

Fourth International

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

Volume 9 No. 4 Price 45 pence

Winter 1975-76



Wohlforth,
Hansen and
Bourgeois
Democracy

International
Committee
statement on the
Portuguese
coalition

Stalinism and the
liberation of
Vietnam (part two)



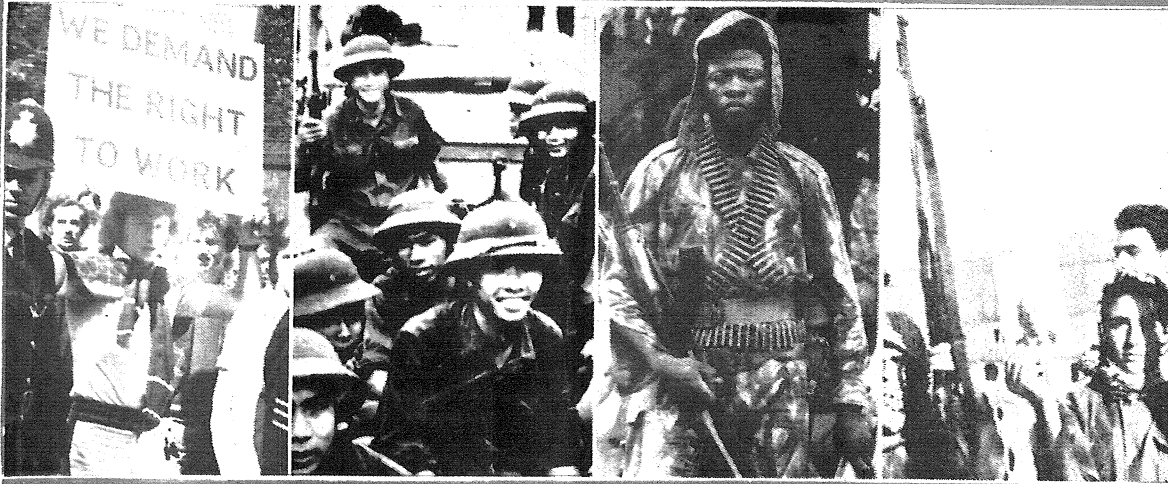
FIRST WORLD CONFERENCE OF REVOLUTIONARY YOUTH

Fourth International

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

Volume 9 No. 4 Price 45 pence

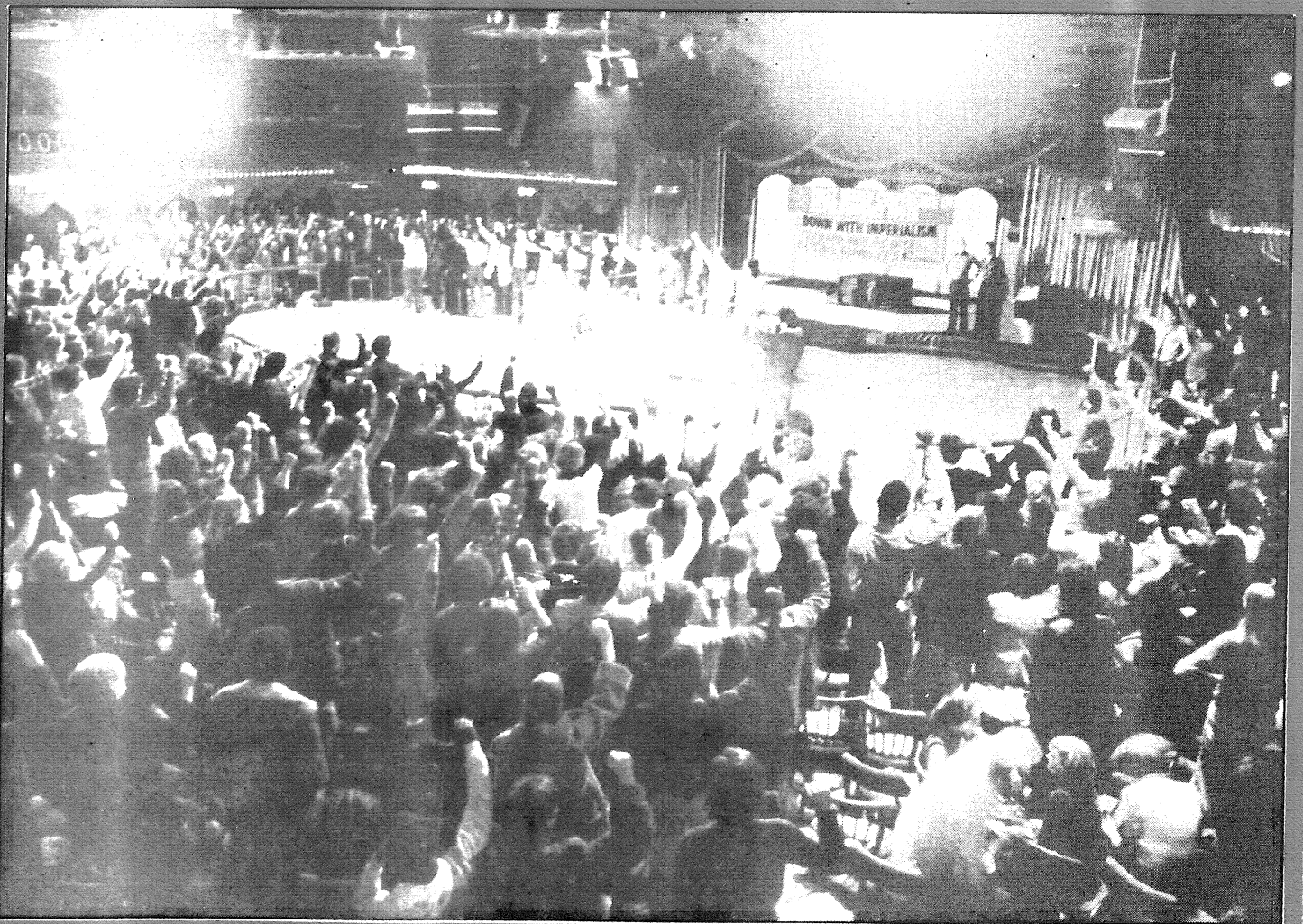
Winter 1975-76



Wohlforth,
Hansen and
Bourgeois
Democracy

International
Committee
statement on the
Portuguese
coalition

Stalinism and the
liberation of
Vietnam (part two)



FIRST WORLD CONFERENCE OF REVOLUTIONARY YOUTH

PAPERBACKS CENTRE

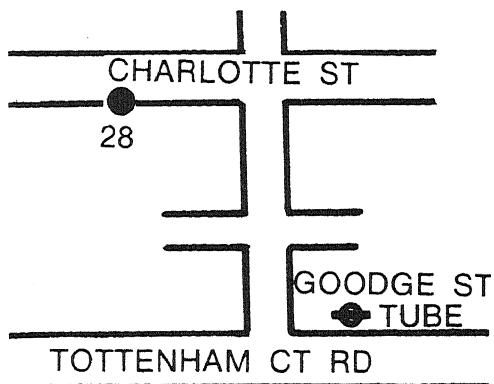
28 Charlotte St
London W1



NOW OPEN
Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs
9 a.m.—6 p.m.
Fri 9 a.m.—7.30 p.m.
Sat 9 a.m.—5 p.m.



BOOKS PERIODICALS NEWSPAPERS



**Come in and
browse around!
No obligation to buy!
We look forward
to seeing you!**

Fourth International

A JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL MARXISM

VOLUME 9 NUMBER 4 WINTER 1975-76

EDITORS: TOM KEMP, CLIFF SLAUGHTER

155 *Editorial*

Wohlforth, Hansen and Bourgeois Democracy 157 *C. Slaughter*

Letter to Joseph Hansen 161 *International Committee 23/10/75*

The Soares-Cunhal-Alzevedo Coalition 163 *International Committee 13/12/75*

The LCPR and the renegade Domingos Neto 167 *Liga pela Construçac do Partido Revolucionario*

Statement 169 *Revolutionary Communist League (Sri Lanka) 2/9/75*

From Slump to Crash! No Return to the 1930s 172 *'Socialist Challenge' Editorial Board (Greece)*

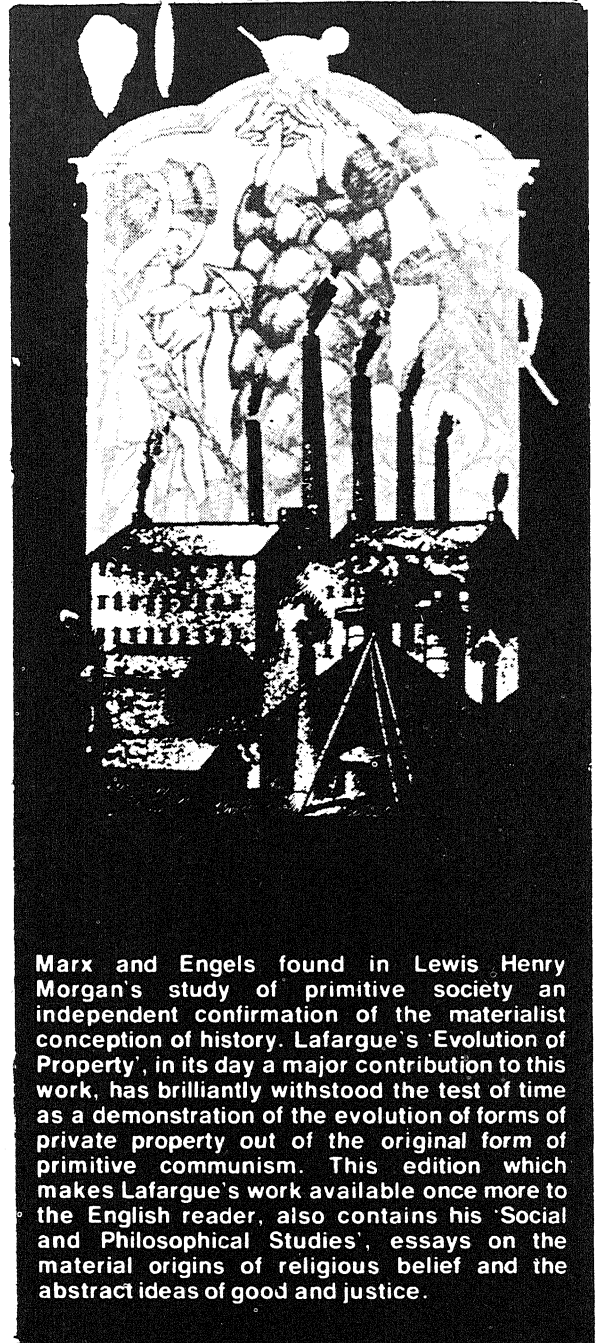
Stalinism and the liberation of Vietnam (part ii) 175 *Stephen Johns*

PUBLISHED BY
THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE FOURTH
INTERNATIONAL
186a CLAPHAM HIGH STREET, LONDON, SW4 7UG

The EVOLUTION of PROPERTY

SOCIAL &
PHILOSOPHICAL
STUDIES

PAUL LAFARGUE



Marx and Engels found in Lewis Henry Morgan's study of primitive society an independent confirmation of the materialist conception of history. Lafargue's 'Evolution of Property', in its day a major contribution to this work, has brilliantly withstood the test of time as a demonstration of the evolution of forms of private property out of the original form of primitive communism. This edition which makes Lafargue's work available once more to the English reader, also contains his 'Social and Philosophical Studies', essays on the material origins of religious belief and the abstract ideas of good and justice.

Available from Paperbacks Centre, 28 Charlotte St, London W1, or by post from New Park Publications, 186a Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UG. Price £1.50 plus 18p postage.

Name _____

Address _____

Amount enclosed _____

6 Sceptics ask: but has the moment for the creation of the Fourth International yet arrived? It is impossible they say, to create an International "artificially"; it can only arise out of great events, etc., etc. All of these objections merely show that the sceptics are not good for the building of a new International. They are good for scarcely anything at all.

The Fourth International has already arisen out of great events: the greatest defeats of the proletariat in history. The cause of these defeats is to be found in the degeneration and perfidy of the old leadership. The class struggle does not tolerate an interruption. The Third International, following the Second, is dead for the purposes of revolution. Long live the Fourth International!

But has the time yet arrived to proclaim its creation? . . . the sceptics are not quieted down. The Fourth International, we answer, has no need of being "proclaimed". It exists and it fights. Is it weak? Yes, its ranks are not numerous because it is still young. They are as yet chiefly cadres. But these cadres are pledges for the future. Outside of these cadres there does not exist a single revolutionary current on this planet really meriting the name. If our International still be weak in numbers, it is strong in doctrine, programme, tradition, in the incomparable tempering of its cadres. Who does not perceive this today, let him in the meantime stand aside. Tomorrow it will become more evident. ♪

Trotsky's words of 1938 were profoundly confirmed in London in November 1975 when 700 revolutionary youth from 23 countries assembled to found the International Youth Committee of the Fourth International. It marked a decisive historic step towards building the world party of socialist revolution, the founding ambition of the Fourth International. The manifesto unanimously passed by the conference states: 'The founding conference of the International Youth Committee of the Fourth International calls upon the youth of every country in the world to join the struggle to overthrow world imperialism and build the world party of socialist revolution. Let the heroic struggle of the Vietnamese youth be our inspiration! Without successful proletarian revolutions and the destruction of the capitalist system, the working class and youth face a future without hope or opportunity.'

The founding of the revolutionary youth international is an achievement of which our movement can be justly proud. The Stalinists dare not hold such a conference, the revisionists could not. Youth come from the United States, Canada, Haiti, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, Chile, Peru, Brazil, Australia, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, Greece, Italy, Cyprus, Spain, Portugal, France, West Germany, Sweden, Yugoslavia, Ireland and Britain. They shared common experiences in the struggle against the ruling class. It truly demonstrated that the international

capitalist crisis knows no national boundaries — it is a world system of violence and exploitation that must be smashed by the working class and replaced by workers' states and socialist planned economies.

The revolutionary youth conference climaxed a year in which the slump intensified throughout the capitalist world. In the United States unemployment rose to over 9 million, with 30 per cent of black youth jobless. New York City verged on the brink of bankruptcy, and capital investment fell by 10 per cent. The unelected crisis-ridden Ford administration lurched into the presidential election year with its foreign policy — based on 'detente' with the Stalinist bureaucracy — in tatters and its domestic plans running into the blunt resistance of the American working class.

Japan registered a record number of bankruptcies — 8 per cent up on the previous year — with a heavy fall in industrial investment, the first since the Second World War. In spite of no less than three reflationary injections, the 'miracle' economy of West Germany plunged deeper into slump. By the year's end there were one and a quarter million workers unemployed with a further 800,000 on short time. The Gross National Product fell by 3.5 per cent. In France, the jobless rose to more than one million for the first time since the 1930s. The legacy of imperial parasitism is expressed in the special bankruptcy of capitalism in Britain. In spite of a deliberate devaluation of sterling, UK exports made no impression in the contracting world market; investment in manufacturing industry fell by 13 per cent with a further eight per cent drop expected this year. During the year unemployment doubled to one and a quarter million and inflation was the highest of any major industrial country.

The full weight of the economic crisis bore down on the oppressed masses of the colonial and semi-colonial countries they piled up a massive \$35 billion trade deficit (the oil states excepted), inflicting starvation on a ferocious scale. Political ferment and upheaval was never more pronounced in these countries. The workers and peasants achieved victory over US imperialism in Vietnam and Cambodia; the reactionary Bandaranaike government ousted the reformist LSSP from the coalition but kept the Stalinists in; the Gandhi government in India seized emergency powers and locked up its political opponents; Bangladesh underwent two coups. In Africa, the mercenary armies of US imperialism and the racist Vorster regime met the fierce resistance of the advance of the MPLA in Angola.

The outbreak of civil war in the Lebanon has again highlighted the struggle of the Arab masses, spearheaded by the Palestinian liberation forces, against imperialism, Zionism and the native Arab bourgeoisie. The Middle East is the flashpoint of a new world war with the Israeli military armed with nuclear weapons. President Sadat's treacherous compliance with the US-imposed Sinai

agreement has opened the way for an intensification of US military preparations in the Middle East.

With the deepening of the slump the international working class has been thrust into revolutionary struggles to fight against poverty, hunger, unemployment and the war aims and reactionary conspiracies of the ruling class. Faced with an undefeated working class, the bourgeoisie has everywhere relied on the bureaucracy to try to split and divide it. The counter-revolutionary role of its social democratic and Stalinist allies now stands more clearly revealed than ever before. The reformists of Western Europe have shown themselves to be the true heirs of Noske and Scheidemann, butchers of the German Revolution. In Britain, a Labour government has imposed draconian state pay laws, doubled unemployment, abolished habeas corpus, sent the SAS murderers into Northern Ireland and opened up the era of the political raid with the police attack on the education centre of the Workers Revolutionary Party on September 27-28, 1975. In West Germany a social democratic government has presided over the Baader-Meinhof state show trials and brought in laws banning left-wing militants from employment in the public services. In Australia the capitalist policies of the Whitlam government, driving up unemployment and inflation, opened the door for the right-wing Fraser coup in November 1975, engineered with the backing of British imperialism.

Stalinism daily steps up its counter-revolutionary work in Portugal and Spain. The CP has been the main prop of the Lisbon military regime, now openly preparing reaction with the suppression of the 25 November military uprising and the imposition of a ruthless austerity programme. In Spain Stalinism is moving might and main to head off the irresistible advance of revolutionary struggles unleashed with the death of Franco. In the face of the resurgence of the Spanish revolution after 40 years of fascism, they attempt to peddle the same lies which led to the massacre of the Chilean working class. But in 1975 Stalinism was also dealt a heavy blow — the victory of the Vietnamese revolution, giving the lie to 'peaceful coexistence' and the 'peaceful road to socialism' and a powerful impetus to the world revolution. With the working class internationally coming forward in struggle, the bureaucracy is in its deepest ever crisis. The struggle for power in the capitalist countries spurs forward the political revolution in the USSR itself. And in China, the anti-Soviet manoeuvres of the Stalinist leaders, fétting every imperialist counter-revolutionary who cares to visit Peking, expose still further the lie that socialism can be built in a single country.

The world economic crisis sounds the death knell for Stalinism; but for the Fourth International, the hour has struck. Strengthened in the battle for Marxism against the revisionism of the renegades Wohlforth and Thornett, the sections of the International Committee of the Fourth International have made important developments in a series of countries, reflected in the strong delegations brought to the International Conference of Revolutionary Youth. The ICFI enters 1976 prepared to carry forward the fight to build revolutionary leadership in the working class, against the reformist and Stalinist bureaucracies and their revisionist allies. The hod-carriers of Stalinist policies in the working class are the Pabloite revisionists of every hue. The International Committee of the Fourth International has taken the struggle for Trotskyism to a powerful new stage with its three series of articles entitled 'Security and the Fourth International' unravelling the

circumstances of the assassination of Trotsky and the GPU crimes inside the Fourth International.

Based on the documented findings of these worldwide inquiries, the International Committee issued a statement on January 1, 1976, charging Joseph Hansen and George Novack of the Socialist Workers Party with being accomplices of the GPU. The irrefutable indictment drawn up by the International Committee stated:

'The International Committee of the Fourth International, which today embodies the historic continuity of Trotsky's struggle for Marxism and Leninism, declared that both Hansen and Novack are accomplices of the GPU. Both have conducted a 35-year masquerade as "Trotskyists" living off the legend of their association with the exiled Trotsky in the 1930s until his assassination in Mexico on August 20, 1940.

'We are fully conscious of the extremely grave charge we are presenting. But an examination of the historical record impels us to take no other course. Both Hansen and Novack knows this material exists and that we have gathered much of it. They say that they are being "framed". This is not the case. We repeatedly called during 1975 for a parity commission to be set up with joint representation from the International Committee and the United Secretariat of which Ernest Mandel is a member. This invoked no response. After painstaking research in Europe and America, the International Committee presents an irrefutable indictment of both men and calls for a public inquiry along the lines of the Dewey Commission of 1937 with a tribunal including worldwide representatives of the Trotskyist movement.'

The eight-point indictment proves that Hansen and Novack have engaged in a conspiracy for at least 35 years to cover up GPU murder and penetration in the Trotskyist movement for purposes of spying and disruption. By consciously and deliberately suppressing the truth about GPU crimes in the Fourth International, Hansen and Novack have aided and abetted the Stalinist bureaucracy and its secret police. This is what makes them accomplices of the GPU. Their only defenders are the renegades Wohlforth and Thornett. They have shown their true colours by rushing to Hansen's defence, and repeating slanders against the International Committee designed to divert attention from the crucial questions raised. Their attempts to bar the investigation proposed by the International Committee and prevent the clarification necessary to the building of the world party mark them as an outright anti-communist tendency.

