective situation carrying the revolutionary party, almost of necessity, at the head of the masses. This explains why the Landler-Rudas faction condemned Bela Kun's ultra-leftism in Hungary while approving of it in Germany for example. In the 'March Action' it only criticized Bela Kun's ill-considered behaviour, on a so to speak 'psychological' plane.

But there is still another thing: this conception also stated Lukacs' position, which established a rigid and mechanical opposition between 'offensive' tactics and 'defensive' tactics, denounced by Lenin along with that between legality and illegality. This rigid opposition comes back to opportunism in the measure in which it prevents the party using every possibility of legal work, its appearance as a party with its own programme, leaving this sphere to reformist and centrist currents and organization.

There was, then, a mechanical contradiction between the historical programme of the party, which was hidden from the workers, and its programme for immediate demands. So both factions were based, in the last analysis, on mechanically opposed conceptions, thus vacillating between ultra-leftism and opportunism. The basis of this was that neither faction understood that 'the emancipation of the workers is the task of the workers themselves', and so the real task of the party consists of leading them from their immediate demands and situation to the achievement of the revolution. This opposition was never to be resolved by the CPs, for it was to find its solution only in the Transitional Programme of the 4th International elaborated by Leon Trotsky, a programme which constitutes the necessary bridge over which workers find the road from their immediate demands and situation to the victory of the revolution. So the united front is only the organizational expression of this path, as the workers are divided by enemy organizations. Consequently, it is also the method of building real communist parties, with confidence in the masses.

For this reason, the strategy of revolution which mechanically opposes offensive and defensive tactics has no meaning.

We must stress that these problems constitute the basis of Lukacs' evolution. More exactly, they motivate his reversion to the anti-revolutionary person he had always been. In 1922, he had still not drawn definitive conclusions. But the fact that for him the revolutionary programme was only applied to an immediately revolutionary situation, which for him was something 'objective', already shows his personal 'solution' which will be the abandonment of every revolutionary programme, when, as he will say, the 'objective situation' is no longer revolutionary. Its real nature is expressed in the various studies which he published in 1923 in his book *History and Class Consciousness*.

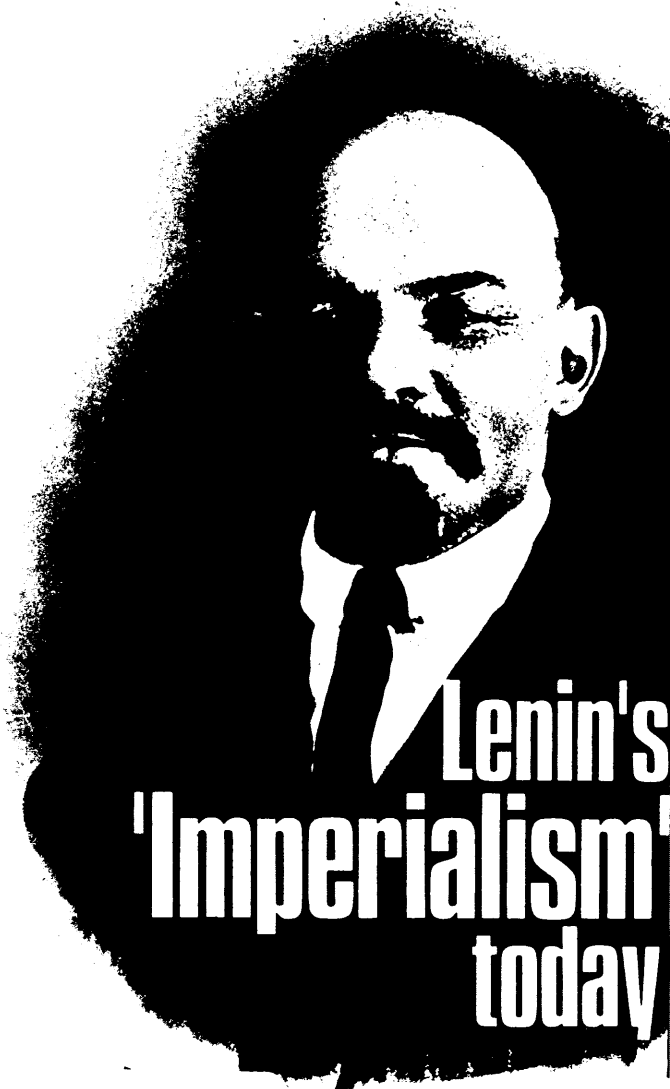


**by Tom Kemp**

LENIN'S *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, written in 1916, just over a year before the Russian Revolution, and sub-titled 'A Popular Outline', remains the fundamental Marxist critique of imperialism. This fact is recognized by the enemies and critics of Marxism who constantly seek to belittle and denigrate it, seldom with any real understanding of what Lenin was trying to do. For Marxists the work provides a characterization of the dominant forces of the epoch which conserves all its validity despite the great changes which have taken place in the world since 1916, changes which, in their main lines, represent the working out of the tendencies in capitalism which Lenin discerned. However, no Marxist can be satisfied simply with paying homage to Lenin's insight. Account has to be taken of the theoretical consequences of the Stalinist degeneration for the theory of imperialism. Fresh analysis has to be made of all the developments which have taken place since Lenin's day. *Imperialism* must be taken as a starting point and a methodological guide, not as a sacred text. It

should be remembered, above all, that Lenin's life demonstrates a close and inseparable combination of theory and practice; it was no accident that Lenin was able to go from the libraries of Zurich to lead a successful revolution. The theoretical work, of which the writing of *Imperialism* was but a part, enabled Lenin to grasp the significance of events in Russia and actually to change his conception of the nature of the Russian revolution.