We invite class conscious workers, students and youth in every country to examine the material presented by the International Committee. Its historic importance cannot be exaggerated in a year in which the Trotskyist movement commemorates the 40th anniversary of the murderous Moscow Trials which saw the physical liquidation of the Old Bolsheviks by the Stalinist regime. The complete rehabilitation of Lenin's political colleagues in the Bolshevik Party, his co-leader of the Russian Revolution, Trotsky, and the Left Oppositionists is a task to which the International Committee is dedicated. It forms a central and necessary part of the building of the world party of socialist revolution. The bloodstains of the counter-revolution which climaxed in the murder in Mexico on the eve of the outbreak of imperialist war all over the world must be purged. It is historically inseparable from recruiting and educating a revolutionary Marxist cadre in the working class and youth as part of the preparations for power.

WOHLFORTH, HANSEN AND BOURGEOIS DEMOCRACY

JUST over one year ago Tim Wohlforth resigned his membership of the Workers League, the United States organisation which works in political solidarity with the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI). This resignation followed a series of events now well known in the Trotskyist movement.

Wohlforth had brought his companion, Nancy Fields, to the IC World Conference in April 1974, knowing her family connections prominent in the CIA but failing to declare these or to seek a security clearance. When these connections came to light, the Workers League Central Committee instituted an inquiry into the matter. For the period of the inquiry, Wohlforth was replaced as secretary, and Fields suspended from membership. Both Wohlforth and Fields voted for these unanimous decisions. However, they refused to participate in the inquiry and left the Workers League on the eve of the start of the inquiry.

In the interim, Wohlforth has issued a document viciously slandering the International Committee, the Workers League, and especially, the General Secretary of the Workers Revolutionary Party, Comrade Gerry Healy. His first public political action was to appear on the November 1974 Boston march on the 'bussing' issue.

Now Wohlforth and Fields have declared their political support for Joseph Hansen and the Pabloite revisionist Socialist Workers Party. Wohlforth was main guest speaker at the SWP's Young Socialist Alliance convention in Milwaukee in December 1975; Fields has been unveiled as Brooklyn campaign manager for the SWP's vice presidential candidate Willie Mae Reid. At the same time they have once more bitterly attacked and vilified the International Committee, its sections, and again, particularly Comrade Healy. (*Intercontinental Press*, Nov 10, 1975) This has taken the insidious form of a monstrous cover-up of crucial evidence relating to the assassination of Leon Trotsky on August 20, 1940, and security questions in the Trotskyist movement involving the Stalinist secret police, the GPU. As a result of Hansen's lies, evasions and double talk (*Intercontinental Press*, November 24, 1975) the International Committee has presented an indictment charging Hansen and George Novack of being accomplices of the GPU and demanding the setting up of a public inquiry along the lines of the Dewey Commission of 1937 into their activities.

It was Wohlforth who in 1963 and 1964 came into political conflict with Joseph Hansen and the SWP leadership because of their abandonment of Trotskyist principles, programme and method. He was at that time a member of the SWP's National Committee. Eventually, Hansen, Cannon and the SWP National Committee expelled him from the party because he and his supporters insisted on a discussion of the events in Ceylon in 1964. There, the leaders of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP), section of the so-called United Secretariat of the Fourth International had openly broken with Trotskyism and joined the bourgeois coalition of Mrs. Bandaranaike.

Hansen and the SWP had just been instrumental in a spurious 'unification' with the rest of the 'United Secretariat', and one of the conditions of this 'unity' had been a ban on discussion of the rightward course of the LSSP leadership! Wohlforth's insistence on a discussion of all the implications of the LSSP action was clearly something which could not be tolerated. Hansen, who later lyingly accused the IC and the Workers League of expelling Wohlforth, certainly did himself expel Wohlforth in 1964!

The same Wohlforth was completely correct in attacking, for example, the action of the SWP National Committee in sending its telegram of 'condolence' to Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy after the assassination of her husband in Dallas. He took a justly critical and indignant position against the SWP's call for Federal troops to intervene in the Civil Rights struggle in the US south. Yet today he rejoins the same party, whose position on Boston and the intervention of the state forces is exactly the same!

On the eve of Wohlforth's announcement of his return to the fold, Hansen had made his most blatant ever attack on the Workers Revolutionary Party and the IC. Wohlforth and Fields made themselves party to an attack which perfectly exemplified Engels' famous statement: 'When the revolution approaches, the main enemy will be "pure democracy".' The occasion was Joseph Hansen's response, in the columns of *Intercontinental Press*, to the police raid and accompanying Press witch-hunt (in the *Observer* and other newspapers) against the Workers Revolutionary Party.

In effect, Hansen's declared 'defence' of the WRP was an unshamed joining in the attack, on the chosen ground of an attack on the supposed 'anti-democratic' practices of Bolshevism. When the British police forces raided the education centre of the WRP on the night of September 27-28, 1975, an article was to appear the following day (Sunday) in *The Observer* newspaper. A reference to talk about 'arms caches in the grounds' was inserted in the article.

Hansen reprints the *Observer* article, now the subject of legal action for libel, complete in *Intercontinental Press*. He then declares that the WRP has not responded to the detailed accusations of *The Observer*. And this in an article purporting to 'defend' the WRP against the witch-hunt! This is nothing short of a declaration of solidarity with *The Observer* and the police against the WRP and the basic democratic rights of the working class.

From his acceptance of Wohlforth and Fields' mendacious version of what were absolutely necessary security precautions in 1974, Hansen moves to the use of these lies to assist the bourgeois press and the bourgeois state against his own political enemies in the international workers' movement. Hansen's and Wohlforth's claims about 'defence' of the WRP are a cynical fraud. Hansen, who last year was denouncing the WRP's and IC's elementary security measures as 'paranoia', now responds to direct police intervention by volunteering testimony against the victim! And it is Hansen's party which Wohlforth and Fields have joined. Let every member and sup-

porter of the Trotskyist movement be warned of the strength of the polarised class forces which compel such rapid transitions in our epoch.

It is not just that Wohlforth has rejoined a party whose abandonment of revolutionary programme and method he had consistently criticised for eleven years. That fact is that the leaders of this party, particularly Joseph Hansen and George Novack, have in the recent period (the period comprising Wohlforth's renegacy from the IC) gone over openly to an anti-revolutionary position in the name of 'democracy'. Their attack on the WRP today is a joining together with defenders of 'democracy' like *The Observer* and the British police against the supposedly 'dictatorial' methods of Marxism.

This was especially marked in Joseph Hansen's recent article in *Intercontinental Press* (August 4, 1975) entitled 'Is Democracy Worth Fighting For?'. By directing his remarks against certain ultra-left adventurists in the international tendency (United Secretariat) with which the SWP is in political solidarity, Hansen sneaks in a wholly anti-Marxist defence of bourgeois democracy. In Portugal, the followers of Hansen's international allies like Mandel have turned away from any claim to the Trotskyist programme of political independence of the working class, towards supporting military dictatorship, given a cover of supposed popular organs of control. Hansen uses a condemnation of their obvious mistakes in order himself to prescribe a return to the 'democratic' politics of centrists like Kautsky.

Wohlforth and Fields now tell us that Portugal is the 'acid test' of revolutionaries, thus declaring full support for Hansen's position. (Significantly, Wohlforth makes no mention of Cuba, which was declared by Hansen in 1962 to be 'the acid test'. On these grounds, Hansen banned discussion in the world Trotskyist movement and 'reunified' with the Pabloite revisionists. Wohlforth was expelled by Hansen in the process. The final occasion of that split — the Ceylon betrayal of 1964 — also receives not a single mention by Wohlforth, who thereby resorts to the exact method used by Hansen: suppress discussion on principled questions, ignore the opportunism of your new-found friends, and vilify your opponents as 'violent' sectarians.)

Hansen joined the Trotskyist movement in the days when Stalinism was developing its 'popular front' policies. Trotsky devoted the last years of his life to the struggle against this 'democratic' betrayal of the working class, and to defence of the nascent Fourth International against the terroristic Stalinist attempts to physically liquidate it. His role on this defence against Stalinism having recently come up for urgent investigation, Hansen also declares himself directly opposed to the political content of Trotsky's struggle at that time.

The Stalinists suppressed, first politically and then physically, as in Spain, all manifestation of the political independence of the proletariat in the period of struggle against the rise of fascism. For them, everything was to be subordinated to the democratic 'alliance', the 'popular front', with the bourgeois parties who declared for 'democracy'. Trotsky countered that fascism and the Popular Front were alternative forms of bourgeois rule in the period of capitalist decay. Suppression of the class demands of the proletariat, for fear of scaring off the bourgeois democrats, was the surest way to drive the petty bourgeoisie into the arms of the fascists. So deep-going was the crisis of capitalism that every single major problem was incapable of being resolved through the

mechanisms of parliamentary democracy. The first and fundamental question was the revolutionary mobilisation of the working class on its own socialist programme and the resolution of the crisis of revolutionary leadership.

It is not remarkable that in the 1930s, when a series of historic defeats of the proletariat made it necessary for Trotskyism to 'swim against the stream', attracting for the most part only elements divorced from the mass movement, Hansen did not challenge this Trotskyist position on 'defence of democracy'; yet today, when the proletariat is suffering from no major defeats and the Trotskyist movement has the great opportunity of getting close to the workers and winning leadership, Hansen springs to the 'defence of democracy'? Having attacked the IC and Marxism on fundamental questions of method and philosophy, and having joined with those who wanted to liquidate the revolutionary party through revisionism, Hansen now openly rejects what Marx himself called the essentially original political part of this theory, the necessity of the dictatorship of the proletariat. At this point, Wohlforth deems it necessary also to declare for 'democracy'.

Let us briefly compare Hansen's article 'Is Democracy Worth Fighting For?' with the positions of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. We shall find that, as on every other issue, Hansen's claim to 'orthodoxy' is a fraud. He is in fact a revisionist of the first order. As this article shows, he has used the experience in Portugal since April 1974 to go over to an open defence of bourgeois democracy, by means of subservience to Social Democracy, in particular the Portuguese Socialist Party (PSP) of Mario Soares.

Ever since the fall of the fascist regime of Caetano in April 1974, no bourgeois party has been able to bring about the mobilisation of the petty bourgeoisie against the proletariat. For many months the Popular Democrats were reduced to a political nonentity. The only reason for their being able to regain any following, first in the North, in Oporto, and then to some extent around the capital, Lisbon, is that the Stalinists worked only to mobilise the working class behind the Armed Forces Movement, and the Socialist Party set about leading as many of its worker-supporters as possible under the political wing of the 'democratic' middle class.

In a period and in a country when bourgeois democracy is good for absolutely nothing except the deception of the working class and the peasantry, the Social Democrats came out as the champions of 'democracy' against any independent workers' programme whatsoever. They dressed this up as opposition to the rule of the Armed Forces Movement in the summer months of 1975, because the AFM appeared then to be leaning towards the Stalinists. Hansen jumped on this bandwagon of 'democracy versus military dictatorship', staking everything on the fact that the Socialists won the largest number of seats in the elections to the Constituent Assembly. Hansen based himself on these transient forms of the political struggle — 'democracy versus dictatorship' — instead of the content, which was the alliance between the Socialist Party and the Popular Democrats, taking advantage of the Stalinist betrayals, to restore bourgeois order by creating a middle class base for a reinforced state machine on a programme of 'democracy' and anti-communism.

Once this mobilisation was on the move, though the working class remained entirely undefeated in battle, Soares, the great opponent of military dictatorship, came out as the spokesman of 'uniting the armed forces' to ensure real authority in the state! This is the Socialist

Party which Hansen supported. He forsook the Marxist characterisation of Social Democracy and of the role of bourgeois democracy in our transitional, revolutionary epoch and so became in fact a *defender* of the fraud of bourgeois democracy, the screen behind which counter-revolution, openly abetted by Social Democracy, takes place. Hansen will denounce such a characterisation as 'Third Period sectarianism'. But it must be stated categorically that the tactic of united front with Social Democratic parties in defence of democratic rights is in no way a 'watering-down' of the Marxist, scientific view of the counter-revolutionary content of Social Democracy, of the *opposition* between bourgeois democracy and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Writing about countries in which the workers' parties had worked within bourgeois democratic republics (or constitutional monarchies such as Britain) and conquered certain 'bulwarks' for themselves within it, Trotsky once said:

'Meanwhile, so long as the majority of the working class continues on the basis of bourgeois democracy, we are ready to defend it with all our forces against violent attacks from the Bonapartist and fascist bourgeoisie.'

('A Programme of Action for France', in *Whither France?*, New Park Publications, 1974.)

This passage was written when the Comintern (through the French CP primarily) was making its turn from the disastrous Third Period and rejection of the United Front, to the equally fatal 'Popular Front', in which the working class United Front was liquidated and subordinated to the bourgeois democracy. It was very explicitly designed to bring the social democratic workers up against the complete inadequacy and rottenness of French bourgeois democracy. It was followed by demands — 'down with the Senate, down with the Presidency, etc.' — which would be refused within the existing 'democracy' because they would open up the best conditions for the struggle of the working class. In this way Trotsky sought rapidly to win the Social Democratic workers over to communism. The paragraph preceding the one we have quoted reads:

'We are thus firm partisans of a Workers and Peasants State, which will take the power from the exploiters. To win the majority of our working-class allies to this programme is our primary aim.'

Contrast the article of Hansen! It is permeated through and through by the craven spirit of capitulation to bourgeois democracy, and nowhere does it raise the banner of proletarian revolution. Hansen follows Kautsky, the renegade, in presenting 'democracy' as some absolute good, contrasted with dictatorship, which is evil. Some twenty times the words 'democratic' and 'democracy' are used without any class characterisation. Nowhere does Hansen perform the elementary duty of a Marxist in such an article and explain that bourgeois democracy is *a form of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie*, that the *fundamental* question for Marxists is 'Which class holds power?' with the defence of democracy, however important, a *secondary matter*.

Hansen, after describing what he calls the 'erosion of democracy', exemplified by the emergency measures of Mrs Candhi, tells us that: 'That socialist programme, as conceived by Marx and Engels and as advanced by Lenin and Trotsky, takes democracy as its heritage, defends it against all encroachments, and proposes to expand it and extend it so that it becomes one of the main features of the society of the future.'

In *State and Revolution*, Lenin indeed goes to some lengths to explain what is meant by the expansion and extension of democracy under the dictatorship of the proletariat, as the masses are drawn into the work of government and administration. But Hansen forgets the *essence* of the question, as Lenin sees it. Those who give the impression of a *continuity* between bourgeois democracy and proletarian democracy are obscuring the *main thing*, that the bourgeois state (whether it works through *democratic* or *Bonapartist* or *absolutist* forms) must be *smashed* before the proletarian state can be established, and that the democratic forms of the proletarian state develop only in the struggle to *suppress* the bourgeois state, the bourgeoisie, and bourgeois democracy.

Anyone calling himself a Marxist in Portugal today who fails to bring forward this *main* question, the mobilisation of the masses to smash the state machine and the building of the party necessary to lead that struggle, and instead talks about 'expanding' democracy, is guilty of treachery. At the very point where *none* of the great problems of the masses can be resolved through parliamentary democracy, where the preparation for power is the first task every day, Hansen lends support to the fraudulent democrats who are front-runners for counter-revolution.

Hansen, as we have indicated, has his political ancestor in this matter: it is Karl Kautsky. Lenin wrote — and the words might have been directed at Hansen himself:

'We, the revolutionary Marxists, never made speeches to the people that the Kautskyites of all nations love to make, cringing before the bourgeoisie, adapting themselves to the bourgeois parliamentary system, keeping silent about the *bourgeois* character of modern democracy and demanding only its extension, only that it be carried to its logical conclusion.'

(Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*.)

What do Hansen and Wohlforth have to say about this verdict of Lenin on the 'cringing Kautskyites of all nations'? Do they consider, along with the 'peaceful, parliamentary road' addicts of Stalinism, that experience has proved Lenin wrong? Lenin, commenting on Marx's doctrine of the *smashing* of the state, concluded: 'Here, as everywhere else, his theory is a *summing up of experience*, illuminated by a profound philosophical conception of the world and a rich knowledge of history.' (*The State and Revolution*). Will Wohlforth perhaps explain how his 'rich knowledge of history' of the 'experience' of Chile or Bolivia have invalidated Lenin's conclusion? Will he help Hansen to show how the latter's famous 'consistent empiricism' has improved on Marx's 'profound philosophical conception' (dialectical materialism) to illuminate this experience in favour of bourgeois democracy.

When Trotsky put forward his programmes for action in the 1930s, in defence of democratic rights against the fascists and against the growing absolutist tendencies of bourgeois government, he continued the teaching and work of Lenin. Whereas Hansen takes the defence and extension of bourgeois democracy as his starting point, Trotsky is especially careful *not* to do so:

'The point of departure in the struggle against fascism is not the abstraction of the democratic state, but the living organisations of the proletariat.' (*Germany 1931-1932*, p. 70).

In Germany, then, as in Portugal today:

'This struggle imposed upon the proletariat by the whole situation cannot, by its very nature, be conducted within the framework of democracy.' (*Ibid.*, p. 290).

It must be said that Hansen does *exactly* what Kautsky was condemned by Lenin for doing. By writing only of the defence, expansion and extension of democracy, he *conceals* its class, bourgeois character and *hides* the necessity of smashing the bourgeois state and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat.

When Hansen says that democracy would not be restricted for the bourgeoisie in a workers' state unless they waged civil war, he conceals the fundamental truth that the workers state is the mechanism for suppressing the class enemy, the bourgeoisie. In this way he once more heightens the illusion that socialism is a gradual process of continuous expansion of 'democracy'. Furthermore, by saying that 'the society of the future' will have democracy as one of its main features, he liquidates the Marxist theory of democracy. In the future classless society democracy, like the state, will have 'withered away': of what use will be rules of formal equality and rights, when men are really, and not only formally, equal? To present 'democracy' as Hansen does is to accept the bourgeois illusion of democracy from beginning to end, i.e. that capitalism is no more and no less than a step on the road to freedom. Who would have thought that Lenin, echoing Engels, described the democratic republic as the political form best adapted for the rule of the monopolies and banks!?

Hansen in his article contemplates the world and observes everywhere 'the erosion of democracy' by 'anti-democratic' and 'totalitarian' forms of government. He then attacks those Portuguese followers of the United Secretariat who were supporting the growth of military dictatorship and the suppression of the rallies of the Social Democrats. In this way, he points out, they were 'inveigled' into acting as auxiliaries of the capitalist class in Portugal!

This is Hansen at his worst! He himself engineered the 1963 'reunification' which temporarily restored the grip of Pabloite liquidationism, turning the cadres of that movement away from the fundamental task, the building of revolutionary parties of the proletariat. The 'militants' to whom Hansen directs his criticism, by combining a worship of spontaneity with the entrusting of the political initiative to 'lefts' in the AFM, were only carrying out the prescriptions laid down by Hansen and the United Secretariat leadership, a continuation of the line with which Pablo split the Fourth International in 1953.

Hansen's alternative is ten times worse. Among those he criticises may be many who are trying to find a way of opening the road for the independent initiative and mobilisation of the masses — a task frustrated by the Pabloism of the United Secretariat — but Hansen would have them disciplined to the demands of the rotten Social Democrats, on the grounds that these express 'the will of the majority'.

After his rapid survey of these developments, Hansen asks:

'Is bourgeois democracy worth fighting for in the period leading up to socialism? Will socialism after all offer a new birth of freedom? Or do the anti-democratic forms of government offered by Brezhnev, Mao and Gandhi, however different the economic bases, represent the wave of the future?'

Here is the political rationale for Hansen's joining with *The Observer* and the British police! It is an action on behalf of democracy, no doubt, against the anti-democratic 'wave'. Note that the 'forms of government offered' by Ford (or Wilson for that matter) do not figure in the list of the 'anti-democratic'. If 'bourgeois democracy' is 'worth defending', according to Hansen, will it then

be legitimate to defend the bourgeois democracy of Ford against the 'anti-democracy' of the USSR and China 'however different the economic bases'? And if the USA came into conflict with India, would Hansen take the side of imperialist 'democratic' America, against anti-democratic India?

These are not far-fetched questions. To assure the 'wave of the future' Hansen is in this article declaring for capitalist democracy against the dictatorship of the proletariat. In the case of the raid on the WRP he takes the same stand. Using the lying excuse of the age-old slanders of 'violence' and 'anti-democratic' practices of the revolutionary Marxists, he joins with the 'democratic' forces of state repression.

In the same way, over fifty years ago, Kautsky, from a centrist position, joined with the bourgeois democracy to attack Bolshevism. He too had his excuses, saying:

'The contrast between the two socialist trends (i.e. the Bolsheviks and the non-Bolsheviks) is the contrast between two radically different methods: the dictatorial and the democratic.' (quoted by Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*.)

George Novack, Hansen's closest collaborator in revisionism, faithfully echoed Kautsky in his 1971 SWP lectures, 'The Role of the Transitional Programme in the Revolutionary Process', as follows:

'In fact the Trotskyist movement aspires to be the foremost protector and promoter of genuine democracy against all anti-democratic and authoritarian forces, institutions, laws and regimes.' (reprinted in *The Transitional Programme for Socialist Revolution*, Pathfinder Press, p. 54).

Hansen has sought for many years to liquidate Trotskyism into this 'democratic', *reformist*, *bourgeois* 'socialism'. It was he and his Pabloite friends who discovered that the revolutionary role of the proletariat had passed over to the students in the 1960s, and in this middle-class milieu they found Rudi Dutschke. This radical protester, opposed utterly to the building of revolutionary parties of the proletariat, wrote the following lines, which are remarkably like those of Hansen:

'We believe that an international opposition is necessary to fight all forms of authoritarian structure, whether in socialist or capitalist form.' (R. Dutschke in the London Student Magazine, *Sennet*, October 9, 1968.)

Revisionism in the Fourth International claimed to be attracting new social layers to Trotskyism, to the revolutionary movement of the proletariat. What the revisionists actually did, led by Hansen, was to subordinate Trotskyism to these middle-class forces, purveyors of the remnants of anarchism and of all manner of bourgeois ideology, thus liquidating the essentials of Trotskyism. The International Committee and its sections are the product of the long and bitter struggle against that liquidationism.

When the IC took up the struggle in 1974 against all attempts of the class enemy to smash our security, to penetrate and break up the movement, it was inevitable that the fight against revisionism would enter a new stage, in accordance with the rapid developments in the relationship of class forces. Wohlforth will be remembered as the man who deserted to the revisionists in the year when the Vietnamese liberation struggle triumphed over US imperialism and his long-lost friends declared for bourgeois democracy against Marxism and the proletarian revolution.

LETTER TO JOSEPH HANSEN FROM THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

186a Clapham High Street,
London SW4 7UG
October 23 1975

To:
Joseph Hansen
United Secretariat
Socialist Workers Party

Dear Comrades,

We have received no reply from Joseph Hansen to our letter of June 21, 1975, sent in response to his rejection of the International Committee's proposal for a parity commission to investigate urgent questions of security in the Fourth International. The United Secretariat remains completely and irresponsibly silent.

Since our letter, the demand for a parity commission has become all the more imperative. This follows publication of an interim report on *Security and the Fourth International* which was commissioned unanimously by the Sixth International Conference of the International Committee of May 19 to 24, 1975. (See the 19-part series of articles published in Workers Press, August-September, 1975.)

New facts have been unearthed about the scope and activities of the GPU network, based in Paris, which penetrated the Fourth International, Trotsky's household in Mexico and the Socialist Workers Party of the United States. This network was responsible for the murder of Trotsky on August 20, 1940, his son Leon Sedov in Paris on February 14, 1938, as well as early leaders of the Fourth International, Rudolf Klement and Erwin Wolf.

This interim report concluded with two articles — 'The Role of Joseph Hansen and Pabloite Revisionism' and 'We Accuse Joseph Hansen and the Socialist Workers Party' (Workers Press, September 8 and 9, 1975). There has been no response whatsoever from the SWP or the United Secretariat. The only sign of acknowledgment appeared in *Intercontinental Press*, October 13, 1975, in an article which said, in passing, that Workers Press had 'buried' Hansen in 'slander' over recent months. The 'slander' accusation by Hansen can be swiftly put to rest — by his agreement to accept a parity commission enquiry along the lines we have suggested.

In view of the fundamental security and political questions raised by this newly-published material, the International Committee insists that its proposal for a commission, composed of an equal number of members from the IC and the United Secretariat, begin immediately the most detailed and comprehensive investigation into all questions of security and provocations in the Fourth International. This investigation must now be extended to cover the very founding days of our movement.

Security is not only an organizational question, but above all a fundamental political question of the struggle of the world party of socialist revolution against the capitalist state, against the intelligence and repressive agencies of the imperialist powers, and against the Stalinist bureaucracy, the main counter-revolutionary force in the world arena, dedicated since its inception to the liquidation of the Fourth International.

The training of revolutionary cadres for the revolutionary struggles of today cannot be carried out without a relentless fight to establish the historical continuity of Trotsky's life and death battle against the Stalinist bureaucracy.

When Hansen lyingly accuses the Workers Revolutionary Party of being led by police agents and provocateurs, but then rejects a security investigation which would hit decisively at the Stalinists and their agents in our movement, what role is he playing? Why has he hitherto insisted on covering up the great historical questions concerning the murder of the founder of the Fourth International and his closest collaborators? What is the responsibility of those, like Hansen, who have criminally neglected these questions and now refuse to take them up?

The preliminary findings of the IC's investigation demand that Hansen give answers. The IC's proposal for a parity commission is directed towards getting these answers and educating the cadres of the Fourth International.

The urgency for the establishment of a parity commission follows the exposure of the unbroken chain of events which began with the planning of Leon Sedov's death in 1936. The centre of this Stalinist intrigue was *Mark Zborowski* who now lives in San Francisco and works as director of the medical anthropology department at Mount Zion Hospital.

Zborowski, adopting the party name 'Etienne', infiltrated the Left Opposition in France during the 1930s and wormed his way into the confidence of Sedov. He was behind the theft of Trotsky's priceless archives from the Nicolaevsky Institute in 1937 and he tipped off the GPU about the name of the hospital where Sedov was a patient and where he was eventually murdered.

In September 1938 Zborowski attended the founding conference of the Fourth International, his reports finding their way directly to Stalin in the Kremlin. Outside the conference he mixed with American Trotskyists like the late James Cannon and arranged the meeting between SWP member Sylvia Ageloff and Jacques Mornard, real name Ramon Mercader, Trotsky's assassin.

Zborowski was suspected by Trotskyist leaders and supporters in Paris but he avoided detection by playing his friends and adversaries off against each other in personality wrangles. He was positively identified as a GPU agent by NKVD chief, General Alexander Orlov, when he defected from Spain to the United States in 1938. Lola Estrine, Mrs David Dallin, was in Mexico when Trotsky received the Orlov letter. She told him she thought the letter was 'a GPU hoax'. On her return to Paris she immediately told Zborowski of the existence of the letter.

Throughout this period, and until the 1950s, Lola Estrine was Zborowski's closest political confidant and staunchest defender. We are told that the same 'Comrade Lola' has recently been invited by the SWP to write the foreword to a re-publishing of Sedov's works by Pathfinder Press.

Lola Estrine travelled to the south of France after the fall of Paris in May 1940 to arrange for a false affidavit to be sworn to enable Zborowski to enter the United States. When he disembarked in Philadelphia she was there to

shepherd him through immigration, to bring him to New York, to find him accommodation and get him his first job. Using her political connections, Zborowski immediately resumed his GPU spy role in the Fourth International and the Socialist Workers Party. From 1943 his controller was Jack Soble, known in the German Left Opposition as Senin, another lifelong GPU agent devoted to the destruction of the Fourth International.

Details of the murderous activities of this pair emerged in testimony that they gave at Senate hearings and in New York District Court trials between 1955 and 1958. But not a word appeared in the SWP weekly journal, *The Militant*, apart from one heavily plagiarized article by Joseph Hansen (April 9, 1956).

The following questions demand answers. What is known in the SWP leadership of the relations between Zborowski and the SWP and the Fourth International after his arrival in the United States in 1941? When he left the Fourth International and the SWP, what investigation took place? Did not his departure throw new light on the security investigation into 'Etienne' which had been dropped before the war? Was any inquiry made into his connection with Sylvia Franklin, James P. Cannon's secretary, who was a GPU agent? Or with Floyd Cleveland Miller, Stalinist agent who penetrated the SWP's maritime section during World War Two? If any inquiry took place, was the International informed? In his testimony Soble said he had ten anti-Trotskyists under his control. Six have been named; who are the other four?

Furthermore, how are you to account for the fact that throughout the gravest crisis of world Stalinism, following the East German uprising of 1953 and particularly the 'secret speech' of Krushchev and the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, the SWP's failure to make any political gains from this crisis went along with a total inability to utilize the testimony of Soble, Zborowski and others to strike powerful blows against Stalinism and build the Trotskyist party? Instead, you favoured 'regroupment' and concluded that a series of basic reforms by the bureaucracy could be equivalent to a political revolution in the USSR (see the letter of the Socialist Labour League Central Committee to the SWP National Committee, January 1961, in *Trotskyism versus Revisionism*, Volume Three).

When we go back even further, to the assassination of Trotsky, we find the same questions are raised. Here is the biggest 'security' question of them all, the attempt of the GPU to politically and physically destroy the Fourth International. Your own role, Comrade Hansen, is central here. The questions that arise from the evidence require you to stand before a parity commission. Comrade Gerry Healy, whom you have viciously slandered, has already declared his willingness to accept the proposal.

In relation to the Trotsky assassination: what was the role of Trotsky's guard, Robert Sheldon Harte? This has always been unclear, but our investigations have opened up the possibility of a clarification at last. How is it that Harte had in his possession a dictionary signed by Siqueiros, the Stalinist organizer of the first attempt on Trotsky's life? How is it that he had a picture of Stalin on the wall of his New York apartment? What was the origin of the large sum of money he left in his will? What is the significance of the fact that his father, on a Departmental passport, was given special protection when visiting Mexico on the grounds that he was personally associated with J. Edgar Hoover? Of these and many other new questions in relation to Harte, you have seen the indisputable documentation in our Workers Press articles. Do you

agree to a commission of investigation on this matter? If not, why not?

You, Joseph Hansen, were politically responsible for Comrade Trotsky's security on behalf of the SWP's Political Committee.

According to Comrade Robins, chief guard, there was, under your direction, complete neglect of any weapons training by the guard until he took responsibility for this. He also questions your account of the actual moment at which Trotsky's assassin was apprehended. What is the meaning of these discrepancies?

Our investigations also disclose matters of which the SWP leadership was presumably already well aware, but certainly did not inform the international movement.

We refer to the report sent to the State Department by Robert McGregor, US Consul in Mexico City, on September 1, 1940. This relates a visit you made to him in which you asserted that Trotsky's assassination had been engineered from the United States. It also quotes you as saying that in 1938 you were approached by a GPU agent who tried to recruit you and that you maintained relations with this agent for three months.

Comrade Hansen, you have written many articles and memoirs claiming to give a full picture of the circumstances surrounding Trotsky's assassination. You even wrote a detailed supplementation of the facts as given by Issac Deutscher, in your introduction to Trotsky's *My Life*. Yet at no time did you mention the GPU's attempt to recruit you. Nor did it enter into the political preparation of the comrades responsible for guarding Trotsky either before or after the Siqueiros raid. The international movement has *never* been informed, and we have the extraordinary position where the US State Department has known of your 'operation' of playing along the GPU, according to you with Trotsky's agreement, but our own movement has been kept in ignorance. What is the answer to these questions, and this question of Sheldon Harte? We do not yet know, but we do know that an independent investigation by the IC and the United Secretariat, with Hansen's collaboration, is politically imperative. Do you agree? If not, why not?

These are not, we repeat, dead historical questions. The Cointelpro documents reveal the extensive infiltration operation of the FBI against the SWP. No one can doubt the implications of the billions of dollars spent on the CIA. And the Stalinist bureaucracy, in crisis equally with imperialism, will always strive to liquidate our movement.

We repeat also that to reject such an inquiry, or to remain silent, while throwing around accusations of 'police agents' against sections of the International Committee of the Fourth International, is political irresponsibility of the worst kind.

You are playing the role of preventing the cadres of our movement from getting to grips with the most urgent political questions of the preparation for power. To continue Trotsky's fight against Stalinism, to take up the thread which was criminally let drop by the SWP leadership, is an absolutely necessary and urgent task. Only those who consider that the Stalinist bureaucracy is no longer counter-revolutionary, that capitalism cannot be overthrown by the proletarian revolution, and that the Fourth International cannot be built, will stand in the way of the parity commission we propose. We demand an answer.

Cliff Slaughter,
Secretary,

International Committee of the Fourth International

STATEMENT BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE
OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

THE SOARES — CUNHAL — ALZEVEDO COALITION

THE Portuguese Revolution stands at a decisive crossroads after the collapse of the revolt of left-wing military units and the repressive measures of the Azevedo government. The revolt was begun by the 1,500 paratroops of the Tancos barracks after the dismissal of the so-called 'left' General Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho.

Calling on reservists and loyal troops the government soon had the revolt under control and followed up with measures intended to 'normalise' the situation in the army. These measures include the purging of Generals Carvalho and Fabiao and Admirals Coutinho and Soares — with the expected dismissal of two other members of the Revolutionary Council, Captains Guerreiro and Conreiras; the detention of 200 left-wing officers, the sacking of 30 senior government officials and the state take-over of all radio and television stations except the Catholic Church-owned Radio Renascenca. At the same time Costa Gomes has demanded the surrender of all civilian-held arms, an end to demonstrations and a huge increase in productivity. The new chief-of-staff, General Eanes, has declared that politics will no longer be tolerated amongst other ranks and that (capitalist) military discipline will prevail. The reactionary officer caste are determined to purge the 'Revolutionary Council', the lower echelon officers and the barracks of all radical influence in order that the Armed Forces Movement can remain the final arbiter of government decisions. By rejecting the bogus 'direct democracy' of Carvalho and Coutinho and adopting the equally fake 'pluralism' of Melo Antunes, the Portuguese bourgeoisie have shown that the only form of parliamentary system they will accept is a system completely under the control of the state — i.e. the Portuguese army.

This is rendered urgent by the deepening of the economic crisis and the rapid increase in unemployment. Faced by a powerful and militant working class, the Portuguese ruling class dare not move immediately towards outright dictatorship but seeks to preserve a precarious alliance with the reformist Communist Party and Socialist Party leaders through the mechanism of the Sixth Provisional Coalition. As the London *Economist* noted: 'The military leaders may even allow the Prime Minister and his colleagues a bigger say in the day-to-day running of the country, if only because running Portugal is likely to become increasingly difficult as the economic crisis begins to bite. The cabinet already has before it an economic austerity plan including such politically unpopular measures as a wage freeze, sharp cuts in consumer spending, higher taxes and rationing. The question is whether the Military Council will come to the aid of the Prime Minister when the inevitable protests start or whether it will choose to sacrifice him and his political colleagues to save itself.' (*Economist*, December 6, 1975, p. 57.)

For these reasons Dr. Carneiro — notorious anti-Communist and leader of the reactionary Popular Democrats, who are in close contact with the right-wing generals and admirals — made no attempt to exclude the Stalinists

from the Provisional government. Rather he sought to trap them within the government. Carneiro until very recently was the loudest advocate of excluding the CP from the government. The Communist Party, after an initial vacillation, held back from supporting the soldiers' action because it is dedicated to the maintenance of capitalist state power with the CP as a force in the government. The Stalinists, led by Alvaro Cunhal, have consistently supported the Armed Forces Movement while disarming the working class politically instead of fighting for a united front with the Socialist Party and taking state power. The Stalinist leaders, totally opposed to any mass mobilisation of the working class against the government, immediately pledged their adherence to the government. Addressing a rally of 18,000 at the Bullring in Lisbon on December 7, Cunhal acknowledged the victory of the right-wing coup, yet called for the revitalising of the Armed Forces Movement and 'unity against the greater danger of the fascist reactionaries'. His policy while wearing down the working class, has played into the hands of the right wing and left real power in the hands of the military. It has also prepared the ground for the reformists, to whom many workers as well as petty bourgeois have turned in revulsion to his Stalinist manoeuvres. In this way Stalinism aids the potential hangmen of the Portuguese revolution and confounds the confusion within the working class. It is aided in this foul task by the Socialist Party leaders.

Mario Soares and company have become a principal bastion of capitalism in Portugal, strongly backed financially and politically by the German Social Democratic Party, which has been the conduit for CIA funds to enable the party to carry on extensive propaganda. This does not make the SP into a fascist party, nor does it invalidate the necessity for a united front, but it does reveal the enormous degeneration of social democracy and the dangers posed by the Soares leadership. The clash between Cunhal and Soares has been nothing more than a struggle for influence in the Iberian peninsula between the Soviet bureaucracy and NATO imperialism, with the bureaucracy ready for 'detente' at the expense of the working class. Both Cunhal and Soares, despite their differences, share a common hatred of the revolutionary working class which they fear more than the combined forces of European and American reaction. Soares openly co-operates with the Popular Democrats who stand for the preservation of capitalism and with the right-wing forces in the army. But this will not stop the reactionaries from trying to liquidate the Socialist Party on the way to creating another Chile in Portugal. At the same time we condemn any attempt such as that of the revisionist Organisation Communiste Internationaliste, to call for the establishing of a Soares government as the solution to Portugal's crisis. This can only create illusions in the working class of socialism being obtained through parliament and give credence to the reactionary Soares' leadership. We warn also against the dangers of Socialist Party co-operation

with army figures like Melo Antunes who, once they have made use of the Socialist Party, will discard it like a squeezed lemon. The Soares leadership is playing a treacherous game of collaboration with the bourgeoisie and international reaction which prepares the way for naked military dictatorship. Its talk of 'democracy' is merely a cover for its support for capitalism in Portugal and Portuguese co-operation with US and European imperialism.

Harsh realities have broken up the illusions and the atmosphere of euphoria which flourished in petty-bourgeois revisionist circles in the wake of the overthrow of Portuguese fascism on April 25, 1974. At the centre of these illusions was the idea that the force for the establishment of socialism could come from a bourgeois army. November 26, 1975, was the moment of bitter truth for these middle-class impressionists. Now that their political bankruptcy has been exposed, they turn on the working class and blame it for not having spontaneously fallen in behind the rebel units. Thus the revisionists of the 'International Socialists' call the collapse of the rebellion a defeat for the working class. Asking why it occurred they say: '*The answer lies in the weakness of the revolutionaries where it really mattered, in the working class.*' (Their emphasis.) This statement by Tony Cliff and Chris Harman in *Socialist Worker* for December 6 appears significantly under the title 'Reaction has won a battle'.

We completely reject the revisionist conception that the events begun by the paratroops on November 25 ended in a defeat for the working class or that the working class was responsible for the collapse of the military revolt. The *disintegration* of the armed forces is an inseparable part of every revolutionary situation. The army, or a section of it, cannot substitute itself for the class — this is a typical and dangerous revision which springs from the hatred of the petty-bourgeois 'lefts' for the building of a revolutionary party. 'An army,' wrote Trotsky, 'is always a copy of the society it serves — with this difference, that it gives social relations a concentrated character, carrying both their positive and negative features to an extreme.' The recent events in Portugal are not an exception but cogently underline the correctness of Trotsky's observation. The officer caste — no matter how demagogic it may appear — cannot represent the historical interests of the proletarian ranks, but in fact run counter to them. Every revolution shows that the officers share the fate of those classes from which they were recruited.

The series of mutinies in the Portuguese army express the symptoms of deep seated crisis but are not the dynamic of the revolution itself. Absolutely no confidence can be placed in the so-called left-wing generals like Goncalves or Carvalho, who themselves express the vacillations of the petty bourgeoisie. The conflicts within the armed forces are part of the disintegration of the army which is necessary for the victory of the working class in any revolution. In Portugal, this has reached an advanced stage, but it in no sense means that leadership must come from within the army or that the building of a revolutionary party is not the priority task. In fact the Portuguese working class showed its political maturity by not blindly following the palace-revolutionists among the parachutists and risking a real defeat under unfavourable conditions. What a contrast indeed between the military units manoeuvring for power in a vacuum and the tens of thousands of Lisbon workers who had poured on to the streets in support of their own demands only a week or two before! What this undefeated working class lacks is the leadership of a revolutionary

party. It is not going to support a new Castro in the shape of Carvalho or any other army officer with political ambitions. In that respect it is right to wait to see what its own leaders will do, because it can hold these leaders to account in a way which is impossible with the generals.

The revisionists show complete contempt for the working class, identifying it with its leaders and contrasting it unfavourably with the ostensibly more revolutionary soldiers. The International Socialists' *Socialist Worker* also commented some time ago: 'The greatest weakness of the revolutionary movement is the unevenness between the soldiers and the workers. The unevenness cannot go on for ever. If the workers do not rise to the level of the soldiers, there is a great danger that the soldiers' level of consciousness will fall to the level of the workers . . .' What petty-bourgeois arrogance and Philistine nonsense!