Lenin did not write as an academic might, concerned simply with providing means to understand the complexities of historical change. Much of the search today for a theory of imperialism is apparently directed towards providing the historian with superior analytical tools, often not so much in order to deepen the understanding of a whole epoch, but rather to explain or interpret particular episodes in diplomatic history, colonial expansion or international rivalry. This was not Lenin's main purpose and only someone who supposes it was can test his theory in this way. His work can only be understood as part of a



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КАПИТАЛИЗМА.**

(Популярный очеркъ).

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campaign to re-arm the socialist movement after its disorientation by the actions of its leading representatives in August, 1914. As he put it in *Imperialism and the Split in Socialism*, written at about the same time:

'The only Marxist line in the world labour movement is to explain to the masses the inevitability and necessity of breaking with opportunism, to utilize the experiences of the war for the purpose of exposing all the vileness of the national-liberal labour politics and not of concealing it.'

### 'Self-censored'

As is well known, *Imperialism* itself was written in such a way as to get past the Tsarist censor: it is, in other words, a self-censored piece of writing. That makes it all the more necessary to consider it within the context of Lenin's political position at the time. This explains both the form which the work took—leaving the reader to draw the conclusions which the circumstances of the time imposed—and the omission from it of political recommendations. It was all the more remarkable that from a wide range of bourgeois sources, and using the works of Hobson and Hilferding, Lenin was able to provide what he called 'a composite picture [a phrase which Lenin himself emphasised] of the world capitalist system in its international relations at the beginning of the twentieth century. . .'. In the same preface, written in 1920, Lenin insists that a true understanding of the class character of the war and an exposure of the theoretical errors of the revisionists like Kautsky, was indispensable to prepare the Communist Parties for the impending social revolution. If nothing else, this preface removes any possibility of believing that Lenin was not intensely concerned with the political conclusions to be drawn from his analysis.

While it is true that Lenin was writing, as always, for a particular situation, to provide a theoretical answer to practical tasks, his work is neither merely a propagandist tract nor of no more than historical interest today as his bourgeois and 'left' detractors maintain. What Lukacs wrote about it in 1924 remains correct in essence: 'The superiority of Lenin consists in this—and that constitutes an unparalleled theoretical accomplishment—that he connected the economic theory of imperialism concretely and completely to all the current political problems and made of the economic content in this new phase the directing thread in all concrete actions in the world thus organized.' The weakness of most current 'left' writing about imperialism is precisely that it fails to establish this connection. It remains empirical, divorced from practice and in that sense abstract, providing no guide to action or simply sticking one on which does not arise at all from the fact as collected and processed. The work of Magdoff, Baran, Jalée, Frank and others falls into this category.

The significance of Lenin's *Imperialism* can only be grasped, and further theoretical contributions made, if we are engaged as Lenin himself was in the construction of a revolutionary movement to overthrow imperialism. To look at his work merely as a fine contribution to theory is to do what Lenin, in another of his works, said was often done to great revolutionaries after their death, when 'attempts are made to convert them into harmless ikons, to canonize them, so to say, and to surround their names with a certain halo for the "consolation" of the oppressed classes and with the object of duping the latter, while at the same time emasculating the essence of the revolutionary teaching, blunting its revolutionary edge and vulgarizing it'. This was precisely what the ideologists of the Soviet bureaucracy do with Lenin every day and did on an indecent scale with *Imperialism* itself during the centenary celebrations last year. Encomiums to the book were obligatory in the 'theoretical' publications of the Communist Parties throughout the world. Yet, through its policy of 'peaceful co-existence', and in many practical ways, the bureaucracy was upholding the existing division of the world resulting from the needs of imperialism and had thus become a counter-revolutionary instrument turned against the struggles of the working class in the countries dominated by imperialism. Since then, in Ceylon and Bengal in particular, it has openly lined up with bourgeois governments dependent upon imperialism in order to crush revolutionary movements and oppose the rights of self-determination for oppressed peoples which was, for Lenin, a vital corollary to his theory of imperialism.

To deal with the theory of imperialism in concrete contemporary terms thus requires an examination of all the problems of the epoch. It is not simply dealing with economic trends; however necessary it is to delineate these accurately and fully, it is also necessary to see how the economic penetrates the political, to grasp and understand the degeneration of the Soviet Union after Lenin's death, to recognize and struggle to overcome the crisis of leadership in the working-class movement through the building of the revolutionary movement. Only in such a way is it possible to continue Lenin's work as opposed to canonizing him and turning him into a 'harmless ikon'. The task of Marxist theoreticians is not to write better history than bourgeois historians, though that is necessary, but through the analysis they make of history to contribute to changing its course in a revolutionary way. It is from this standpoint that Lenin's *Imperialism* must be read and studied.

There is no need at this stage to summarise once again the contribution which Lenin made to the theory of imperialism. It is worth pointing out, however, that Lenin conceived his project as a collective task for the Marxist movement and

that while working on it he was in close contact with others who made their own independent contribution. This applies particularly to *Imperialism and World Economy* by N. I. Bukharin, to which Lenin wrote a preface, and to G. Zinoviev's *The War and the Crisis in Socialism* which was written in close political collaboration with him. These works drew on much the same material as Lenin and employ the same terminology, though they approach the question from different angles. Thus, for example, Zinoviev writes as follows:

'... when we speak of *modern imperialism*, we have in mind that imperialism which was raised on the soil of a *highly developed capitalism*, the imperialism of the capitalist bourgeoisie, that imperialism whose main prop is finance capital.

'The characteristic feature of modern imperialism is the interconnection between financial and industrial capital. To evaluate correctly the historic role of capitalism, it is necessary to differentiate between the various types of capital. ...'

### The re-creation of Lenin's tradition

Bukharin and Zinoviev were both victims of Stalin and their role in the formulation of the theory of imperialism was not simply forgotten, it was deliberately excised from the historical record. It is necessary to see Lenin's work as part of a theoretical tradition of Marxism which was all but destroyed during the Stalin era and which today has to be re-created. The quotation from Zinoviev is also pertinent to another issue. Non-Marxists, critics and opponents of Marxism regard their theory of imperialism as applying only to the epoch of highly developed capitalism. As Lenin puts it: 'if it were necessary to give the briefest possible definition of imperialism we should have to say that imperialism is the monopoly stage of capitalism'. Lenin's pamphlet is, after all, an explanation of this basic point which is amplified in the oft-quoted five 'basic features'.

Critiques of the Leninist theory, based on quite different definitions, have become a feature of the literature, but really pass beside the point. Anyone is entitled to draw up their own definition, but there has to be some consistency in its use thereafter. The Leninist definition is specific and selective, it is not a general theory applicable to all epoch, but relates to the current epoch of advanced capitalism: an epoch which Marxists maintain is one of its crisis and decline. The task of Marxist theory is to explain how the old competitive capitalism passed into a monopoly stage and to trace out all the social and political consequences—including the international rivalries and wars—which followed from this development.

When we turn to the problem of the development of the theory of imperialism since Lenin we are confronted not with the task of dealing with a great body of theoretical literature or with tracing out its influence but rather with explaining why Marxist theory as a whole was afflicted with a terrible blight which lasted for decades and

whose effects are still apparent today. On the one hand it could be claimed that the events of the 1920s and 1930s offered a striking confirmation of Lenin's characterization of the epoch of imperialism as one of wars and revolutions. The social upheavals which followed the First World War, the unprecedented depth and length of the Great Depression, the emergence, in the shape of fascism, of reaction in its most malignant form, the bitter inter-imperialist rivalries which plunged Europe and Asia into the most destructive conflicts in history, surpassed what even Lenin might have imagined on the assumption that capitalism would somehow secure for itself a new lease of life.

### No exoneration for Stalinism

The coincidence of this apparent confirmation of everything which Marxism had taught about the nature of the capitalist mode of production, its ripeness for removal from the historical stage, the conflict between the state forms taken by bourgeois rule and the development of the productive forces with the theoretical palsy of 'official' Marxism is at first sight a dramatic and tragic paradox. Observers like E. H. Carr, with some pretensions to objectivity, claim that it was because the working class in the capitalist countries were not ready to make a revolution.

The tendency of such explanations is to exonerate the Stalinist leadership of the Third International and the national Communist Parties from blame. But if we take this road how do we explain the theoretical bankruptcy which characterized official Marxism in this period? I have tried to show elsewhere the pitiful state of the theory of imperialism in this period and the general paucity of theoretical work on the subject. On the one hand there was official doctrine, as represented by the textbooks of political economy, a vulgarized version of Leninism doctored and distorted to serve the changing interests of the Soviet bureaucracy. Little or no fresh and original work could pierce surface once the Stalinist regime had turned to purging its opponents and turning Marxists like Zinoviev and Bukharin into non-persons. On the other hand, there were those intellectuals, outside the Soviet Union, attracted into the Communist Parties, or following in their wake, who tried to carry on some of the best of the intellectual tradition of Marxism. The price they paid for this, of which they were wholly or largely unaware of at the time, was heavy. It not only weakened their theoretical work but it required of them an abdication of any real share in influencing policy: there was, in fact a complete or near complete divorce between theory and practice.