No less cynical, cowardly and unprincipled is the position adopted by the American Socialist Workers Party led by Joseph Hansen and George Novack. Of all the revisionist groups, the SWP had the dubious distinction of being the most servile and sycophantic defender of the counter-revolutionary leadership of the Socialist Party as well as the reactionary Constituent Assembly. The principal parties in the Constituent Assembly were the semi-fascist Popular Democratic Party (PDP) and Soares' Socialist Party. Today both parties have dropped their opposition to the armed Forces Movement and joined with the reactionary generals and admirals to support the repressions of Azevedo. They are part of the Sixth Provisional Government. Unmasked by the events of November 25, these revisionists now try hastily to divest themselves of political responsibility and try to appear wise after the event. David Frankel, SWP reporter, comments in the *Intercontinental Press* (December 5, 1975): 'The ultra-left groups trailed in the wake of the CP. [This is an oblique attack on the pro-Mandel faction of the United Secretariat, the political sponsors of the Liga Comunista Internacionalista in Portugal, which has given uncritical support to the AFM.] Unlike the Stalinists they want a socialist revolution in Portugal. But in calling for socialist democracy they refused to defend the democratic rights already existing under capitalism . . . the ultra-lefts gave radical cover to the MFA's [AFM] attacks on democracy of any kind.' Frankel and the SWP are equally guilty with the 'ultra-lefts' of building the authority of the reactionary officer corps. When the AFM tried to set up fake 'workers' committees' under the domination of the army in July the representatives of the SWP in Portugal — the PRT* — welcomed this retrograde step rapturously. On July 10, 1975, the PRT stated publicly: ' . . . we salute the position finally adopted by the MFA Assembly, supporting the development of popular assemblies and stimulating them through the participation of the military. We consider that this linking up . . . will really be able to constitute dual power which can rapidly replace bourgeois power completely, and direct society in order to resolve the most immediate problems of the people, guarantee jobs and the standards of living, ensure the right to housing, and finally put down reaction and punish its agents.'

* Partido Revolucionario dos Trabalhadores — The Revolutionary Workers of Portugal which, according to Hansen, is a 'group that has declared its adherence to the Fourth International'. The rival LCI is described by the same Hansen as the 'Portuguese sympathising organisation of the Fourth International'. The subtlety of Hansen's semantics is truly mind-boggling!

This was criminal deception of the working class and a gross betrayal of Trotskyism because the decision of the AFM stated the precise opposite. It called for 'organisation, vigilance, work, discipline and authority' and went on to declare: 'Since production is not sufficient to meet the overall needs of the country, great exertion is called for from the working masses.' Despite this threat of speed-up and regimentation the PRT continued to sing hosannas to the junta and assured the masses that the AFM was introducing 'dual power from above', that it was introducing a 'genuinely revolutionary policy' and that the army — the backbone of every bourgeois state — had ceased to be bourgeois and had become 'half-sovietised'.

This is the real position of the pro-SWP groups in Portugal, which completely unmasks the fraudulent posturings of the Frankels and (Gerry) Foleys today. Like all revisionists, however, the sunny euphoria of summer has turned into a morbid wintry pessimism. Having placed all reliance on the AFM and the Constituent Assembly the SWP-PRT can do nothing except bemoan the fate of 'democracy' in Portugal and proclaim that all is virtually lost: '. . . there is no perspective for the workers taking power without a bloody civil war . . . it is possible that extensive petty-bourgeois layers in Lisbon could quickly [*sic*] go over to the side of reaction . . . it is going to be much more difficult for the workers to increase the momentum of their struggle without some viable political perspective. . . . Once the rightist officers get in a position to strike hard blows against opposition to their authority, they may be able to restore "discipline" rather quickly.' (*Intercontinental Press*)

Having worshipped the spontaneity of the masses in July, they now, predictably, deprecate the strength and combativity of the working class and implicitly glorify the power of the officers and the bourgeoisie! Such is the bankruptcy of the SWP revisionism which is epitomised and immortalised in Foley's support for the Azevedo regime: 'It [the government] was able to act with a force no one on the left suspected when it got the chance to *appear to act not as the destroyer of the freedoms gained by the masses after 1974 but as the defender.*' (*Intercontinental Press* p. 704. Our emphasis.)

The revisionists of the International Marxist Group like the International Socialists also claim that the failure of the paratroops' revolt imposed a defeat on the workers. They arrive at this conclusion by assuming that the 'military domination in Lisbon and the rest of the country is in the hands of the right — and in many cases the ultra-right . . . the massive revolutionary presence in the army is largely finished. Attempts to disarm the workers will proceed apace.' This conclusion rests on the belief, propagated by revisionists of many hues, that the main revolutionary force was inside the army. They now speculate on the relative weight of 'left' and 'right' inside the army as though such distinctions can be clearly drawn or are decisive. The same note of pessimism is seen in relation to the Communist Party — which is, in fact, the main barrier to revolution in Portugal. The IMG revisionists have found a convenient scapegoat in the other left groups whose illusions in the revolutionary potentiality of the army, as a substitute for the working class and the guilding of a revolutionary party, they fully shared. Essentially Pabloite in concept the IMG commentary on the ebb and flow of forces allegedly making for revolution in a spontaneous way, leads to swings from euphoria to pessimism as an empirical reaction to surface events. Hence, the IMG believes that 'the situation in Spain works entirely in

favour of the Portuguese revolution' as though in Spain problems comparable to those in Portugal will not be posed under conditions in which the army — or at least the officer corps — will attempt its own Bonapartist solution. The IMG, which itself sees the army (or part of it) as a revolutionary force, criticises the IS and PRP and says they 'have spread the most dangerous illusions in the nature of the left-wing officers in Portugal'. The IS method is the same as that of the IMG, superficial impressionism, but it leads in a different direction. Seeing the SP co-operate with the PPD, the Portuguese tendency similar to IS virtually describe the party of Mario Soares as 'social fascist'. Now it can be seen why the *Socialist Worker* ends up by blaming the working class for the defeat of the paratroops' revolt. The idiocy of the IS, so exposed to attack, obviates the IMG from the need to look into the way in which its own sister organisations have avoided the basic tasks in Portugal in pursuit of some illusory short-cut to power with the help of the elite COP-CON forces and the AFM.

This is a contemptible rejection of the Marxist analysis, which sees the working class as the only revolutionary force in capitalist society as well as its analysis of the role of the bourgeois army in a revolutionary situation. The success of the army revolt would only have resulted in the substitution of one kind of Bonapartism by another; one no less unstable and threatening for the working class than the present regime. It would have provided Carvalho with the direct route to power for which he has been preparing for some time. His own policy was the creation of bogus 'workers' councils' and the elimination of all left parties from political life. It was this combination of anti-Communism and populist demagoguery which attracted the revisionist IS in Britain. The period since then has been rich in opportunist political manoeuvres and double-dealing.

The struggle of factions has been going on inside the army ever since the fall of fascism. Some officers have appeared 'left' when they thought that it would serve their careers. In fact, as the *Economist* said of chief-of-staff Fabiao, he is 'a weak if not unprincipled officer, anxious to be on the winning side'. In August he declined to become Prime Minister under the group of nine moderate officers because they appeared to be 'losing ground'. He then went on to placate militant leftists in the army and has now presumably trimmed his sails once again. While these 'left' generals have enjoyed much of the limelight, other sections of the Armed Forces Movement have carefully gone about preparing the foundations for a military-police dictatorship. Although the 'military intervention' group was dissolved, there is little doubt that it will be revived again when the time is more opportune. Even more sinister is the transfer of thousands of soldiers to inactive duty and the equipping of the hated Republican National Guard and the Public Security Police with heavy weapons. Behind Azevedo, Jaime Neves, commander of the élite Amandora Rangers and his clique are preparing the base for a pre-emptive strike against the working class and the left parties.

The supporters of former president Antonio de Spínola, too, have not been inactive. They have a resistance movement in parts of the country with a powerful wing in the army, reinforced by officers who have returned from Angola. As the recent rebellion shows, the older reservists can generally be counted upon to support the right wing. The right-wing officers who control the opposition from exile — unlike the Stalinists and Socialists — have no

illusions at all in the fraud of parliamentary democracy. They are actively preparing for a right-wing dictatorship while barely tolerating the *status quo* in Lisbon. Both leaders of the illegal right-wing opposition — Alpoim Calvao and Santos e Castro (now leading FNLA forces in Angola) — are convinced proponents of military dictatorship as the only alternative to communism in Portugal.

Meanwhile the Portuguese economy is rushing headlong towards bankruptcy and chaos. Currency reserves could be exhausted within six months. Unemployment is already over the 400,000 mark. The government is determined to impose an austerity programme which will require huge cuts in working-class living standards. In other words the workers will be asked to give up all the gains made since the downfall of fascism to enable capitalism to survive. This can only be done by a victory of the counter-revolution, backed by all the forces of international reaction. The world bourgeoisie is determined to prevent the working class from taking power and opening the way for revolution in Spain and the whole of Europe. The severe economic crisis, combined with the belated historical development of Portugal, consummated by 50 years under fascism means that there is no basis for bourgeois democracy of the type which grew up in the more advanced capitalist countries. The demands of the working class have imposed further intolerable strains which simply cannot be contained within a parliamentary framework. The choice for Portugal is either proletarian power or a return to authoritarian government and the smashing of the trade unions and workers' parties. The luxury of parliament and basic democratic rights cannot be afforded by the Portuguese bourgeoisie propped up for half a century by fascist dictatorship and foreign loans.

The Azevedo government today rests politically upon the support of Stalinism and social democracy and economically upon the Common Market bourgeoisie. The decision of the Nine in October to funnel aid through the European Investment Bank with interest subsidies and to waive all financial protocol is a clear indication that the Common Market bourgeoisie sees the Azevedo regime as a principal safeguard against both social revolution and a massive penetration of US capital. But the new links formed between European capital and the Portuguese far from insulating Portugal's economy from the crisis will deepen it immeasurably. The implications of this are now being unfolded in a sharp polarisation of forces which is stripping bare the revolutionary pretensions of the Armed Forces Movement, exposing the Stalinists and reformists and plunging the petty-bourgeois revisionists into despair. The army remains the instrument of the bourgeois state which must be broken up by the intervention of the working class. The idea that the army as such can play a revolutionary role is completely reactionary. The soldiers can only play a revolutionary role under the leadership of the working class which must form its own militias to replace the standing army.

What emerges from the events of November 25 is that alongside the disarray of the leaderships, the working class stands undefeated and prepared to fight. The crux of the matter, therefore, is to resolve this crisis of leadership in the shortest possible time before the bourgeoisie can follow up the defeat of the military revolt with a decisive

attack on the working class. The spectre of Chile stalks Lisbon. Far from being behind the army, the working class is ahead; it forms a coherent and powerful force which has not known defeat since April 25. It must not wait on the army but itself pose its claim for power in the most resolute way. It must demand that the CP and SP form a government without bourgeois ministers or army generals and break clear of the AFM. This is the only way that Cunhal and Soares can be exposed. This can be brought about by a general strike to paralyse the economy and bring down the Azevedo government. The working class must set up its own committees, form militias and demand the disbanding of the police, the security forces and the army. Every attempt must be made to disintegrate the discipline of the army and shatter its morale. Regimental and battalion companies must be elected which will keep a vigilant eye upon the officers.

The International Committee of the Fourth International calls on all CP and SP militants to demand of their leaders that they break immediately and unconditionally with the Azevedo regime, fight for the release of all left-wing political prisoners and an end to state control of the radio, Press and TV.

- Down with Stalinism and social democracy, the mortal enemies of the working class!
- Build Committees of Action to defend the basic democratic rights of the working class and to rally all the oppressed people of the towns and country in action against the bourgeoisie.
- Down with AFM and the fake Constituent Assembly!
- For a genuine Constituent Assembly convened by workers' councils!
- Disfranchise the bourgeois parties!
- No surrender of arms to the Provisional government!
- Full political rights for the soldiers!
- Right-wing politicians, wealthy capitalists and big landlords must be arrested and put on trial!
- Industry and land must be nationalised under workers' control and a radical agrarian reform carried through with the abolition of the rural debt and the creation of cheap credit for poor farmers!
- Portugal must break the stranglehold of the international bankers on its economy, repudiate its foreign debt and establish a monopoly of foreign trade!
- Break with NATO and renounce all similar treaties and undertakings. It must recognise the Luanda government in Angola and give full backing to the MPLA and Fretilin in Timor!

Such a programme can rally the support of the working class and the mass of the poor peasantry. Only determined working-class leadership can block a military coup and win to its side or neutralise the petty bourgeoisie. Above all this means the building of the League for the Construction of the Revolutionary Party, the section of the International Committee of the Fourth International in Portugal. Only the LCPR can take the leadership of the working class and lead its struggle for power.

December 13, 1975

THE LCPR AND THE RENEGADE DOMINGOS NETO

LIGA PELA CONSTRUCAC DO PARTIDO REVOLUCIONARIO

OUR movement, the Liga pela Construçac do Partido Revolucionario, is the Portuguese section of the International Committee of the Fourth International, the world party of socialist revolution founded by Leon Trotsky in 1938. The base of our movement is the theory of Marxism, together with the conquests of Lenin and the Bolsheviks, the October Revolution, and the first four Congresses of the Communist International, together with Trotsky's struggle against Stalinism. In Portugal itself, our section was established in the last years of Fascist rule through a political break with the opportunism of the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI), which had split from the International Committee (IC) in 1971.

Neto was one of those who came from the OCI. For a period he was Secretary of the LCPR. In February of this year he was expelled. Although at that time he stated he was a sympathiser of the LCPR, he has since shown himself to be a vicious opponent of our movement, indulging in organised physical assaults on LCPR members and in using his property rights under bourgeois law to attack the movement. This hostility was already inevitable in the theoretical positions which he declared at the end of 1974 and beginning of 1975.

Neto is now a middle-class political adventurer whose only aim and activity is to attack the Trotskyist movement. The Central Committee of the LCPR warns the working-class movement that this man is a renegade from Marxism who is prepared to put himself at the service of the Stalinist and bureaucratic enemies of the working class. We warn also that if he tries to present himself as a Trotskyist this is a lie. He has no connection whatsoever with the LCPR or our paper *Vanguardia Operaria* and is a sworn enemy of our movement. His actions against our movement should be treated as the provocations which they are.

Neto makes demagogic statements about his demand for an LCPR Congress to discuss his 'differences'. Now that he attacks the movement openly we will make the differences public. They come under four heads:

1. Neto resigned as Secretary, the post to which he had been elected, heedless of all Party decisions. He deserted his revolutionary responsibilities.
2. The *only* document he submitted in the period between his resignation as Secretary and his expulsion from the LCPR was a short essay entitled 'The need for development of Marxist theory in the field of psycho-sociology.' (This essay is reprinted along with the present statement.) There was *no* political document of a programmatic kind.
3. The offices of the LCPR were legally in Neto's name. Three months after his expulsion and his own

declaration that he was a 'sympathiser', he organised a gang of eight people, armed with sticks, to attempt a violent take-over of this office, asserting his property rights. Comrades of the LCPR suffered physical injury. Since that time he has secured the premises by legal enforcement.

4. Although he did not write down his political position, Neto in fact capitulated to Stalinism. He rejected the revolutionary perspectives of the International Committee, and excused his failure to build the independent revolutionary party by constantly raising the sceptical question of whether Stalinism in Portugal could play a revolutionary role. To support this view he constantly suggested that Stalinism had a revolutionary role in China and in Cuba. As everyone knows, that is also the position of the petty-bourgeois revisionists of the 'United Secretariat' that Portuguese Stalinism has a revolutionary role. This is the form taken by the capitulation of the petty bourgeois in the capitalist state in Portugal, in the shape of the Armed Forces Movement (AFM) and their Stalinist supporters. It is the form taken by rejection of the revolutionary role of the working class.

Neto's decadent idealist views on psychology and psycho-therapy in relation to Marxism are his 'theoretical' rationale for this capitulation to the counter-revolution. It has been the position of all the European and American petty bourgeois 'New Left' that, as Neto puts it in the first sentence of his document: 'Capitalist exploitation oppresses the proletariat right down to the deepest entrails of each worker.' They see the proletariat only as an oppressed class, not as a revolutionary class. They can conceive of the proletariat *only* in terms of individual proletarians, each with an immortal soul incurably corrupted by capitalism. What 'objectivity' on the part of this petty-bourgeois, to see in a Portuguese working class which has overthrown Fascism after 43 years, only a class 'intimidated by alienation, exploitation and hellish repression'! In a fit of demagogy, Neto refers to the petty bourgeoisie as the group most afflicted by 'neuroses, sentiments of impotence, frustration', with 'the vices of the bourgeoisie on a smaller scale which spoil and defile its support for the working class'. But he is utterly blind to the petty-bourgeois nature of his *own* standpoint, that of the intermediate classes who identify their own interests with those of 'man' in general.

According to Neto, 'the class struggle is carried out at this alienated level'. This is nothing to do with Marxism. The class struggle is a manifestation of the struggle of the productive forces (of which the working class itself is the most vital element) against the social relations of production which constitute 'alienation' of the worker from his

own labour, from the product, from the means of production. Marxism has penetrated to the objective laws of motion of capitalist society, and the Marxist party's role in the class struggle is *not* carried out at 'the alienated level'. Because Neto sees everything through the eyes of the petty-bourgeois individual, with workers only as other individuals, oppressed and capable only of following the advice of the enlightened petty-bourgeois, he is caught in the vicious circle. This fits perfectly with his political position: the working class is not yet ready to fight for power, and so to desert the revolutionary party will not affect anything; in the meantime, everything can be left to the Stalinists. Neto cowers before the Stalinists and the AFM, and to excuse this he blames everything on the working class. Thus he writes: 'The masses are terrified by the dictatorship of the proletariat and of communism . . .' He considers the working class incapable of fighting for communism, for their own power, incapable of defeating Stalinism and of linking up with the workers in the political revolution in the USSR, Eastern Europe and China. He deliberately obscures this political revolution by referring to the Stalinist bureaucracy as having an 'equally deformed mentality'. All this psychological speculation is designed to erase the qualitative difference: that in 1917 the capitalist property relations were overthrown, and that the gains of the October Revolution must be defended and preserved through proletarian revolution in the capitalist countries and political revolution in the USSR.

Neto tried to establish for himself a special position in this counter-revolutionary attack on Marxism and on the working class. He argued that his psycho-social research was a necessary prerequisite of the proletarian victory, e.g. he writes: 'The process of transformation and creation of communist militants, which has always been done and is being done in practice in revolutionary parties, will only win if it is carried out scientifically on the basis of the development of Marxist practice and theory up to the level of psychology and psychosociology . . . Our workers and revolutionary militants *must be clarified* about the part played by neuroses, psychical and sexual misery, the misery of family and personal life suffered by the majority of humanity . . .'

But even this is not enough for Neto, who states also that 'It is *indispensable* to advance with therapeutic mass measures . . . a scientifically studied process of disalienation . . . with each comrade, carried out on the basis of freedom and responsibility.' (Our emphasis.)

Trotsky once wrote that as the revolution approaches the petty bourgeois emit an increasing amount of 'moral effluvia'. The petty bourgeois take these ethical outpourings to be general wisdom in the interests of all mankind, but in fact it is in the field of morality that class bias is strongest of all. The same man who puts forward his programme for the moral reform of all individuals speaks for a class which is actually destined either to support the revolutionary proletariat (given the resolving of the proletariat's crisis of leadership) or to be the plaything of the

reactionary requirements of the bourgeoisie. The time taken for this experience to prove itself depends on the relationship of class forces and the revolutionary tension in the situation. It took Neto only three months to show that his morality 'mass therapy' was to be implemented through the technique of organised physical assault on the revolutionary cadres plus the use of bourgeois property rights!

So much for Neto's version of the role of the revolutionary party as 'antevision of the future socialist and communist community.' This idealism was of course nothing to do with the Marxist concept of the revolutionary party. Only the vulgar evolutionist opponent of materialism and of the dialectic sees revolutionary change as just a spreading out of something which gradually grows within the old. In point of fact, the revolutionary party can only lead the working class to the conquest of power and the classless society if it consciously conducts an internal struggle against the pressure of hostile class forces within its own ranks. These pressures do not *decline* with time, through the 'disalienation' of the members or 'mass therapy'. They reach their highest point of tension as the revolutionary situation actually matures. This is precisely what happened to Neto himself! Ignoring the dialectic of the contradictory development of the party as a unity and conflict of opposites, he himself demonstrated that very dialectical process. He appeared, unable to break with the theoretical and political positions of the OCI, as the leading representative of counter-revolutionary pressure within the LCPR.

The LCPR Central Committee and the International Committee rejected Neto's position completely, and warned the whole movement of the reactionary implications of Neto's attack on dialectical materialism. We now warn the working class that Neto's development expresses clearly the dangers immediately in front. The crime of the Stalinist and Socialist leaders is that they collaborate completely in maintaining the capitalist state, acting on every occasion against the independent political activity and demands of the proletariat. Every step they take in this direction gives confidence to the reactionary forces in the AFM, just as it did in Allende's Chile. In this way the petty bourgeoisie is pushed into the arms of reaction, again as in Chile, to become the cohorts of physical assaults on the working-class movement. This is the historical significance of the provocateur-like actions of Domingos Neto against the Trotskyist movement.

The fundamental task before us shows through even more clearly as a result of this experience. The LCPR, on the basis of the decisions of the Sixth World Conference of the International Committee, appeals to all militants, youth and workers to join in the struggle to recruit thousands to the Trotskyist movement, the LCPR, for the 35th anniversary of Trotsky's assassination by Stalin's agents, in August 1975, and to build the revolutionary youth movement for the World Congress of revolutionary youth in November 1975.

Central Committee LCPR.

STATEMENT BY THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST LEAGUE, SRI LANKA SECTION OF THE ICFI

A COMPLETELY new period of the class struggle now opens up in Sri Lanka (Ceylon) with the final decision of the Prime Minister Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike to expel the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) from the coalition government on September 2, 1975. Behind this decision to end the LSSP-Stalinist-SLFP coalition government that came to power in 1970 and form a right-wing SLFP government, lies the failure of the Popular Front government to achieve any stability in the capitalist economy battered by the deepening world slump of capitalism and its inability to inflict a defeat on the working class.

All the reformist measures, wage freezes, speed-ups and all the other attacks on the living conditions of the masses attempted by the LSSP-CP leaders to 'solve' the bankruptcy of capitalism have failed miserably. The economy not only plunges deeper in the slump, but the working class and the peasantry are not ready to accept and bear any of the consequences of this crisis. The capitalist class took the decision to end the coalition because they have reached this impasse. Now they are attempting to provoke the counter-revolution, using all the weapons supplied in the past decade by the LSSP and Stalinist leaders in strengthening the state machine and protecting capitalist property from the struggles of the workers and peasants.

The establishment of a right-wing SLFP government is only the first step in this direction. They cannot stop short of establishing a Chile-type military dictatorship. The recent statement by Mrs Bandaranaike, that she decided to break the coalition with the LSSP not because she is opposed to 'socialism' because if that were so she would not have formed the coalition in the first place, is only a thin camouflage for what is really happening.

In the first place the SLFP's decision to form a coalition government with the LSSP, in 1964, was not at all over a question of 'socialism'. On the contrary, it was taken in order to protect the capitalist property system and the bourgeois state from the rising tide of the workers' and peasants' struggles which culminated in the 21 demands movement and the peasant demonstrations in the north-western province. Rejecting as impracticable the proposals made by certain sections of the ruling class to establish a military dictatorship to control the situation, Mrs Bandaranaike proceeded to form the coalition government as the only way out for the capitalist class. This is what she said:

'We cannot go backwards. We must go forward, disruptions, especially strikes and go-slows must be eliminated and the development of the country must proceed. Some people have various ideas on these subjects. Some feel that these troubles can be eliminated by the establishment of a dictatorship. Others say that workers should be made to work at the point of gun and bayonet. Still others maintain that a national government should be formed to solve this problem. I have considered these ideas separately and in the context of world events. My conclusion is that none of these solutions will help to get us where we want to go . . . Therefore, gentlemen, I decided to initiate talks with the leaders of the working class, particularly Mr Philip Gunawardene and Dr N. M. Perera.'

Now after 11 years of failure either to solve any of the problems of the economy or to control the working class, the ruling class is forced to end the coalition government. Look at the depth of the economic crisis. The results of the worldwide capitalist slump are reflected in Ceylon in the sharpest manner.

The balance of payments deficit which was 161.3m rupees in 1973 increased to 467.4m rupees in 1974. This is a four-fold increase. The balance of trade deficit in the first quarter of this year is 514.4m rupees. The total national income of Ceylon is 16,000 rupees whereas the total national debt is 12,560m rupees. Of this amount Rs957.88 is internal debt and Rs298.52m is foreign debt.

As the *Economic Times* has reported the estimated balance of payments deficit for 1975 would be around 3,112m rupees. It went on to say that 'this gives an indication of the balance of payments pressures the economy must contented with. Development assistance channelled through the Aid Consortium is established at about Rs812m and when adjustment is made for project aid estimated at 200m, an unfinanced payments deficit in the region of Rs2,100m still remains. This is the magnitude of the problem.'

These statistics reveal the prospect of immediate national bankruptcy. Together with this the slump in the industries has assumed record proportions. In April 1975 the production of flour fell by 21 per cent. Production of textile yarn fell by 41 per cent and that of textiles by 33 per cent. Production of plywood fell by 64 per cent, that of steel by 32 per cent and tyre production by 75 per cent. This deepening of the slump in a situation where the number of unemployed has risen to 3 million out of a total population of 13 million clearly exposes the policies of the coalition government and the capitalist class.

The government's decision to increase the fertilizer prices by 400 per cent in 1974 and to stop loan facilities for peasants has resulted in a catastrophic food crisis. The paddy (rice) collections by the Paddy Marketing Board in the first six months of 1975 is less by 5m bushels than that of the same period for 1974!

The entire responsibility for this economic destruction lies squarely at the hands of the capitalist ruling class. And at the same time this crisis has proved beyond doubt that the work done by the LSSP and CP leaders under the guise of pushing the SLFP to the 'left' to solve the problems of the masses is a trap laid for the working class. As these leaders prevented the working class from taking power and implementing a socialist programme, by spreading illusions about the 'progressive path' of the SLFP and the national bourgeoisie, the SLFP in turn went more rapidly to the right to create massive unemployment, economic destruction and national bankruptcy.

The SLFP and the capitalist class cannot and will not stop at this. They are preparing to pay huge compensation to British imperialists under the fraud of the taking over of tea estates. Who pays for this? Is it the capitalist class? No! It is the workers and peasants who will have to

pay for it. In the same breath they have come forward to open up the country for imperialist capital, hoping to preserve their profits, even assuming the role of the compradors. On this count the SLFP is preparing a bill to protect imperialist investors from the 'nationalization threats' of the workers and to smash trade unions to create the best possible conditions for imperialist exploitation. Precisely because of this rightward leap, the SLFP is creating conditions for a CIA coup in Ceylon. They have covered up for the mysterious expenditure of the US Embassy in Ceylon under the PL480 rupee bank account.

It is this government that halved the rice ration; that made sugar unavailable in the market that raised the fertilizer prices by 400 per cent and the prices of all the essential foodstuffs. And it is this government that abolished the free medical service and raised the transport fares. This government that took all these steps to put the whole burden of the crisis on the backs of the masses with the help of the LSSP and Stalinist leaderships is now making preparations to take even more extreme and sinister measures.

The people of the country have given no mandate whatsoever for the SLFP to take any of these measures. This was proved beyond doubt in all the bye-elections, where the SLFP was routed in all except one. The working class, rallying round the 28 demands for higher wages and for the implementation of a programme of socialist nationalization, has shown its determination not to let the burden of the economic crisis be imposed on the toiling masses. During the last five years all the sections of the working class including the urban and estate workers and teachers who are participating in island wide strikes for the first time, the rural youth and the students have repeatedly taken the offensive against the government.

Only the treacherous LSSP and Stalinist leaderships protected this government by incorporating the notorious Public Security Act into the constitution, by supporting the Criminal Justice Commissions Bill and the Press Council Bill and supporting the military-police repression against the workers and the youth. Basing itself on the military, the police, the emergency laws and on the provocative civil disobedience campaign mounted by the right wing UNP, the SLFP now breaks the coalition paving the way for a right wing dictatorship.

There is only one way for the workers and peasants to defend themselves against the economic attacks and their basic rights from the counter revolutionary political attacks: drive out the SLFP and form a workers' and peasants' government!

If the working class is not mobilized to win the support of the peasants to establish a workers' and peasants' government then the capitalist class will return with enormous vengeance to smash all the class organizations of the working class and form the military dictatorship.

The LSSP leadership which by joining the coalition government strengthened the bourgeois state, and allowed the ruling class to prepare for counter revolution will now take the position of pressuring the government from outside to 'push it to the left'. These leaders who now comb the SLFP to find 'back bench progressives' are disarming the working class and covering up for the conspiracy hatched by the SLFP and the UNP. The Stalinist Communist Party still cling to the SLFP government and say that they are fighting to establish the 'unity of the progressive forces' from within the government. In fact, as the bourgeoisie breaks the Popular Front to impose a dictatorship, the task of these leaderships is to prevent the

working class from taking power and pave the way for counter revolution. The counter revolution which is being prepared by the ruling class under the protection of this right-wing SLFP government cannot be defeated by the 'Popular Fronts' or under the fraud of 'defending bourgeois democracy.'

Only the mobilization of the working class and the peasantry behind the revolutionary party to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat can beat back the conspirators. In Ceylon, only the Revolutionary Communist League, the section of the International Committee of the Fourth International, fights on this programme.

The LSSP and Stalinist leaderships and the revisionists and centrists are utterly hostile to this fight. The search for 'progressives' in the SLFP against the right wing and to defend the bourgeois state under the guise of protecting parliamentary 'democracy' will have only one effect: it will allow the capitalist conspirators and their state to implement their plan of counter revolution. At the same time this is the best possible way to isolate the working class from the peasantry and the middle classes! On the other hand the Pabloite revisionists around Bala Tampoe and the Robertsonite centrists around Edmond Samarakkody are sabotaging the struggle for workers' power saying that the workers are not yet ready.

Only a working class leadership which rejects these treacherous Stalinist, reformist and centrist misleaderships to mobilize themselves around a socialist programme and win the support of the peasantry and middle class, by fighting to smash the capitalist state machine, and disband the groups of conspirators, can meet the challenge of the present situation. As the only way to meet the economic crisis we fight to mobilize the working class around the following programme:

- In a situation where national bankruptcy is threatened, stop paying compensation, interest payments and repayments of loans to the imperialists.
- Expose all the capitalist cliques and parties who attempt to pay them, isolate them and drive them away!
- Break from the financial and political institutions of imperialism.
- Nationalize all imperialist and capitalist property under workers' control without compensation.
- Establish workers' control over agency houses and nationalize them!
- Establish a state monopoly of foreign trade.
- Expand trade relationships with East European countries, Russia and China. Demand the revolutionary help of the workers of advanced capitalist countries against the threats of imperialists.

The following programme is the only immediate answer to the food crisis:

- Take profit out of fertilizer, chemicals corporations etc and bring down the prices of essential goods necessary for agriculture. Nationalize the fertilizer and chemical corporations under workers' control!
- Nationalize the transport services and establish workers' and peasants' control over the distribution of food.
- Abolish all rural debt! Nationalize all banks to grant credit facilities for the peasants!
- Nationalize land!

The only way to defend the right to work and ensure jobs for all is to nationalize without compensation under workers' control all industries and banks. The only way to protect the living conditions of the workers and the peasants is to bring to power, in opposition to the SLFP-UNP

government, a workers' and peasants' government which immediately implements this programme. We call upon all workers, peasants and youth to rally around the RCL to implement such a programme by forming a workers' and peasants' government.

At the same time we demand that the LSSP and CP leaders who speak in the name of the workers and peasants, should fight for a mandate for this programme against the SLFP government. We fight to expose them at every point of their retreat and build the RCL as the revolutionary party of the working class. To defend the basic democratic rights of the working class against the attacks of the capitalist government and state and from the CIA and similar conspirators and also from the capitalist goon squads, we demand that a united front of all the working class parties, trade unions and organizations must be immediately formed on the following programme:

- Bring down the SLFP government.
- Withdraw the emergency.
- Repeal the Public Security Act; Press Council Act and the Criminal Justice Act.
- Disband the standing armies — which provide a fertile breeding ground for reactionary coups — and replace it with a workers' and peasants' militia.
- A workers' inquiry on PL 480 money transactions.
- Defend all the struggles of the workers and peasants on basic rights by mobilizing the entire strength of the working class.
- Dissolve all the mysterious and conspiratorial organizations such as Sarvodaya; Marga etc.
- Release all the left-wing political prisoners.
- Defend the rights of all the working-class political tendencies to publish newspapers, to hold public meetings and demonstrations.
- Form action committees uniting in action all the members of all the political tendencies of the working class to fight for the above programme in every factory, town, locality and village.

The RCL takes the initiative to unite the entire working class in action — against the bourgeois state, its parties and its conspirators — in the struggle to defend the basic democratic rights. At every stage of this struggle it is necessary to fight for a revolutionary constituent assembly and for a constitution against the capitalist legislature and its anti-democratic constitution. This is necessary to:

- Establish all the language rights of the Tamil speaking masses.
- Establish the citizenship rights of the plantation workers.
- Establish secularism in education and mass media by abolishing the state religion.
- Separate from the Commonwealth.

- Deprive the parties and cliques who defend private property any right to pose as the people's representatives.

We demand that the LSSP and CP leaders fight for the convocation of a constituent assembly from the representatives of the trade unions, factory workers, peasants and the oppressed masses in the north to legislate the above programme. All the leaders who retreat from the whole struggle are opening the door for the counter-revolution. The LSSP and CP leaders who violently turned against all the struggles of the masses, to protect the capitalist state in the past period, will continue to do so. Hence the fundamental question is to expose and defeat these leaderships and build the RCL as the revolutionary party by demanding that they break from the bourgeoisie and take power to implement a socialist programme.

Only the ICFI opposed the entry of the LSSP into the coalition government in 1964 on a principled basis. The ICFI warned the most advanced sections of the working class about the seriousness of the crisis which demanded the direct participation of the LSSP in the government. It is the ICFI which fought to prepare the working class for the taking of power. The middle-class cliques around Bala Tampoe and E. Samarakkody who rejected this perspective and argued for the past ten years that 'the economic crisis is not so sharp' and that the 'working class is not yet ready for power' helped the great betrayal of the LSSP-Stalinist leaders. Refusing at every stage to fight for the transitional programme to unite the working class in the struggle to conquer power they opposed the exposure of the LSSP-CP leaders by forcing them to break the coalition and take power

Only the RCL warned since 1970 about the implications of the economic crisis and the class role of the SLFP and the coalition government. We fought in the working class to build the revolutionary leadership for the taking of the power

The RCL as the Ceylon section of the International Committee of the Fourth International fought to drive out the treacherous leaderships who refuse to take power always posing the taking of power as the central question that the working class faced.

Now the coalition is over. All the manoeuvres of the 'left' leaders are aimed at giving the time the bourgeoisie needs to establish the dictatorship. There is only one way forward before the vanguard of the working class and the youth: join the RCL and transform it into the revolutionary party.

- Expand the twice-weekly *Kamkaru Mawatha* and *Tolilal Pathei*.
- Build the Rs 100,000 fund for the daily paper.
- Build the 3rd Conference of the YS in October.
- Transform the RCL into the revolutionary party.

September 2, 1975

STATEMENT BY EDITORIAL BOARD OF 'SOCIALIST CHALLENGE'
PAPER OF THE WORKERS INTERNATIONALIST LEAGUE,
GREEK SECTION OF THE ICFI

From Slump to Crash! No Return to the 1930s

THE Greek capitalist economy has entered the ante-room of total bankruptcy, threatening the working class, the youth and the poor peasants with dangers of enormous dimensions. The complete slump in production is already a reality, openly admitted by the most authoritative spokesmen of the bourgeoisie. Investment, both public and private, has completely stopped, industrial production is falling, the balance of payments is in the worst position since the war and the Karamanlis government is orienting itself towards a large-scale devaluation of the drachma. At the same time, unemployment is rising at an enormous pace — according to the latest figures, it rose by 41 per cent from March 1974 to March 1975. After the complete slashing of public spending, implemented by Karamanlis a few months ago on the demand of the international banks and monopolies, the ending of all investment is now acknowledged.

The contradictions of the capitalist system have reached their highest point. Now the system itself cannot function. The industrialists have lost their confidence in the future of their system have reached their highest point. Now the system itself cannot function. The industrialists have lost their confidence in the future of their system, and, as the big industrialist Katsabas confessed, no new investment in industry has been planned, not only for 1975 but also for the whole of 1976! *Naftaboriki* (the economic journal) gives an explanation of this in the following characteristic words: 'The economic conditions, the state policies, the *psychological climate* above all — above all indeed, feeds doubt, disbelief and fear and forces one to wait. And waiting concerns *every investment activity*, not just one, two or several sectors. *There is no investment at all for reasons known to everybody.*' (Emphasis added.)

Foreign monopoly capital, together with its Greek dependents, has today to face a strong working class which has overthrown the junta. The capitalists' 'doubt' and 'disbelief' about the ability of the Karamanlis government to impose on the working class the demands of the monopolies is growing every day. This is the most important reason among those 'known to everybody'. The Greek capitalist economy, in the conditions of a frenzied trade war, carried out on an international scale, will suffer further crushing blows. Its only 'hope' for survival is to impose on the working class the consequences of the crisis, creating mass unemployment. This is exactly the problem for the bourgeoisie. And it must be solved through a struggle with the working class. The Karamanlis government is trying, with deliberate provocations like the recent Athens attack against the building workers' demonstration, to create the conditions for imposing a decisive defeat on the working class.

It tries to rally around it the most impoverished and confused strata of the middle class, in order to turn them

against the working class. But owners of capital have expressed their doubts about the ability of Greek capitalism to go on functioning as before, by a sharp turn from buying shares to depositing their money in the banks. In June, deposits rose by an unprecedented 90 per cent, which shows that money is desperately looking for a way out, since it cannot be invested in industry. But there can be only one way out for this surplus capital: its destruction, with tremendous consequences for the whole production process.

Commenting on this unprecedented increase in its deposits, *Oikonomikos Tachydromos* (another economics journal) wrote: 'In the present conditions of the worsening crisis in the balance of payments, it is possible that *tornado-like forces will arise suddenly* which will transform the dormant liquidity in the banks into a factor that will subvert the relative equilibrium of today.' (Emphasis added.)

For some time now, the bankruptcy of many industries is a reality. Marinopoulos (the president of the Greek CBI) is prepared to 'open in front of the workers the books' of these bankrupt enterprises and of those that are going to follow.

Finance capital, which controls industrial production through loans, demands from the Karamanlis government the guaranteed safety of its invested funds, since industry is unable to do so. The banks themselves face immediate bankruptcy. Since capital cannot be invested, it cannot have any return and the functioning of the banks is impossible in these conditions. The increased deposits not only do not solve any problem, but, on the contrary, they make the problems of the banks more sharp, because the banks have to pay interest rates to depositors without themselves collecting any rates from industry.

Under the pressure of finance capital, the Karamanlis government was lately discussing the possibility of a take-over of the bankrupt enterprises by the banks and of investments by a group of banks, since this is no longer being done by industry. This Utopian conception shows the absolute dead end for the bourgeoisie. If the banks could invest, there would be no reason why the industries could not do the same. But the banks as well as the industries are working, under capitalism, with profit as a criterion. The only force that now has an interest in setting in motion all the productive forces is the working class.

This condition of Greek capitalism is clearly reflected in the balance of payments. The figures revealed recently to the economics correspondents by the director of the Bank of Greece, Prof Zolatas, show clearly that the threat of state bankruptcy is on the agenda.

1930 is here. It only remains to be declared so. Imports, despite being drastically slashed, are going to cost this year \$5,000m, while exports are not going to cover even 40 per

cent of the imports. In a period where the foreign exchange reserves do not suffice for even one year's needs in oil, the capitalist state needs right now \$500m to pay the interest on its borrowings from abroad. Under these conditions, the international banks not only cannot, but are not prepared to give any more loans to an already bankrupt state. At the same time, the 'invisible earnings' that for so many years covered an important part of the balance of payments deficit, are steadily declining.

To meet this situation, Zolotas, according to the *Oikonomikos Tachydromos*, thinks that '... the time has come for a re-examination of the "disparity of purchasing power"; i.e. the time has come to devalue the drachma by a large percentage, and to cut back imports drastically. This will lead to an enormous rise in prices and a steep fall in the standard of living of the masses. This today is the strategy of the Karamanlis government.

Kolmer, the commentator of the *Oikonomikos Tachydromos* who came back recently from his 'studies' in America, speaks the language of the international bourgeoisie when he writes: 'If we got used to living beyond our means, there is no other way to face our problem than to get used to it. The rest is a question of "technicalities" ...'!

In a period when the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) itself points out that the international capitalist economy and especially the Greek, will go through a 'difficult period', Zolotas speaks pointlessly about a 'favourable climate for the industrialists, in which they must dare now (and not tomorrow) to make their new investments.' At the same time as he points out that no investment must be made in the building industry, Zolotas's claims that 'we must be ready for the reflation that is coming' are a reactionary charade aimed at disorienting the working class from their real tasks — the struggle to overthrow this rotten system that is going towards total bankruptcy. The working people must not be fooled by such declarations of the bourgeoisie.