With important works of Marxism no longer reprinted or consigned to the memory hole, how was fresh creative work possible? It is not only that the works of the Left Opposition were suppressed and put under the ban so that, for example, the valuable writings of Preobrazhensky



**Preobrazhensky :**  
put under the Stalinist ban

**Rosa Luxemburg :**  
suffered a similar fate

**Lukacs,**  
their works suppressed, only to be resurrected

**Gramsci :**

and others passed into oblivion. A similar fate was accorded to the work of Luxemburg and her school, directly relevant as it was to the theory of imperialism, to certain of the works of Lukacs, Gramsci and others which have been resurrected only in recent years to fill the enormous theoretical void in Marxist studies. For a whole epoch, then, Marxists carried on their theoretical work under severe constraints: either under the shadow of the apparatus if they remained inside the Communist Parties or accepted their political leadership, or as part of tiny opposition groups against which its whole might of propaganda, and if needs be of extermination, was turned. Instead of a straight fight between Marxism and the ideologists of capitalism there was a much more complex situation in which Marxist theory itself was going through a prolonged crisis.

The Second World War and its aftermath complicated the situation still further and introduced some new elements. For example, the crisis in bourgeois economic thought which had become acute during the depression was relieved by the appearance of Keynesian theory with its immediate policy applications and its apparent relevance to the problems of post-war capitalism. The pervasiveness of the Keynesian assumptions in intellectual circles brought their influence into much ostensibly Marxist literature about the development of capitalism. On the practical side, the fact that the expected post-war slump did not take place, that capitalism entered onto a phase of expanded reproduction again, that further structural changes took place within the corporate business order and that the old territorial empires were dismantled provided, a fertile soil for theories which contested the relevance of Marxism from new angles and for revisionism on the part of erstwhile or self-styled Marxists. The repetition by the 'orthodox' of theory as dogma and the introduction of opportunist revisions to accord with the needs of the Soviet bureaucracy first

during the Yalta-Potsdam honeymoon, then during the Cold War and latterly under the umbrella of 'peaceful co-existence', further served to confuse the issue.

Imperialism survives not as a result of its inherent strength but because of the crisis of leadership in the working-class movement. An analysis of history since 1914 would demonstrate this. Through a series of wars and revolutionary crises bourgeois rule has been saved by the open betrayals first of the leaders of Social Democracy and the trade unions, then of the Communist Parties under Stalinist leadership. These leaderships have become necessary supports for the maintenance of the capitalist ruling class and its system of exploitation and oppression, productive of still further wars and upheavals. True, within this period structural changes have taken place in capitalism, but the student of Lenin's *Imperialism* sees in them the working out and extension of the tendencies in monopoly capitalism which he discerned. Anti-Marxists and revisionists have used all their ingenuity to find new terms to describe these developments in such a way as to disguise their essence and to mislead their readers into thinking that imperialism has indeed given place to some newer stage of capitalism or that capitalism has been replaced by something else. For the Stalinists it is 'state monopoly capitalism', for Galbraith the 'techno-structure', for one set of revisionists the 'permanent arms economy', for another 'neo-capitalism'. All aim to show that capitalism has acquired a new lease of life for a more or less extended period and that any revolutionary perspective, at least in the advanced metropolitan countries, must be indefinitely postponed. No wonder such latter-day Kautskys avoid a detailed examination of Lenin's work which they prefer to ignore or dismiss with a few phrases. There is not one of the so-called new tendencies of capitalism which cannot be explained in terms of Lenin's 'basic features' of imperialism.





**Hilderding :**  
Lenin drew from his work

**Galbraith :**  
Invented new terms for Imperialism

**Frank :**  
both failed to connect the economic theory of Imperialism to current political problems

**Magdoff,**

Of course, it is the task of Marxist political economy to deal as precisely and concretely as possible with the trends in post-war capitalism and the changes which have taken place in imperialism. It is necessary to show what the consequences of the crisis of leadership have been, i.e. the terrible price which has had to be paid for the prolongation of the existence of capitalism owing to the treachery of the reformists, Stalinists and revisionists. This balance-sheet cannot be drawn up on the basis of the gains made by sections of the working class in the advanced countries during the boom, which is the typical procedure of all the revisors and enemies of Marxism. The ability of the capitalist mode of production, once these betrayals had established the conditions for its survival, to undergo a further period of extended reproduction involved a heavy price which the bourgeoisie intends to exact increasingly from the working class even in the hitherto privileged areas. But still more, the measure must be taken of the costs in human misery and death which this has meant in the underdeveloped countries, costs which are so enormous as to be incalculable. Meanwhile, all the contradictions built up during a long period of inflationary full employment and heavy expenditure on armaments and war preparations are now coming forward to prepare the way for world monetary breakdown and economic slump of which the first signs have been visible since 1969.

In the writing on imperialism which has appeared in 'left' circles in recent years a certain amount of progress has been made, in a purely empirical way, in showing how Lenin's definition of imperialism remains the only one which enables the trends in contemporary capitalism to be understood. However, this writing, such as the books and articles of Magdoff, Jalée, Frank, Baran and others, has done little to advance the *theoretical* understanding of imperialism and because of this it has been able to make no con-

tribution to the tactics and strategy of the Marxist movement. Such theorists either try to remain 'independent' Marxists or they are, in practice, camp-followers of Maoism or Stalinism. They have been mainly trying to convince an intellectual public that imperialism still exists and is a bad thing. At the same time they have for the most part simply written off the role of the working class in the advanced countries and accept the position of Baran and Sweezy that :

'The revolutionary initiative against capitalism, which in Marx's day belonged to the proletariat in the advanced countries, has passed into the hands of the impoverished masses in the under-developed countries, who are struggling to free themselves from imperialist domination and exploitation.'