The working class and the peasants cannot allow the monopolies and the Karamanlis government to throw them into a misery even worse than that of the 1930s. Unemployment in the EEC countries is already over 4.5 million. What is the immediate danger today is the very existence of the working class and not the jobs in one or another section. There can be no normal way out of this crisis. The bourgeoisie knows this very well and the talk about 'solutions within the limits of the possible, the normal, the non-revolutionary' is fraudulent talk.

The bourgeoisie seeks to create a corporate state in order to subordinate the working class to its own needs. In

this attempt of the bourgeoisie, the most dirty role is played by the Stalinists who want to tie the working class to the state-controlled leadership of the General Confederation of Trade Unions (CGT). This is also the meaning of the recent appeals of Dracopoulos (the Communist Party's right wing faction) for a 'National Council' and a 'National Government'.

There is only one way to 'solve' the crisis: the independent mobilization of the working class to bring down the Karamanlis government and to establish workers' and peasants' power. Only the Workers Internationalist League has undertaken this mobilization with a programme of transitional demands:

- All big industry and the banks must be nationalized, without compensation and under workers' control.
- The workers must answer the mass lay-offs with factory occupations and with the demand to open the books under the control of workers' committees, as a first step for the establishment of workers' control.
- A sliding scale of hours and wages to secure jobs for all.
- The Agricultural Bank which robs the peasants must be put under workers' and peasants' control. Cheap fertilizers and low-rate loans must immediately be given to the poor peasants.
- The mechanism of suppression by the bourgeois state, the army and the police used by Karamanlis against the working people, the youth and the peasants, must be disbanded.
- Armed workers and peasants and the workers' militia must replace them to settle accounts with all the junta-ite mafia protected by Karamanlis and to smash any attempt at a right-wing coup.
- Withdraw the counter-revolutionary alliances of NATO and the EEC, which are daily conspiring against the democratic rights of the working people. Out with the bases of death, the foreign military bases.
- Councils of Action must be built everywhere to unite the working class in the struggle against the attacks of the capitalist state, for the defence of democratic rights and to lay the foundations of working-class power.
- Down with the Karamanlis government — for a workers' and peasants' government!
- Build the revolutionary youth, that will become the basis for the building of the mass revolutionary party.
- Build the Workers Internationalist League, the section of the International Committee of the Fourth International in Greece.

THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL AFTER LENIN



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



FRANZ MEHRING Absolutism and Revolution in Germany 1525-1848

Germany from Luther's time to the age of Marx saw the rise of Prussian absolutism and the growth of the revolutionary proletariat. Mehring's book — here published in English for the first time — gives a clear and penetrating account of the development of the German state and its history of class struggle. Writing from the standpoint of historical materialism, Mehring reveals how the power of Frederick the Great rested on feudal backwardness, how the impotent German bourgeoisie clung to absolutism in the face of the revolutionary workers of 1848.

This volume begins the publication of a series of first English editions of the major writings of Franz Mehring, the leading Marxist theoretician in German Social Democracy and a comrade of Luxemburg and Liebknecht. Fully annotated and illustrated with contemporary drawings and a map.

JUST PUBLISHED!

Price £1.80 plus 25p postage.

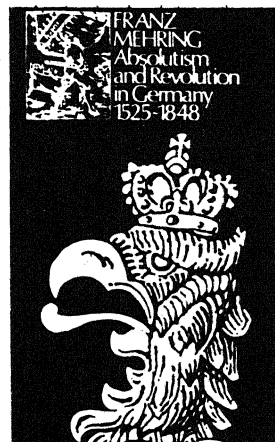
AMOUNT ENCLOSED

NAME

ADDRESS

.....

Post to 186a Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UG



Stalinism and the liberation of Vietnam

BY STEPHEN JOHNS

(part two)

THE DEFEAT OF US IMPERIALISM

The defeat of US imperialism was the most heroic phase of the long and bitter Vietnamese revolution. America was the greatest military power the world had ever known. The US military machine utilized all the science and technology of capitalism for one purpose — the destruction of the world revolution by force. For more than 15 years the liberation armies of Vietnam were the main target. The bombing offensive was called 'Operation Rolling Thunder' — a graphic description. The US air force dropped the equivalent of 450 Hiroshimas on this small nation. Night after night, day after day, the B-52s would unload over the North, turning the countryside, the cities, the towns and villages into hellish infernos where nothing above ground survived. The Tass news agency reported one such raid on December 28, 1972: 'The B-52 bombers came in large numbers and from a high black sky they dropped their carpet of bombs right in the middle of Hanoi and the immediate suburbs . . . the bombs poured like rain . . . everything was destroyed.'

But one thing was indestructible — the revolutionary will of the Vietnamese workers and peasants in the North and the South. This was the period when the Revolutionary Workers Party (Lao Dong) leadership in Hanoi and the National Liberation Front leaders in the South demonstrated their revolutionary mettle by mobilizing and leading the whole of the Vietnamese masses to victory. Ho Chi Minh said before he died in 1969:

'The war may last another five, 10, 20 or more years; Hanoi, Haiphong and other cities may be destroyed but the Vietnamese people will not be intimidated.'

The American imperialist attitude to the war was characterized by a blind arrogance and a pragmatic belief in the superiority of weapons over political morale. Their ideology was that of a global imperialism — the complete domination of all the resources and peoples of the world for the benefit of US capitalism. In April 1965 as the bombing of the North got under way the US Secretary of State Dean Rusk made this appraisal of foreign policy:

'Unhappily, a minority of governments are committed to different ideas in the conduct and organization of human affairs. They are dedicated to the promotion of the Communist world revolution . . .

'The overriding issue of our time is which concepts are to

prevail: those of the United Nations Charter or those proclaimed in the name of the world revolution?'

Frank N. Trager, a US 'theoretician' of the Vietnam war had some useful ideas on how American policy could be made to prevail. To conquer the vexed problem of NLF influence among the oppressed people of the Central Highlands he suggested:

'The sparse Vietnamese-Montagnard population near the border can be easily moved to new villages which will have the protection and the civic action service of the Special Forces [CIA]. All persons then found in or seeking entrance to the border — except at prescribed checkpoints — would be regarded as enemies and treated so [i.e., tortured and murdered]. (Trager — *Military Requirements for US Victory, in Vietnam*, Penguin Special, 1965. Original emphasis.)

The problem of stopping the infiltration of liberation forces was, Trager conceded, more difficult:

'It requires a large-scale effort at bulldozing and defoliating the jungle — carving out a zone of visibility — and building a long north-south military road and intercommunications base system.'

Defoliation, climate warfare, chemical bombs, germ bombs, poison bombs, napalm, fragmentation bombs, half-a-million troops, helicopter gunships, aircraft carriers — the American military machine was a giant, but a giant with feet of clay. The professors and officers eagerly applied their pragmatic methods to the 'simple' task of wiping out the enemy. The intensity of their efforts was the best measure of their failure. All the resources of imperialism could not produce an objective understanding of what was going on in Vietnam or a viable strategy capable of containing or defeating the NLF. Such knowledge of course was the possession of the Vietnamese leadership. It was based on its *revolutionary practice*, involving both political struggle and military conflict, posited against its old experience from the earlier campaigns. 'Today,' said Ho Chi Minh, 'it is the case of the grasshopper pitted against the elephant. But tomorrow the elephant will have its guts ripped out.' By 1965 the military 'guts' of US imperialism were beginning to spill out all over the South. By day the NLF controlled 60 per cent of the country, by night 80 per cent — membership had grown from 300,000 in 1962 to some seven million. US advisers admitted in private that they had lost the war

on the ground. What the American military strategists had not counted on was a leadership with a long history of struggle against imperialism, extensive support amongst the working class and the peasantry and with an unparalleled knowledge of the strategy and tactics of People's War.

The lessons of the war to oust the French were carried into the Southern struggle by the People's Revolutionary Party formed as the undisputed guiding force of the NLF in January 1963. All over the South liberation committees (women's workers' and peasants') were built on the basis of a programme embodying the experiences of the national liberation struggle in the North. The NLF's appeal was broad, aimed at drawing the widest sections of the masses into the anti-imperialist struggle. The 'struggle movement' launched in the countryside was a permanent political campaign that utilized every incident of conflict between the masses and imperialism as a source of political education.

The strategy was brilliantly successful. The Americans found that they could only govern through a series of corrupt, brutal, dictatorships that lacked any mass base. The backers of US imperialism were almost entirely mercenaries who fought and opposed the NLF for solely money, self-interest and self-gain. The programme of the NLF was given flesh in the propaganda of the liberation associations. The social aspects of the anti-imperialist struggle were always stressed. Like the leadership in the North the NLF approached the liberation war as part of an 'uninterrupted' revolution (establishing bourgeois democratic rights — national independence, free speech, land reform) spilling over from the bourgeois stage into a socialist revolution.

The NLF and the People's Revolutionary Party of course repeated the theoretical weaknesses of the Vietnamese leadership. They talked of a 'people's democracy', a 'national democratic' government — hang-overs from the Stalinist formulations picked up during the period of training under the Stalinist Third International. But the ultimate goals of the struggle were not disguised. On one occasion Party members accused the NLF of a 'bourgeois' orientation. Why was there stress on reducing rents in the countryside? Why confiscate the land only of the pro-American landlords? What about the slogan 'land to the tillers', the critics asked. *Nhan Dan*, the party newspaper in the North, replied: '... slogans must be fulfilled in accordance with existing circumstances and requirements of the revolution... However, certainly in the end, the slogan "Land for the tillers" will be fulfilled.' The experience in the North had demonstrated that this was so.

As the war of US intervention deepened the PRP was forced to cast aside whatever democratic and populist illusions it had and adopt a more sombre communist profile. The following extract from a PRP cadre training manual of October 1965 reveals that the Hanoi leaders saw the liberation and the unification of Vietnam as an integral part of the uninterrupted transformation of social relations and the setting up of a workers' power in alliance with the liberated peasantry:

'The party [objective] . . . is to overthrow imperialism, colonialism, and feudalism, to build a life of peace, prosperity and happiness without oppression and extortion.

'Once independence is obtained, the next step is unification, constructed and consolidated in every way to make the country powerful and rich, a stronghold of peace.

'Then will come the social reorganization, along socialist-

communist principles, without land demarcations, cooperating in rural electrification, re-education of individuals, nationalization of private property, cultural and scientific education for everyone, progressing day by day to better and better things in all fields.

'Also, helping other small weak countries to struggle against imperialism and rid the world of conflict and to help provide everyone with freedom, legality, warmth, food and happiness . . .' (*Vietcong* by Douglas Pike).

The language may seem quaint but the message is unmistakably clear. Independence, unification and socialist construction are seen, not as separate epochs in time, but as contiguous phases in the establishment of a workers' state in alliance with the poor peasantry. In all probability the PRG will be forced by pressure of circumstance and the growth of a rural capitalism to combine socialist measures with its programme of unification or face the prospect of its political expropriation by sections of the peasantry backed by the remnants of the native bourgeoisie, the dissident religious sects and world imperialism.

The military aspect of the Vietnamese struggle against US imperialism is a study in itself. Only the broadest outlines can be covered here. The war divides roughly into three periods.

1960 to 1965: what the Vietnamese called the 'special war', when the Saigon puppet government escalated the offensive backed by a growing number of US 'advisors'.

1965 to 1969: After America staged the 'Tonkin Incident' (a provocation off the North Vietnamese coast) President Johnson got Congress agreement for direct military intervention without declaring war. By 1969 541,000 US troops were in Vietnam. Bombing raids through this period.

1969 to 1975: The so-called 'Vietnamization' of the war. The US, gripped increasingly with economic crisis, suffering devastating military defeats in Vietnam, faced with massive protest at home and more important growing unrest in the working class due to the crisis, was forced to start withdrawing troops.

Tactics of victory

'Vietnamization' was beginning of the end. The puppet troops were incapable of fighting the NLF and the North Vietnamese forces. Saigon was increasingly isolated after the Paris agreement of 1973 its days were numbered. The closer US imperialism got to total defeat on the ground the more savage and indiscriminate became the retaliation against the Vietnamese people. The war became the ultimate technological nightmare. Large areas of North Vietnam were sown with tiny seismic devices which picked up the smallest movement. The devices were tuned in to the US computer centre at Phnom Phnom in Thailand. Here the data was analysed. The final stage was the launching of the bomber fleet against the unknown, unseen enemy — it could have been a herd of buffalo, peasants at work or children going to school — no matter, if it moved it was destroyed.

Pentagon war planners inspired by the massive destruction wrought by the US airforce in Korea imagined that aerial bombardment on an even bigger scale would defeat the NLF and the North. They were wrong. So mistaken in fact that even leading military figures began to dissent publicly. One such figure was ex-General Ridgeway — UN commander in Korea after the sacking of MacArthur. In *Look* magazine of April 1966 Ridgeway pointed out that there was no comparison between the Vietnamese and



Khe Sanh, the US fortress which was surrounded and obliterated by NLF and North Vietnamese forces.

Korean wars. He warned of the impending US disaster:

'Relatively little terrorist activity occurred in South Korea. United Nations personnel rode in open jeeps throughout our zones without drawing an assassin's fire. Our power easily contained guerrilla activity, even though our forces were neither as well equipped nor as mobile as they are in Vietnam. . . . In short our line of battle was well defined, the enemy clearly identifiable, and the political decisions were sharp. . . . None of these conditions holds in Vietnam today. . . .

'Korea also taught us that it is impossible to interdict the supply routes of an Asian army by air power alone. We had complete air mastery over North Korea, and we clobbered the Chinese supply columns unmercifully.

'Unquestionably we inflicted serious damage on the Chinese and greatly complicated their problems of reinforcement and supply. But we did not halt their offensive nor materially diminish its strength. . . .

'After the Chinese repulsed the ill-fated advances on the Yalu, General Douglas MacArthur himself emphasized his disillusionment with the value of tactical air power. It could not isolate the battlefield, he said, and its effectiveness had been greatly overrated.

'It is easy for the civilian mind to be seduced with talk of "easy" conquest through air power. But the crucial battles are still won by foot soldiers.'

The general's grim and prophetic remarks went totally unheeded by the Pentagon bureaucracy, intoxicated as they were with the prospect of an 'easy' conquest from the air — backed by a vast array of electronic technology.

The leaders of the liberation struggle deployed the method of protracted war against the enemy. This eventually involved the arming of the entire masses, with the People's Army in the North (and later the South) and the NLF regulars, as the fighting core. Protracted war falls into three stages. The formation of alliances, agitation among the masses, political education, the construction of fighting units and selective strikes against the enemy. In this stage the role of the party cadre is vital. The second stage approximates to the guerrilla war. In the offensive against the enemy flexibility and mobility is the essence. It is a war of attrition, the guerrillas strike with concentrated force when temporarily in a position of strength and then disperse. Conflict with an enemy superior in numbers, or military strength, is always avoided. A qualitative change occurs in this second stage of the liberation struggle when the enemy ceases active pursuit and decides to hang on to what he has got. This allows the liberation forces their own territory and the ability to build up stable political and economic bases. From this point they can become more offensive-minded — the guerrilla units become larger.

Mobile warfare dominated the scene. General Giap the Vietnamese military leader described this as 'a form of fighting in which the principles of regular warfare gradually appear and increasingly develop but still bear a guerrilla character'. The third stage is the frontal assault phase. The conflict comes to resemble conventional warfare. The guerrilla activities continue mercilessly behind the

enemy's lines, but the bulk of the fighting is done with large regular units of the People's Army.

There appears to have been a great deal of discussion and some controversy within the Lao Dong and the NLF about the precise character of this third stage. It centred on whether the end was to be sought through a General Uprising, which would have an overwhelmingly political character; by means of outright military victory; or by means of negotiation — or by some combination of the three. As it happened the liberation of the South appears to have been a combination of outright military victory combined with an uprising in the very final days of the assault on Saigon.

The Vietnamese struggle cannot, however, be understood as a military campaign. It was a revolution, carried through by the masses, arms in hand. War and revolution were inseparable, the leadership of the People's Army and the proletarian party essential. (For the political and the military aspects of the anti-imperialist struggle Giap's writings are the best source. A hostile, though very thorough, investigation is conducted by the US 'advisor' Douglas Pike, in *Viet Cong* MIT Press, 1966.)

After 1965 it was obvious to most observers that America could not win in Vietnam. The only possible imperialist response to the liberation forces was the greater and more widespread use of mass military terror, and finally total nuclear devastation.

Diplomatic in-fighting

The war was agonisingly prolonged because of Stalinist policy. The Moscow Stalinists were by the 1960s completely committed to peaceful co-existence and 'detente' with the main imperialist powers. They deprived the Vietnamese of the necessary supplies, weapons and personnel for 'speedy victory'. It was a cynical counter-revolutionary policy. Vietnam was now deprived of support to the extent that the resistance began to flag. The struggle of the Vietnamese masses was also used by the Soviet Stalinists to extract concessions from the US capitalist class. Outright support for the revolutionary war however would have shattered 'detente' with the US and drawn the bureaucracy into an open confrontation with imperialism — an event that would have had a dramatic effect on the Russian masses on which the parasitic bureaucracy rested. The Chinese too came to display a disregard for the Vietnamese revolution. The later stages of the war witnessed a round of squalid diplomatic in-fighting between Moscow and Peking for the allegiance of the US. The growth of the Chinese bureaucracy, and its counter-revolutionary international policy, was a direct result of its own failure to break definitively from Stalinism. The Stalinist manoeuvres however did not succeed in smothering the Vietnamese revolution. As *The Times* commented in one of its many Vietnam editorials: 'Try as the Russians may to keep the Vietnam war from destroying the basis of co-existence with the Americans, the task gets harder as the escalation grows.'

One of the first top-level discussions between imperialism and the Stalinist bureaucracy over Indo-China was in June 1961, when Kennedy met Khrushchev in Vienna. Little detailed information came out of the meeting. But later in a speech Kennedy conceded the war in South East Asia had been discussed. Kennedy made this discreet reference to the Stalinist approach:

'Mr Khrushchev emphasized a point that I would like to recall.

He said that numerous disorders are happening in the world and that not all of them should be attributed to him.'

Over a year later in an interview with the French newspaper *Le Monde* Khrushchev was even more explicit on the true nature of peaceful co-existence:

'How can humanity be rid of this kind of suffering? [He asked rhetorically.] If you are Marxists you say: by liquidating capitalism, by giving power to the workers, in this way there will obviously be no more fighting.

'But if we demanded that other countries change their social system and adopt ours, we would find ourselves in contradiction with peaceful co-existence. The act of imposing a system on another country would lead to war . . . We live on a basis of mutual concessions. If we want peace, we have to build up peaceful relations on the basis of acceptable mutual concessions.'

With this unspeakable cant and humbug the Stalinists covered up their counter-revolutionary role. It was of course the American ruling class who were attempting to impose their 'system' on the Vietnamese.

Lenin on 'peace'

Lenin dealt with Khrushchev's reformist pacifism many times in the course of his exposure of the social-democratic traitors who voted for World War I in 1914:

'Some of the means employed to fool the working class are pacifism and the abstract preachment of peace. Under capitalism, particularly in its imperialist phase, wars are unavoidable . . . The idea of the possibility of a so-called democratic peace without a series of revolutions is deeply erroneous.' (*Position and Tasks of the Socialist International*.)

In his article 'On the Peace Question' Lenin attacked the whining after peace, detente, co-existence, etc., that characterized all Soviet foreign policy under Khrushchev:

'The peace slogan can be advanced either in connection with definite peace conditions, or without any conditions at all, as a desire for indefinite peace, for peace in general. It is obvious that in the latter case we have a slogan that is not only not socialist, but that it is entirely devoid of meaning . . . 'Slogans must be advanced in order to make clear to the masses, by means of propaganda and agitation, the irreconcilable difference between socialism and capitalism [imperialism]; they must *not* be advanced in order to *reconcile* two hostile classes, and two hostile lines by means of a little word which "unites" the most divergent things.' (Original emphasis.)

The Moscow Stalinists preached 'indefinite peace' in order to win concessions from imperialism and stabilize their own position directly at the expense of the world revolution. The 'peace' and 'co-existence' policy of the Moscow Stalinists was repeated in the metropolitan capitalist countries where the Stalinist parties refused to call for the victory of the NLF — until the very end of the war. They teamed up with sections of the middle class, the social-democratic left, Christians etc. — in all manner of vigils, protests. The worth of such allies was amply demonstrated when the NLF conducted a terror attack on the enemy headquarters — the US embassy in Vietnam — in 1965. 'Left' MPs Eric Heffer and William Molloy delivered a note to the US Embassy in Britain stating: 'We would like you to know how much we deprecate this senseless act of violence and we express our profound sympathies for the victims and our abhorrence at this wanton act.' Such were the peace-loving allies of the Vietnamese! The one thing the Stalinists would never do in the metropolitan countries was to mobilize the working class against the capitalists for the taking of power.