Such a false view both of the lack of revolutionary capacity of the working class in the advanced countries and of the ability of the oppressed masses in the colonial and semi-colonial countries to strike decisive blows at the imperialist world system reflects a non-Marxist, petty-bourgeois radical position which goes back from Lenin to Hobson, or adopts a Luxemburgist position on the conditions for capitalist reproduction.

Marxist strategy, especially since the early Congresses of the Communist International, has always accorded an important position to the struggle against imperialism waged by the peasant and worker masses in the colonial and semi-colonial countries. It has always insisted, however, that the decisive blows against imperialism must be struck in the metropolitan countries. The combination of the crisis of leadership with the conditions of the boom produced in 'left' intellectual critics of capitalism, who claimed to be Marxists, a turning away from the basic Marxist concept of the working class as the revolutionary class with an historic role to overthrow capitalism and replace it by a new and higher social formation, namely socialism. According again to the very typical representatives of this school,

Baran and Sweezy, 'the American working class and their organized cores in the basic industries have to a large extent been integrated into the system as consumers and ideologically conditioned members of society'. It is, of course, Baran and Sweezy who place the working class in the ranks of 'consumers' instead of beginning, as materialists, with the objective position of the class in the productive relations of capitalism. In fact, their position, at least in this sentence, is to deny the existence of the working class as a class and to abandon Marxism altogether. This, of course, had been done more openly by other 'New Left' ideologists such as Marcuse.

## The role of the working class and its party

It is clear that there can be no understanding of the contradictions of imperialism, let alone of projecting a means of fighting against it, on the part of people who, for all their 'anti-imperialism', cannot recognize the role of the working class and therefore do not see any need to build a revolutionary party to lead this class to power. Thus 'left' writings about imperialism have reached an impasse. Formally they recognize the Leninist theory, but they emasculate it by separating it off from its revolutionary practice and therefore render it sterile. They tag along behind whatever movement looks revolutionary at the moment—Castroism, Maoism, the student radicals, black nationalism—but get no higher than radical protest because they do not believe that imperialism is really in a crisis.

Events during and since 1968—'life itself'—have struck heavy blows against these revisionist tendencies and have made necessary some adjustments, at least in words, to take account of the working-class struggles in the European capitalist countries and the USA. Even Marcuse who, by an ironic twist, was present at the UNESCO farce in Paris to ikonize Marx at the very time when the May events were beginning, had to revise his paper when published to bring in the working class, when it is no longer 'the prisoner of its own integration and of bureaucratic trade union and party apparatus supporting this integration'—not, be it said as a class *for itself* but as a *supporter* of the ghetto population, the students and the intellectuals whom he still sees as the main instrument of social change. The fact is that the working class has been challenging the right of the bourgeoisie to rule all over Europe in a series of revolutionary confrontations of which the events in France were the beginning. Behind these events lies the deepening and insoluble crisis of imperialism which the bourgeoisie desperately tries to solve on the backs of the working class.

The vindication of Lenin's work goes much further than verifying certain theses put forward in *Imperialism*, but it is clearly fundamental that it has stood the test of experience and remains the starting point for a Marxist understanding of the dominant forces in the present epoch. This can be seen if we take a number of tendencies

which even bourgeois theorists and publicists are bound to take account of and which have, indeed, promoted a new and more serious interest in Marxism in academic and intellectual circles in the capitalist countries. For example, there is the growing concentration of economic and political power in the giant monopolies and banks which dominate the economic life of the capitalist countries today. Where but in Lenin and the works of other Marxists was such a development foreseen? The great interest being shown by bourgeois economists in the 'multi-national corporations' testifies in the same direction. The old textbook concepts of marginal utility economics are helpless to grasp what is involved in such massive concentrations of power operating on an international scale. Again, it is increasingly apparent that political 'independence' has not permitted the colonies and semi-colonies of the old territorial empires to extricate themselves from dependence upon the capitalist world market, and specifically from the stranglehold of the big extra-territorial monopolies which are the main agents of imperialism. Economic growth on independent lines, or indeed on any other, has proved to be the biggest swindle of the post-war period. Poverty and stagnation remain endemic over two-thirds of the globe dominated by imperialism, condemning the people who live in those countries to slow death through malnutrition if not a rapid one through starvation and disease.

## The manifestation of the imperialist crisis

How has the crisis of imperialism manifested itself since the Second World War?

1. The territorial area available to imperialism has diminished. To a greater extent than before 1939, world capitalism has had to face the challenge of a rival world system. Open conflict at the periphery has been accompanied by permanent international tension requiring heavy expenditure on armaments.

2. Threatened by the national liberation struggle in the colonies and semi-colonies the old empires have been dissolved. A new but highly unstable equilibrium has been established with the handing over of political power to national bourgeois governments which have become, in fact, the guarantors of the investment interests of the big corporations in the newly-created states. Still tied to the world market dominated by the advanced capitalist countries, these countries remain in a state of economic dependence and are unable to overcome the problems of poverty and stagnation which they have inherited from their colonial past.