Towards the end of the Vietnam struggle the collaboration between imperialism and Stalinism became quite open. The Vietnamese leadership were stung on several occasions to deliver thinly veiled attacks on this international treachery. They were, of course, in a difficult position, since they depended, to an extent, on the arms and supplies from China and Russia.

The flurry of diplomatic activity intensified after March 1968. President Johnson's advisors told him 'Operation Rolling Thunder' had been a failure. The 1968 Tet offensive — a simultaneous uprising of the NLF all over the South, accompanied by an invasion of the People's Army from the North — had demonstrated to the Americans how little impact their enormous expenditure of men, machines and aid, had made on the liberation forces. Johnson announced his retirement — he had been broken by the war. The US appealed for peace talks, and under pressure from the Russians, the North Vietnamese sent representatives to Paris. As the preliminary discussions got under way. Nixon was elected president on the promise that he would pull the US out of Vietnam and leave the fighting to the South Vietnamese — backed, of course, by US military aid. The Americans put forward a five-point programme involving a cease-fire and a withdrawal of troops to the respective zones — it was Geneva all over again. Robert McClosky, the State Department Secretary, frankly disclosed: 'What we would like, of course, would be for the Soviet Union to use its considerable influence with the North Vietnamese and the so-called Provisional Revolutionary Government towards acceptance of these new US proposals.'

The North Vietnamese and the NLF leaders contemptuously rejected such US 'offers'. They had learnt their lesson in 1954 when the partition of Vietnam and the withdrawal of Vietminh units north across the 17th parallel had set back the revolution several years. Now the Lao Dong leadership began to attack the bureaucracy. The statements were at first restrained — but their target, the Moscow and Peking leaderships was clear enough.

America's military position got worse. The puppet troops of the South, backed by fewer and fewer US troops, were unable to check the advances of the NLF and the regular North Vietnamese units. Nixon struck out wildly. In March 1971 the CIA engineered a coup in Phnom Penh and deposed Prince Sihanouk's neutral Cambodian regime that had provided sanctuary for the Vietnamese liberation forces. The coup was followed by a US invasion of Cambodia.

The Moscow Stalinists did nothing. They maintained diplomatic relations with the rightist Lon Nol regime in Phnom Penh. (In October 1972 at the 17th UNESCO conference the Soviet delegate voted to accept the Lon Nol representative in place of the emissary of the Cambodian government in exile). The Cambodian invasion achieved very little. The NLF was able to continue its operations and supplies down the famous Ho Chi Minh trail continued to pour into the South. In Cambodia the Khmer Rouge liberation army rapidly encircled the Lon Nol dictatorship.

A new round of diplomatic activity commenced. In July, 1971 Kissinger made a secret trip to China. This opened the way for a Nixon visit in February 1972. Two months later the President was the guest of the Moscow Stalinists. The Vietnamese Party organ *Nhan Dan* warned against Nixon's reactionary strategy of utilizing the split between the Moscow and Chinese bureaucracy to drive back the revolution. *Nhan Dan* said Nixon's policy con-

sisted of 'dividing the socialist countries, winning over one section in order to oppose the national liberation movement and carry out a counter revolution'. Nixon was attempting to achieve a compromise between the big powers in an attempt to make smaller countries bow to their arrangements, said *Nhan Dan*.

Chief enemy

The attack became more outspoken. Radio Hanoi declared that: 'It would be sheer ignorance and stupidity for Nixon to continue to harbour illusions about the possibility of using the strength of big countries to bully a small country.' The Vietnamese refused to bow to this secret diplomacy and continued the fight. The American position became critical. The extent of corruption, cowardice and demoralization within the puppet army got worse as US troops were withdrawn. The last American unit left in October 1972 — leaving 43,000 advisors behind. In a stroke of wild aggression Nixon ordered the blockade of the Northern ports with 'unsweepable' mines in May 1972. Supplies would have to be carried across the mainland of China. But the squabble between the bureaucracies held them up. China refused passage for Russian equipment arguing that the Soviet navy should clear the mines from North Vietnamese waters.

In the same month Nixon was greeted in Moscow. According to Radio Moscow he was 'a sincere negotiating partner'. 'Our country,' said this cynical Stalinist broadcast, 'observes in its foreign policy the Leninist principles of peaceful coexistence.' The love affair between the Russian Stalinist leaders and possibly the most aggressive warmonger in history had begun. It was to end only when the totally discredited Nixon was removed after the Watergate scandal.

But Hanoi made it clear to the world that it would not be a party to a deal between imperialism and Stalinism, made across the bodies of the fighters who had given their lives for the liberation of their country and their revolution. In a remarkable editorial *Nhan Dan* denounced the secret diplomacy. It warned 'those who are departing from the great all conquering revolutionary thoughts of the time and who are pitifully "bogging" on the dark muddy road of compromise.' It continued:

'Who is the chief enemy of the world revolution? Where lies revolution and where counter-revolution? These questions, which were easy to answer in the past, have become today puzzling questions because of unhealthy tendencies. [These tendencies were those who had succumbed to the 'Machiavelian policy of "reconciliation" with the US imperialists.]' 'For the socialist countries safeguarding peace and carrying out peaceful co-existence cannot be separated from the world movement for peace, democracy and socialism. 'If this is aimed only at carrying out the narrow immediate interests of a country, it will not only harm the revolutionary movements of various countries but in the end will bring to those very countries incalculable losses and make them give up their internationalist duty.'

The *Nhan Dan* editorial ended with this declaration:

'The revolution of each country is an integral part of the world revolution, and the revolutions of all countries have the effect of impelling and assisting one another. The victory of the revolution in a country is not the end but only the beginning of the long travel towards the triumph of socialism on a world scale.'

This was a significant statement from the Vietnamese leadership. They talked of peaceful co-existence. But in

the same editorial *Nhan Dan* stated that agreements with imperialism can be made only if they 'impel the offensive of the revolution forces.' If they are made 'out of the narrow interests of one's nation . . . to help the most reactionary forces to avert the dangerous blows' they become a 'cruel reconciliation beneficial to the enemy, and not beneficial to the revolution'. This was a correct perspective. The *Nhan Dan* editorial came at a crucial period of the struggle in the liberation of Vietnam. All the forces were bearing down on the leadership to make it capitulate. But it did not. The revolutionary struggle was continued and led to a break with peaceful co-existence and a sharp criticism of Stalinism. Without this leadership South Vietnam would still be under the yoke of the US puppets.

The most savage episode was about to be unleashed against the North Vietnamese. In October when the last regular US units left Vietnam the US imperialists began a frantic search for some agreement. The secret diplomacy escalated. Podgorny visited Hanoi (the Nixon administration thoughtfully suspended the bombing attacks for fear of obliterating or embarrassing their co-partner in 'peaceful coexistence'). Kissinger visited Peking and Moscow. 'Initiatives' were discussed but Hanoi and the NLF remained firm. On December 17 the Paris 'peace talks' were 'recessed'. Nixon ordered the most intensive bombing raids so far on Hanoi, Haiphong, the countryside and the Red River dykes — the only bulwark against the flooding and total destruction of the densely populated Delta area of North Vietnam. For 12 days a mass aerial terror — far worse than the allied bombing of Dresden, worse than Hiroshima and Nagasaki — was unleashed against the North. The Stalinists stood by while the American ruling class attempted to force the Vietnamese leadership to capitulate by threatening total destruction. On January 27, 1973 the Vietnamese signed the Paris peace treaty.

What did it mean? The world Press asked the chief Hanoi representative Le Duc Tho this very question. He replied: 'I am a Communist. According to Marxist Leninist theory, so long as imperialism exists there will be war.' In fact the Paris agreement reflected both the weakness of US imperialism — now gripped by the world economic crisis of capitalism — and the treachery of the Stalinist bureaucracies.

The International Committee of the Fourth International made this assessment:

'The Paris agreement has changed the form in which the civil war will take place. If US imperialism is too weak to regain control of the South, the NLF and Hanoi conversely have been deprived of the modern armaments necessary to conquer and decisively defeat the Saigon armies and the US air force.

'The Thieu puppet regime [the latest and the last US backed dictatorship], despite the concessions of the NLF and Hanoi and the technical superiority of its army and air force, has lost the strategic initiative in the civil war.

'Hated by the peasantry and harassed by the guerrillas the Saigon regime is now rapidly succumbing to the dual pressures of inflation and corruption'.

Saigon and the Americans had also been forced to make concessions. Large NLF zones in the South were recognized. The ultimate aim, a government of 'concord' including the NLF, was agreed. The division of Vietnam was accepted as 'provisional' and the presence of the large People's Army units in the South was either ignored or tacitly accepted. There were no post-Geneva illusions on the part of the NLF and the Lao Dong leaders after Paris. Before the ink was dry they warned that 'reactionary forces would sabotage the agreement'. They continued to

demand fulfilment of the Paris terms but throughout maintained and escalated the struggle against the rotten Thieu regime.

It was a combination of revolutionary leadership and the sharpening economic and political crisis of imperialism which accounted for the final victory in April, 1975. One of Giap's greatest strengths was his ability to see the struggle not just from its military standpoint in Vietnam, but as part of the global conflict between the working class and imperialism. He realized, even before Paris, that the political and economic crisis of US imperialism would be a decisive factor. He knew also, that, mobilized behind a revolutionary leadership, the forces of world revolution were stronger than imperialism. There can be no doubt that this understanding accounts, to a large extent, for Hanoi's intransigence in the face of Stalinist pressure to capitulate. In a speech to his troops in July 1969 (recently published in English in *People's War against US Aero-Naval War*, Hanoi, 1975) Giap made the following analysis of the Nixon policy of 'Vietnamization':

'This new strategy is an official acknowledgement to the American and world's people that the US was economically, politically and militarily weak. It shows that the US is no longer in a position to squander its money and scatter its armed forces all over the world to meet the requirements of massive responses as it did before.

'Though still clinging to their role of world policeman, the US imperialists are compelled to reconsider the key points of intervention and to revise the extent and method of intervention in their counter-revolutionary global strategy. They must tailor this strategy to a situation in which the balance of forces in Vietnam and in the world is more and more unfavourable to them.

'But they are very obstinate. Behind the camouflage of the Nixon doctrine and the 'Vietnamization' of the war the aggressive and warlike nature of the US imperialists is always apparent.

'They continue to pursue their neo-colonialist and warlike policy in order to consolidate their position, dominate the capitalist world and carry out their global strategy.'

[*Giap continued*]: 'The American imperialists are doing their best to achieve their "Vietnamization" plan in order to get out of their quagmire in South Vietnam. This is an aggressive plan in all fields — military, political, economic — a most perfidious strategic scheme, aimed at consolidating their defence line, pushing forward the pacification programme and destroying our liberated zone. . .

' . . . "Vietnamization" for the US was a way to get out of the war but also an effort to win a position of strength while being in fact in a losing position. It is an aggressive plan full of contradictions and considered a crazy dream by public opinion in the world as well as in the US.

'With an expeditionary force over half a million strong, the US has bitten the dust. How can it expect to carry the day when the GIs are superseded by a disintegrating puppet army and our people and armed forces are growing in strength and posture in the military and political fields?'

The collapse of Thieu

Inflation, rising unemployment and super-exploitation in the factories resulted in a growing militant offensive by the American working class. This merged with the mood of disgust and demoralization infecting large sections of the American people over the useless slaughter of 50,000 youth in a war the imperialists could only win by obliterating Vietnam in a nuclear holocaust. In the US significant sections of trade unionists began to join the anti-war protest while in Vietnam a mood of mutiny and passive resistance began to seize the conscript army. In its

main points Giap's prognosis turned out to absolutely correct. By 1973 the US was the centre of the deepening world economic crisis which resulted from the breakdown of the inflationary boom and proceeded to the collapse of orderly monetary relations between the capitalist powers, the development of run-away inflation and finally the transformation of boom into slump. The colossal cost of the war was itself a crippling burden on US capitalism. Military expenditure is largely parasitic, representing a forcible transfer of surplus value from the non-military to the military sector of the economy. As the tendency of the falling rate of profit intensified in the US powerful voices within the capitalist class were raised against the ever-expanding vista of military aid to the South.

The 'Vietnamization' policy was a total failure. After Paris the US found it was still spending more and more to prop up the creaking Thieu regime. Aid flooded in at the rate of £5,300m a year — twice the total national income of the South. It was as if US capitalism was giving its puppet supporters 10 or 11 times their yearly incomes merely to buy their allegiance in the fight against the world revolution. In fact the aid mountain was squandered in the morass of corruption that spread out like a fetid swamp from Saigon. Generals and politicians became dollar millionaires overnight, delving deep into the US treasure chest.

Under imperialism, the South had developed a hideously distorted economy. Cut off from the North, it existed on the US capital input. After the withdrawal of US troops the crisis became acute. (The North also suffered — the partition deprived it of the bulk of its traditional food supplies, but the Democratic Republic of Vietnam enjoyed the advantage of nationalized and planned property relations and a consistent land reform.) Inflation soared to over 200 per cent a year. Drastic price rises of 50 to 60 per cent were decreed by the bankrupt Saigon regime. Towards the end of Thieu's rule mass unemployment began to develop, as companies, dependent on the massive US presence in Vietnam, collapsed. Strikes and mass demonstrations, led by the NLF and supporters of the Provisional Revolutionary Government, undermined the authority of the regime.

When the final offensive came after the New Year of 1975 the shell of the puppet administration cracked wide open revealing a totally rotten core. The US mercenaries were incapable of any resistance. The last offensive resembled a stampede to the South away from the advancing liberation forces. (The best account published so far is in the latest Hanoi publication: *The Thieu Regime Put to the Test, 1973-1975.*)

The day before May Day 1975 the first NLF units penetrated Saigon. Twenty four hours earlier the working-class population had staged an uprising throwing the puppet regime into total chaos and flight. At the head of the victorious columns rode barefoot teenage fighters, veterans of the revolutionary struggle that had triumphed over the largest and most barbaric imperialist power in history. After three decades of war and oppression the liberation of Vietnam was complete.

Leadership

It is vital for the revolutionary movement to understand the lessons of the liberation of Vietnam. The long struggle in Indo-China clearly reveals the crucial importance of the peasant masses in colonial countries. It is essential for the proletarian revolutionary party to take the leadership of

the peasantry in colonial and neo-colonial countries. Without this, victory is impossible. The agrarian and national questions are inseparable and are the motor force of the anti-imperialist revolution. To underestimate either of these issues is fatal.

The Vietnamese revolutionary war is however a living example of the correctness of Marxism as developed by both Lenin and Trotsky. In particular it represents a vivid illustration of the permanent revolution. The combined and uneven development of imperialism, its brutality and warlike nature throws forward the revolutionary struggle in backward countries where the masses are dragged from feudalism under the yoke of foreign capitalist oppression. Such countries can take the proletarian revolutionary road decades before the outbreak of revolutionary struggles in the metropolitan capitalist countries. Yet the fate of these revolutions is bound inseparably to the world revolution, which depends for its final victory on the emancipation of the powerful working class of the imperialist countries.

The other great lesson is the indispensable role of leadership in the revolution. Without revolutionary leadership there could have been no revolution in Vietnam. The links between the Vietnamese leaders and Stalinism and their training in the Stalinist Third International, led to many grave weaknesses at crucial junctures in the struggle and at times seriously imperilled the prospects of ultimate victory. The Vietnamese masses paid dearly for the liquidation of the Vietnamese Trotskyist movement. It deprived them of a clear understanding of the permanent revolution, therefore disarmed them in the face of imperialism and Stalinism. They paid dearly for Geneva. But the principal Stalinist danger did not come from within Vietnam but from outside, in the form of the Moscow, and later the Chinese bureaucracies. In breaking empirically from the dictates of Stalinist peaceful coexistence the Vietnamese leadership were able to carry through the revolution.

All those petty-bourgeois movements who like to condemn the Vietnamese leadership as 'traitorous', 'Stalinist', 'counter-revolutionary' etc., must do one thing. They must account for the Vietnamese revolution. Could such a bitter battle, for thirty years and more, against everything imperialism has to hurl at the working class, faced with such treachery from Moscow and Peking, have been successful without revolutionary leadership? It would most certainly have been impossible.

Revolutionary violence

But it would be entirely incorrect to suppose that the Vietnamese leadership — having carried through their revolution — are therefore immune from the social forces that led to the growth of Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union and China or the consequences of their confusion on the Trotsky-Stalin struggle. To understand and combat the dangers of bureaucracy would require a thorough assimilation of the permanent revolution and the theoretical gains of Trotsky's struggle against Stalinism and the building of the Fourth International. It would require a thorough internationalist perspective.

This the Vietnamese leadership do not have. It can only come out of the construction of sections of the Fourth International in South East Asia, including Vietnam. This however does not detract from the fact that by breaking from Stalinism empirically, and advancing the world revolution, the Vietnamese leadership have undermined the Stalinist bureaucracy. This is a third great lesson. The

advance of the world proletarian revolution does not strengthen Stalinism, it weakens it.

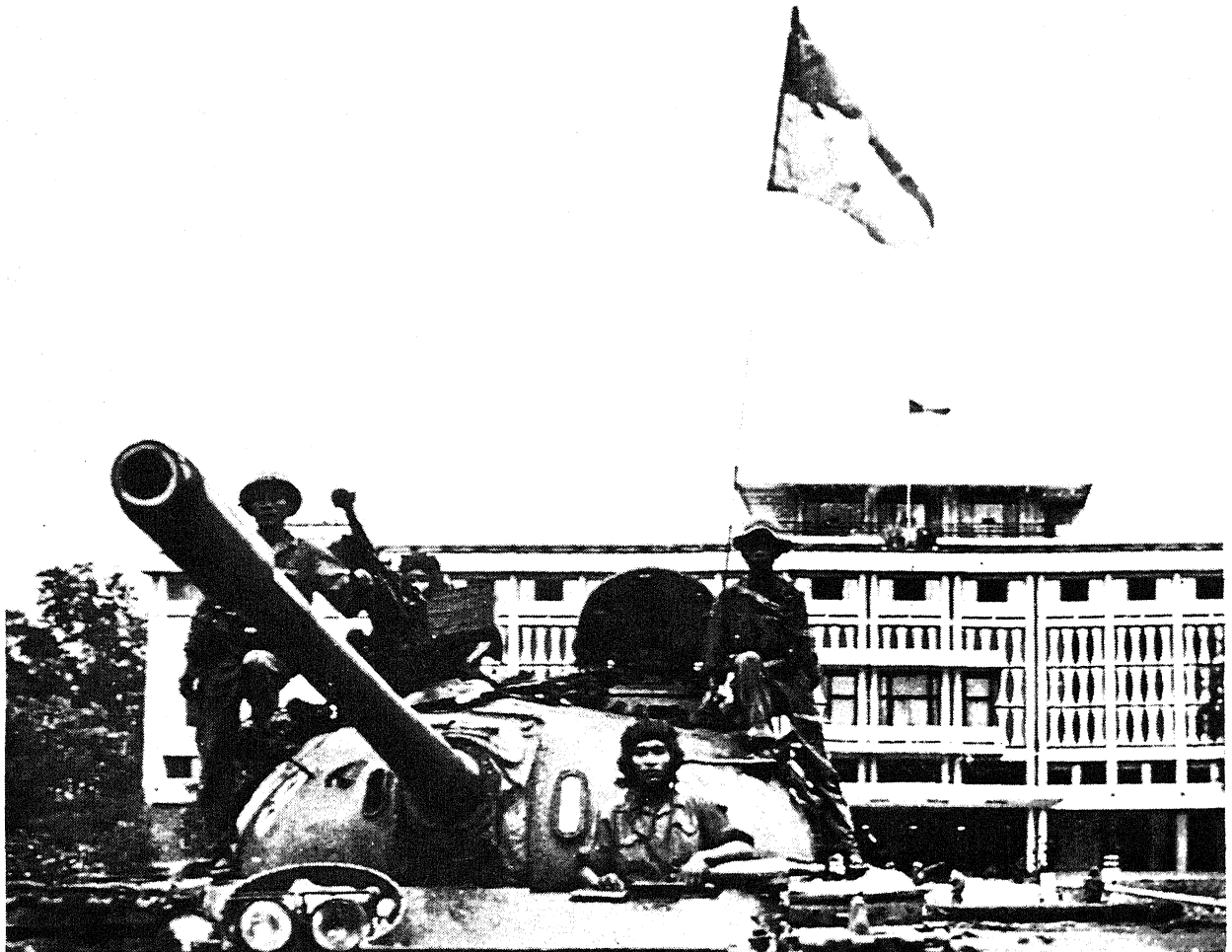
The Soviet Stalinists are alarmed at the victory in Vietnam since it shattered the peaceful co-existence myth that imperialism cannot be defeated by the revolutionary movement of the working class led by a Marxist party. The bureaucracy now makes a pathetic attempt to turn the victory in Vietnam into triumph for the policy of peaceful coexistence. On the day of Saigon's liberation Brezhnev told a Kremlin gathering that he hoped 'the elimination of hotbeds of war in Indo-China would assist detente between the United States and the Soviet Union.' While Brezhnev spoke Schlesinger, the US Defence Secretary, was warning that the next confrontation would be in Korea, and this time US imperialists would use nuclear weapons.