3. The imperialist world system now has its centre not in Europe but in the United States, a country which has never had more than a few minor colonies. The USA thus draws into itself all the problems of world capitalism and is at the same time directly concerned in its preservation,

not excluding the possibility of retaking the areas occupied by non-capitalist states. At the same time, the search for new fields for the realization of surplus value and the accumulation of capital creates rivalries and tensions between the United States and the older capitalist countries of Europe, as it seeks to maintain the rate of profit at the expense of its competitors in the international market.

4. World expansion of capitalism had as its root the reconstruction of the war-torn areas made possible through the outflow of US dollars. Continued expansion during the sixties was connected inseparably with the continuation of this outflow, the weakening of the dollar and the continuous crisis of the world monetary system of which it remained the key currency.

5. If on the one side the world system of capitalism has been kept expansive by the continued willingness of the United States to supply dollars, on the other side it has been undermined by the inflationary pressures and currency disorders which this has inevitably generated. No less important, indeed basic to the whole process, has been the strength of the working class in the advanced countries, founded upon high levels of

employment and the ability of trade unions to win regular wage increases.

6. Imperialism has been in continuous decline and crisis as a world system since 1914. It is no longer able to develop the productive forces. It is no longer able to offer a tolerable future for mankind. All over its sphere of influence civil war remains open or endemic below the surface; class confrontations on an unprecedented scale have been taking place since 1968.

7. The ruling classes of the capitalist countries have now very little room for manoeuvre either in the metropolitan countries or in the dependent countries. There are few possibilities for increasing the exploitation of the less developed countries and the intolerable conditions of existence which prevail in them keep them in a constant state of political ferment. The buying off of the working class in the advanced countries has now produced an uncontrollable inflation which threatens the major currencies with disaster. The needs of capital now conflict with the demands and expectations of the working class. The crisis of imperialism comes to a new climax; the need for revolutionary leadership thus becomes paramount. As Lenin put it in 1920: 'Imperialism is the eve of the social revolution of the proletariat.'

# Defeat imperialist conspiracy against Bangla Desh

BENGALI resistance to the barbaric Yahya Khan regime and the heritage of imperialist partition in India has entered a decisive stage with the intervention of Indian armed forces.

It is now only a matter of time before the combined forces of the Mukti Bahini and the Indian army crush the Pakistan troops in Bangla Desh and occupy Dacca.

The International Committee of the Fourth International was the only organization to support in a principled manner the right of Bangla Desh to secede from Pakistan.

It now stands unreservedly for the defeat of the hated Pakistan army and the liberation of Bangla Desh—as a prelude to the voluntary and revolutionary unification of India on socialist foundations.

The ICFI supports completely the right of the E Bengali people to solicit the support of capitalist and workers' states in their struggle to eliminate Pakistani oppression.

We critically support the decision of the Indian bourgeois government to give military and economic aid to Bangla Desh. We condemn the attempt of US imperialism to stop the conflict through UN intervention and the threatened cessation of economic aid to India.

US imperialism is determined to utilize the Indo-Pakistan conflict to weaken the Indian economy, as its decision to cut off arms supplies shows.

It wants to facilitate the unlimited penetration of US finance capital into India and the installation of a more docile regime in New Delhi.

This is part of US imperialism's global strategy to contain and push back the developing anti-imperialist

struggles of the SE Asian workers and peasants.

At the same time the ICFI urge Indian and Bengali socialists to place no confidence whatever in the capacity of the Bengali and Hindu bourgeoisie to carry through any of the tasks of the Indian democratic revolution.

Behind Mrs Gandhi stand the Hindu fanatics of Jan Sangh and big-business interests who wish to annexe E Bengal, and take back the profitable jute and tea industries which they lost after partition.

Having co-opted a large proportion of the right-wing Awami League leadership in Calcutta, the Indian bourgeoisie and landlords will—after victory over Pakistan—seek to impose their rule through Awami League collaborators.

At the same time they will try to ruthlessly repress any revolutionary tendencies around the Mukti Bahini as well as preventing any movement towards the revolutionary unification of E and W Bengal.

That is why up to now the Congress movement has refused to recognize the Republic of Bangla Desh.

It also explains its manoeuvres with the National Awami Party of Maulana Bashani, in order to isolate and destroy those groups who are not prepared to subordinate themselves to the economic and strategic aims of the Hindu ruling class.

The ferocious repression of the Naxalites in W Bengal—with the intervention of the Indian government on the side of Mrs Bandaranaike against the Ceylonese rural uprising in April—is convincing proof of the reactionary nature of the Indian bourgeoisie.

Another and even more fundamental reason for Indian intervention is the

deadly fear of the mass uprising which the Pakistani occupation has provoked, and the threat that this uprising will spill over into W Bengal.

The ICFI warn the Bengali workers' and peasants' revolutionaries.

They must organize themselves separately and maintain their political independence from the Awami League bourgeoisie and the Stalinists.

These tendencies seek to undermine their struggle and place them at the mercy of Delhi—in the same way as they previously accepted Rawalpindi rule.

Revolutionaries must combine the national struggle with the fight for an uncompromising re-division of the land in the interests of the poor peasants, the nationalization of industry and the setting-up of a workers' and peasants' government.

The workers and peasants will be compelled to struggle against the plans of the Indian bourgeoisie and will need the support of the working class of India and the rest of the world.

Determined mobilization and action of the masses themselves in Bangla Desh, the building of an alternative revolutionary leadership of the working class; these are the immediate needs of the workers of Bangla Desh.

The ICFI condemns unequivocally the role of Peking and Moscow Stalinism, which have refused to recognize the Bangla Desh Republic and has betrayed the national aspirations of the Bengali people.

- Long live the Bangla Desh Revolution!
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# Withdraw troops! No compromise! Build revolutionary Marxist party!

BRITISH imperialism has established military control in N Ireland as the only way to preserve the reactionary Unionist government. Internment without trial and shooting on sight are inflicted on the traditionally Catholic working-class areas.

Under the protection of this military dictatorship, neo-fascist organizations have armed and drilled sections of the Protestant middle class and backward Protestant workers.

The British ruling class has always used Ireland as a base for its most reactionary aims. In the epoch of capitalist decay this is just as true. As the British working class is faced with the task of reviving in new form its revolutionary traditions, so the ruling class whips up the reactionary forces in Ulster out of the most reactionary traditions.

The British working class, in its preparation to bring down the Tory government and take power, must of necessity take responsibility for the struggle of the Irish workers against that same imperialist establishment. The Irish workers now have the first great chance of ending imperialist oppression, as their crisis coincides with the posing of revolutionary tasks before the working class in Britain.

Behind the acceleration of reaction in N Ireland lies the worsening economic crisis. The Catholic workers, the most oppressed section, started to fight against the Unionist government as the boom came to an end. The horrifying prospect now facing Unionism and British imperialism in Ireland is that the Protestant workers in engineering and ship repair, forced into struggle against the Westminster and Stormont governments by the deepening crisis, will reject Unionism and Paisleyism, which cannot answer these problems, and fight alongside the Catholic workers.

This is the reality behind the appearance that Protestant-Catholic divisions predominate. It was because the 50-year-long Unionist grip on the working class began to loosen in face of the economic and social crisis that Paisleyism sprang up in the 1960s. It is the worsening crisis now which makes Paisley turn his attention to demagogic calls for action against unemployment.

The very same factors are at work in the Irish Republic. In face of the rise in working-class militancy since 1966, and with the prospect of even greater struggles because of the worsening crisis and Common Mar-

ket entry, the Irish bourgeois parties resort yet again to nationalism to divert the struggle.

There is no way out for the bourgeoisie on this road. By turning the attention of the workers to the N, they unwittingly prepare for an even greater explosion, because these struggles will combine. The treachery of the social-democrats in Ireland is revealed by the Irish Labour Party's strategy of working for coalition with the bourgeois Fine Gael party.

In the N and in the S, the main question, and the main responsibility facing the Irish section of the Fourth International is to establish the political independence of the working class from the bourgeoisie and all its agencies.

The International Committee supports the right of all oppressed peoples, including the Irish people, to fight with whatever methods and weapons they decide. In the struggle against the army and police of British imperialism, the working class of Britain and every other country cannot be neutral, and takes the side of the oppressed.

At the same time, the Irish section of the Fourth International must struggle for those methods and those actions which advance the political independence of the working class.

The IRA's methods will not defeat British imperialism and, if they are not opposed, will lead to defeat. The Catholic masses in the

N provide support for the individual terrorism of the Provisionals, just as they supported the Civil Rights marchers, only because the Labour and trade union leaders have provided no leadership or means of expression for the upsurge of the working class against the Unionist government.

Those revisionists who support the nationalists are playing into the hands of the bourgeoisie, whose purpose is to tie the Catholic workers to the bourgeois parties in Dublin and, above all, prevent the gaining of working-class political independence. They obstruct the task of forging unity with the Protestant workers. The Provisionals' campaign of forcing direct rule from Westminster through acts of terror is a cynical use of the Catholic workers under conditions of grave danger, with the sole aim of creating the conditions for a deal directly between the Irish and British bourgeoisie.

The role of the British Labour leaders and their Stalinist apologists is to serve directly the interests of the big bourgeoisie. They sent the troops into Ireland, and they now act as the open representatives of the Tory government in completing the 'military solution'. The campaign in Britain to get the imperialist troops out of Ireland coincides with the struggle for alternative revolutionary leadership, to throw out the Labour traitors in the

course of the struggle to bring down the Tory government.

Only the working class united behind revolutionary Marxist leadership will abolish the border in Ireland, establish a united Irish Republic, and settle the problem of the democratic rights of religious minorities.

The bourgeoisie, N and S, seeks only for the best way of accommodating to British imperialism and settling accounts with a working class which they must at all costs keep divided. The fight of the workers in the N against unemployment and poverty, and in defence of their trade unions and their democratic rights, a struggle against the governments at Stormont and at Westminster, undoubtedly coincides with that of the British working class, and with the need of the workers in Eire to overthrow the bourgeois parties which have enslaved them since partition.

It is fear of this prospect which now throws together the right-wing politicians on both sides of the border. Lynch and his Ministers make overtures to Paisley, who they hope can control the Protestant workers better than can the discredited Faulkner.

The IRA Provisionals' spokesman, O'Connell, has appealed to Paisley to establish his party among Catholics. Paisley has uttered what would once have been impossible words for him: a united Ireland.

This is the bourgeois vision of a united Ireland: controlled by ultra-right parties and tied to British imperialism.

The International Committee calls upon all sections of the British labour movement to demand the immediate withdrawal of troops from Ireland.

It calls upon Irish workers, Protestant and Catholic, to join the 'Right to Work' campaign of the Young Socialists and Socialist Labour League.

It calls upon the workers of N Ireland to unite in their trade unions in defence of their living standards and basic rights.

Above all, the International Committee calls upon all revolutionary fighters in the youth and working class in Ireland to join the Irish section of the Fourth International, to fight for the political independence of the working class and for Marxist theory against all the agencies of bourgeois ideology, from the churches to the Stalinists and revisionists.

The Irish section of the FI will establish its leadership in the fight for the unity of the Irish working class, and the unity of the Irish and British working classes against the common enemy. It is because that unity can now be forged that the long history of defeats of the Irish people's struggle against imperialism can now be ended.

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There is no way out for the bourgeoisie on this road. By turning the attention of the workers to the N, they unwittingly prepare for an even greater explosion, because these struggles will combine. The treachery of the social-democrats in Ireland is revealed by the Irish Labour Party's strategy of working for coalition with the bourgeois Fine Gael party.

In the N and in the S, the main question, and the main responsibility facing the Irish section of the Fourth International is to establish the political independence of the working class from the bourgeoisie and all its agencies.

The International Committee supports the right of all oppressed peoples, including the Irish people, to fight with whatever methods and weapons they decide. In the struggle against the army and police of British imperialism, the working class of Britain and every other country cannot be neutral, and takes the side of the oppressed.

At the same time, the Irish section of the Fourth International must struggle for those methods and those actions which advance the political independence of the working class.

The IRA's methods will not defeat British imperialism and, if they are not opposed, will lead to defeat. The Catholic masses in the

N provide support for the individual terrorism of the Provisionals, just as they supported the Civil Rights marchers, only because the Labour and trade union leaders have provided no leadership or means of expression for the upsurge of the working class against the Unionist government.

Those revisionists who support the nationalists are playing into the hands of the bourgeoisie, whose purpose is to tie the Catholic workers to the bourgeois parties in Dublin and, above all, prevent the gaining of working-class political independence. They obstruct the task of forging unity with the Protestant workers. The Provisionals' campaign of forcing direct rule from Westminster through acts of terror is a cynical use of the Catholic workers under conditions of grave danger, with the sole aim of creating the conditions for a deal directly between the Irish and British bourgeoisie.

The role of the British Labour leaders and their Stalinist apologists is to serve directly the interests of the big bourgeoisie. They sent the troops into Ireland, and they now act as the open representatives of the Tory government in completing the 'military solution'. The campaign in Britain to get the imperialist troops out of Ireland coincides with the struggle for alternative revolutionary leadership, to throw out the Labour traitors in the

course of the struggle to bring down the Tory government.

Only the working class united behind revolutionary Marxist leadership will abolish the border in Ireland, establish a united Irish Republic, and settle the problem of the democratic rights of religious minorities.

The bourgeoisie, N and S, seeks only for the best way of accommodating to British imperialism and settling accounts with a working class which they must at all costs keep divided. The fight of the workers in the N against unemployment and poverty, and in defence of their trade unions and their democratic rights, a struggle against the governments at Stormont and at Westminster, undoubtedly coincides with that of the British working class, and with the need of the workers in Eire to overthrow the bourgeois parties which have enslaved them since partition.

It is fear of this prospect which now throws together the right-wing politicians on both sides of the border. Lynch and his Ministers make overtures to Paisley, who they hope can control the Protestant workers better than can the discredited Faulkner.

The IRA Provisionals' spokesman, O'Connell, has appealed to Paisley to establish his party among Catholics. Paisley has uttered what would once have been impossible words for him: a united Ireland.

This is the bourgeois vision of a united Ireland: controlled by ultra-right parties and tied to British imperialism.

The International Committee calls upon all sections of the British labour movement to demand the immediate withdrawal of troops from Ireland.

It calls upon Irish workers, Protestant and Catholic, to join the 'Right to Work' campaign of the Young Socialists and Socialist Labour League.

It calls upon the workers of N Ireland to unite in their trade unions in defence of their living standards and basic rights.

Above all, the International Committee calls upon all revolutionary fighters in the youth and working class in Ireland to join the Irish section of the Fourth International, to fight for the political independence of the working class and for Marxist theory against all the agencies of bourgeois ideology, from the churches to the Stalinists and revisionists.

The Irish section of the FI will establish its leadership in the fight for the unity of the Irish working class, and the unity of the Irish and British working classes against the common enemy. It is because that unity can now be forged that the long history of defeats of the Irish people's struggle against imperialism can now be ended.

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