But the Vietnamese revolution has proved above all that the emancipation of the working class and the peasantry requires the seizure of power. This is the final lesson of the Vietnamese struggle — there are no peaceful, diplomatic, democratic, gradual roads to socialism. Power has to be taken by the masses led by the revolutionary party. This applies to all countries of the world. For the benefit of the peaceful coexisters we end with a quotation from General Vo Nguyen Giap's latest work to be published in English — *To Arm the Revolutionary Masses, to Build the People's Army* (Hanoi, 1975).

'Marx and Engels . . . showed the proletariat the most correct way to liberate itself: the working class, under the leadership of the Communist Party and in close alliance with the peasantry, should make use of revolutionary violence to shatter the State machine of the bourgeoisie and establish the State of proletarian dictatorship, using it as a tool to safeguard the rule of the proletariat and transform society along the principles of communism.

'The military organization of the proletariat is set up primarily in connection with this great cause of the proletarian revolutionary struggle. Rising up to break their fetters and overthrow the whole of the old world, the proletariat and the revolutionary masses, must, of necessity, proceed to build their own military organization in the course of the revolutionary process. This is necessary because a material force can only be overthrown by a material force, and only violence can help carry out the great historic mission of overthrowing the rule of the capitalist and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat.'

- Long live the Vietnamese revolution.
- Unconditional defence of the deformed workers states in Hanoi and Saigon.
- Critical support for the Vietnamese leadership.
- Down with Stalinism and peaceful coexistence.
- Build section of the International Committee of the Fourth International in every Asian country to lead the struggle for the proletarian revolution.



The Liberation of Saigon: May Day 1975. A unit of the Peoples Liberation Army outside the captured headquarters of the Thieu puppet regime.

WHY THE REVISIONISTS OPPOSE THE VIETNAMESE REVOLUTION

In the struggle to defend the Indo-Chinese revolution from its imperialist foes and its revisionist detractors the International Committee of the Fourth International has invariably incurred the charge of being 'conciliatory' to Hanoi and even 'capitulating' to Stalinism.

In their time the revisionist-liquidationists of the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI) who now grovel at the feet of the Stalinist and the social-democratic bureaucracies in France, refused to demand 'Victory to the National Liberation Front' (NLF) or even the recognition of the Provisional Revolutionary Government on the grounds that the Hanoi leadership and the NLF were betraying the Vietnamese workers. (They even said this on the eve of the Tet offensive.)

Consequently the bewildered OCI members and their youth movement were instructed only to support the completely abstract and disembodied slogan — 'Victory to the Workers and Peasants in Vietnam'. Concretely of course, this meant opposing the military and political struggle of the NLF and Hanoi and giving objective support to the imperialist butchers in Vietnam who were equally prepared to decapitate the mass movement of its leadership in Vietnam and tolerate any kind of government save that of the NLF.

This was also the standpoint of the anti-communist American group the Spartacist League as well as the Socialist Workers Party which qualified its anti-war campaign by confining itself to the pacifist demand 'Bring Back the Troops Now' and by refusing — for fear of provoking a chauvinist reaction in the American middle class — to raise the slogan 'Victory to the NLF'.

This reactionary petty-bourgeois tradition now finds its clearest expression in Britain in the renegade group the Workers Socialist League. In the article 'Vietnamese Trotskyists' its paper *Socialist Press* (June 12, 1975) deliberately distorts the history and attitude of the Workers Revolutionary Party on the Indo-Chinese revolution and in doing so reveals with great clarity its purulent, counter-revolutionary course.

Distortions and lies

The intervention of this group is of some political importance. The Thornett clique displays the characteristic hostility of petty-bourgeois revisionism towards revolutionary leadership. They must therefore become more openly counter-revolutionary after the Vietnam revolution which has enormously sharpened the conflict between the working class throughout the world and the forces of imperialism. The WSL 'analysis' of the liberation of Vietnam and its diatribe against the Workers Revolutionary Party is a clear example of this degeneration.

The WSL deploys its usual mixture of distortion and downright lies in this attack in order to smuggle through a

profoundly reactionary assessment of the events in Vietnam. The distortions and lies must be dealt with first.

Through their publication *Socialist Press* the Thornett clique attempt to 'prove' that the Workers Revolutionary Party has given 'uncritical support' to the 'Hanoi regime' and abandoned the fight against Stalinism. The June 12 issue states: 'In Workers Press on May 10 the Provisional Revolutionary Government's [of South Vietnam] foreign policy was described — without qualification or criticism — as "revolutionary internationalism".'

In fact the *Workers Press* of May 10, 1975 makes no mention whatsoever of the 'Provisional Revolutionary Government's foreign policy' — the words 'revolutionary internationalism' are used, quite correctly, to describe a speech made by one of the National Liberation Front leaders. It is worth going into this matter in some detail since it exposes a common trick used by the Thornett group — the use of quotations torn completely out of context. It represents a shameless adulteration of material written in the revolutionary movement.

The *Workers Press* on May 10 gave over half its foreign page to report the reactions to the victory of the Vietnamese revolution. The first article dealt with the Stalinists. We wrote: 'The sharp contrast between the unprincipled politics of the bureaucracy in Moscow and Peking and the revolutionary principles of the national liberation forces in Indo-China continues to stand out. In the last 48 hours Brezhnev has spoken publicly to get the US imperialists off the hook over the defeat in Vietnam and the Chinese have given a new propaganda boost to the Common Market. At the same time, the new revolutionary governments in South Vietnam and Cambodia have been speaking to the opposite effect — to encourage the revolutionary struggle against imperialism by workers and peasants everywhere.'

In a separate article we stated: 'Compare the reactionary deeds of the Kremlin and Peking bureaucracies with the revolutionary deeds and sentiments of the NLF leaders. Nguyen Tron Vinh said at a rally in China: "Led and educated by our Party, all soldiers and people in our country carried forward the national tradition of tenacity, thoroughly understanding that there is nothing more valuable than independence and freedom. Clearly realizing their internationalist duty to national independence movements and revolutionary movements of the oppressed peoples throughout the world; fighting bravely, fearing neither hardship nor sacrifice, overcoming all difficulties, and determined to win victory". Vinh continued: "The strength which enables our people to win this victory comes from the three revolutionary currents in the world at present and from the strong international support for our just cause. This constitutes a great strength displayed by the three nations of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia fighting in unity and assisting one another against their common enemy and winning a common victory."' Vinh ended by pledging that the revolutionary unity bet-

ween the three nations would be maintained against imperialism.

In a *third* article we stated: 'The speech by Nguyen Tron Vinh is the *revolutionary internationalism* which the Kremlin and Peking Stalinists have so totally abandoned.' (Emphasis added.) There is no mention of the PRG. No mention of the foreign policy of Vietnam. No suggestion that the Vietnamese leadership has somehow acquired a revolutionary internationalist perspective of the Trotskyist movement based on the Permanent Revolution. But we do state correctly that the speech by Nguyen Tron Vinh, expresses a perspective of the upsurge of the international revolution that is completely alien to the Moscow and Chinese bureaucracies and the line of peaceful co-existence.

The Thornett Press has, in other words, cobbled together a bad forgery in order to uphold the false accusation that we are giving uncritical support to the PRG. Hanoi and the foreign policy of the Vietnamese leadership. The *Socialist Press* of June 12 continued its distortions. It stated: 'On May 12 it [Workers Press] spoke of "the consistent revolutionary line pursued by the NLF since they first took up arms in 1941".'

Out of context

This one sentence is wrenched out of the scores of articles written in Workers Press on the Indo-Chinese revolution to suggest that the Workers Revolutionary Party is somehow covering up for the liquidation of the Vietnamese Trotskyists by Ho Chi Minh and his Party in 1945. In fact the Workers Press article suggests nothing of the kind. The full context of the extract is as follows:

'The developments in Indo-China are more than just a successfully completed national liberation struggle of primary interest to the workers of Vietnam and Cambodia. The immediate declaration of revolutionary solidarity with the workers of Laos, still fighting to remove every last influence of international monopoly capitalism from their own country, is one measure of the internationalism of the National Liberation Front and the Khmer Rouge. Another is the revolutionary acts carried out by both new regimes since taking power, first and foremost the smashing of the old state administrative apparatus right down to the smallest hamlet level. On top of dismantling the old state power and building a new state structure of revolutionary committees, the new regimes have virtually abolished capitalist property relations overnight. All economic management has passed to the state of the armed workers and peasants. *This continues the consistent revolutionary line pursued by the NLF since they first took up arms in 1941 after the French abandonment to Japanese military invasion.*' (Emphasis added.)

'They did not waver from their line despite all the deals signed by the international Stalinist bureaucracy with imperialism to wind up revolutionary struggles everywhere in favour of "peaceful co-existence" between the two social systems. The NLF's revolutionary principles survived Stalinism's post-World War II agreement with imperialism over "spheres of influence" which wiped out revolutionaries wholesale. They survived the niggling supply of arms which the Stalinists in Moscow and Peking only supplied because they were obliged to by their contradictory position at the head of degenerated workers' and peasants' states with nationalized property relations. They survived two "peace" agreements imposed by the bureaucracy which both let the defeated imperialists off the hook — the French in 1954 and the Americans in 1973 — and allowed the capitalist rump regimes to continue in the south.'

What is being stated here is that the Vietnamese leadership — the Vietminh, the Vietnamese Workers Party, the

National Liberation Front and the Peoples Revolutionary Party — never abandoned their revolutionary perspective of overthrowing imperialism. If this was not so, just how did the Vietnamese revolution come about? How was it possible for the workers and peasants of Vietnam to sustain a revolutionary war against imperialist oppression of the most brutal and horrific kind and achieve victory, without a revolutionary leadership? It is precisely this question, as we shall see later, that the WSL, beneath their tissue of lies and distortions, seek to avoid.

Slanders

The Workers Press article of May 10 cannot in any sense be described as seeking to justify or cover up the killing of the Vietnamese Trotskyists, nor does it argue that the liquidation of the Trotskyists was a progressive act. These suggestions are merely the slanders thrown at the Workers Revolutionary Party by the Thornett clique. The WSL in fact raise the issue of the liquidation of the Vietnamese Trotskyists as a launching pad for their own reactionary analysis of the Vietnamese revolution.

First they attempt to distort the Manifesto of the Sixth International Congress of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) published in Workers Press of June 2.

After quoting only *two* paragraphs of the three-page ICFI manifesto, the Thornett clique level the following slander: 'This [manifesto] is a shabby deceit. The Vietnamese Trotskyists were not martyred, they were physically and politically defeated by Stalinism in 1945, and with their "martyrdom" came a historic set-back for the Vietnamese revolution whose price has been paid in blood.'

There is no shabby deceit involved in the ICFI statement. The only shabby deceit is the WSL's use of the murder of the Vietnamese Trotskyists to attack the Workers Revolutionary Party and the Fourth International. The attitude of the Manifesto to the Vietnamese leadership and the killing of Trotskyists could not be clearer. It states:

'The Sixth International Congress of the International Committee of the Fourth International hails the victories of the workers and peasants of Vietnam and Cambodia. This defeat of US imperialism signals the unleashing of titanic revolutionary struggles on a world scale. The events in Vietnam and Cambodia represent the highest stage of revolutionary struggle since the victory of the Russian working class in 1917.

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

In another section of the Manifesto the ICFI turned to the crucial question of leadership in the Vietnamese revolution:

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

'As the foreign policies of Mao and Tito so clearly illustrate, these regimes very soon become an absolute obstacle to the development of the revolution and are organically incapable of making any contribution to the development of Marxist theory. Thus, far from giving any credibility to Stalinism the victories in Vietnam only prove the unpostponable necessity of building the ICFI in every country and preparing for the tasks of the political revolution against the Stalinist regimes and the conquest of power in the imperialist ones. These achievements in Indo-China — empirically made at enormous cost — do not, in any sense, invalidate the principled struggles of the Indo-Chinese Trotskyists — murdered by Ho Chi Minh's agents — for the programme of the Permanent Revolution.

'Their martyrdom was not in vain and their policies are indelibly inscribed in the progress of the revolution. New generations of Indo-Chinese revolutionaries will once again turn to the example of these Trotskyist pioneers in the coming period.'

This statement expresses in the clearest possible terms the position of the ICFI and the Workers Revolutionary Party towards the liquidation of the Vietnamese Trotskyists. It is also crystal-clear on the nature of the Vietnamese leadership — a leadership that continued its struggle to smash imperialism in its own country and was forced to break empirically from the Stalinist peaceful co-existence line and its corollary in the colonial and semi-colonial countries — the two-stage theory of the revolution. On these issues of crucial concern to the working class, the Thornett clique is silent of course.

Bertrand Russell

This is not the first time the ICFI has raised the question of the liquidation of the Vietnamese Trotskyists. It has been a constant feature of the Trotskyist analysis of the Vietnamese revolution. The charlatan Thornett knows this very well. He was a member of the forerunner of the Workers Revolutionary Party — the Socialist Labour League — in the period of the struggle to expose the Vietnam Solidarity Committee, staffed by revisionists of the International Marxist Group, Stalinists, opportunists all organized around the anti-communist and reactionary idealist philosopher Bertrand Russell.

The Socialist Labour League broke completely with this organization precisely because of its refusal to allow any exposure of the betrayals of Stalinism in Indo-China. Thornett and many of his camp followers know this history. Yet in their paper they cast a friendly nod in the direction of the Pabloite International Marxist Group. We read in the *Socialist Press* of May 15, 1975, for example: 'Even the International Marxist Group have drawn attention to these killings in their press.'

But it was the Socialist Labour League — while Thornett was a member of its Central Committee — and the Workers Press, which first took up an attempt by the IMG to gloss over the liquidation of the Vietnamese Trotskyists.

In the Workers Press of November 18, 1969 (conveniently forgotten by the WSL) Cliff Slaughter, a member of the ICFI, attacked B. Purdie of the IMG for silencing criticism of the Vietnamese leadership for their anti-Trotskyist pogroms. Slaughter began with an analysis of the role of Stalinism in Vietnam:

'Because the Communist Parties are agencies of the Soviet bureaucracy, they adopt political policies to make imperialism easier for the bureaucracy to negotiate and exist with. As soon as the working class moves towards the overthrow of imperialism, then the Communist Parties devote themselves to

blunting and thereby preparing major defeats for the working class.'

Slaughter goes on to take up the IMG:

'At the London memorial meeting for Ho Chi Minh, attended by all sorts of revisionists and opportunists, chaos followed a speech by Chris Harman of the "International Socialism" group. It must be said that Harman made a correct and necessary reference to Ho Chi Minh's actions at the end of World War II in murdering hundreds of Trotskyists in Saigon and the rest of Vietnam.

'Purdie and the IMG, who have never exposed or attacked the rotten, anti-communist politics of the "state capitalist" group, suddenly erupted with a frenzy of accusations against Harman for making a correct point! The IMG journal *International* (October 1969) describes the September 20 memorial meeting in an editorial article "Unity and Vietnam".

'According to the editorial, "Harman's speech was provocative and in complete contradiction with united front principles." This was, of course, their argument against the Socialist Labour League at the very start of the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign. For years we had campaigned for 'Victory to the National Liberation Front' but when the revisionists set up the VSC they tried to ban us from criticizing Stalinism! The essence of the matter was — and still is — that without a fight for the independent revolutionary party against Stalinism, there can be no fight against imperialism.

'And the essence of the Pabloite revisionism here is that it covers up for Stalinism against Trotskyism and against the working class. The *International* editorial goes on: "We will not deal with the question of the Vietnamese Trotskyists in this editorial. Because of the interests in this matter we have commissioned material which will give a full picture of what happened — *the truth is a lot more complicated than the IS leaders think.*" [Slaughter's emphasis].

'The logic is inescapable, as we saw in our last article (Workers Press, October 28). The Fourth International should never have been formed, and the proletariat's needs can be answered by a new development within Stalinism.'

Fake accusations

Since 1945 the ICFI has consistently exposed Stalinism inside and outside Vietnam. We were the first movement to raise the slogan 'Victory to the NLF', we campaigned for unconditional defence of the NLF, yet defended at all stages our right to criticize the leadership and campaign against Stalinism.

Above all we struggled against every brand of revisionism and opportunism that attempted to drive back the struggle in Britain to build the revolutionary party to take the working class to power, and substitute in its place all manner of middle-class protest involving empty gestures of 'solidarity' with the Vietnamese workers and peasants. Solidarity with the Vietnamese revolution means leading the British revolution. The record of the Socialist Labour League and the Workers Revolutionary Party is there for everyone to examine. With all his innuendo, slanders, jibes and distortion, Thornett and his WSL cannot wipe out this record.

After disgorging all their false accusations and distortions the WSL go on to prostitute the heroic record of the Vietnamese Trotskyists in 1945 in order to undermine the struggle for revolutionary leadership. *Socialist Press* of June 12 presents a scanty 'chronology' which they suggest 'sets the record straight' on the Vietnamese revolution. This potted 'history' is a jumble of tendentiously selected 'facts' presented in such a fashion as to support the final conclusion of the WSL — that the Vietnamese revolution was more or less spontaneous and occurred despite the

Vietnamese Workers Party and the military organization of General Giap and the Vietnamese army leaders.

The most significant section of the 'chronology' deals with the 1945-1949 period. The suggestion is that Ho Chi Minh and the then Indo-Chinese Communist Party leadership acted as the willing tools for Stalin and liquidated the leadership that rose up against the return of French imperialism. This period has already been dealt with in considerable detail earlier in this article. Only the main points need to be emphasized here. The *Socialist Press* chronology states:

'August 23, 1945 — Stalinists oust coalition of the left Parties in Saigon, replace it with their "Committee of the South", claiming they have an "independence" agreement with the French.

'September 2, 1945 — Hundreds of thousands demonstrate in Saigon. Mass opposition in the contingents to Stalinist policies.

'September 4, 1945 — Stalinist leader in Saigon Tran Van Giap violently attacks Trotskyists. Their organizations banned, hundreds arrested, many of whom disappear. Among those killed are Ta Thu and Tran Van Trach, founder of Vietnamese Trotskyism. French colonialists and officials released from prison.'

The 'chronology' can be examined step by step. Firstly, there was no 'ousting' of a 'left coalition'. What happened was that the Vietminh, the nationalist front dominated by the Indo-Chinese Communist Party, ordered an insurrection after the surrender of the Japanese in August 1945.

Large areas of the North had already been liberated from the Japanese by the Vietminh and their military guerrilla wing under Giap. Throughout the South the vacuum left by the Japanese was filled by the Vietminh liberation committees, organized in the countryside. In other areas the Buddhist sects like the Hoa Hao and the Cao Dai took control.

In Saigon a coalition was formed on August 17 called the National United Front. This was *not* a grouping of 'left' parties, as the *Socialist Press* would have us believe, but a collection of Buddhist sects, bourgeois-nationalist forces like the reactionary pro-Japanese parties and the equally anti-worker and anti-peasant pro-Chinese nationalist movement the VNQDD. The Vietnamese Trotskyists joined this coalition, on what basis is not clear from the evidence available in English.

The Front was not 'ousted by the Stalinists'. On September 7 it merged with the Vietminh and became the Southern National Bloc Committee. The hundreds of thousands who demonstrated in Saigon were not, as one might be led to believe from the *Socialist Press* 'chronology', all members of the revolutionary movement demanding the overthrow of imperialism. Monarchists and nationalists certainly mobilized contingents on the demonstration. The content of the bourgeois-nationalist opposition was specifically anti-French, the VNQDD certainly were in favour of an 'independent' Vietnam under the 'protection' of Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang armies who were moving in, 200,000 strong, on North Vietnam.

Economic crisis

The Vietminh 'agreement' with the French was examined in the first section of this article. Ho Chi Minh and the leadership were undoubtedly caught in a Stalinist trap. Stalin had agreed at Yalta and Potsdam to allow French imperialism back in South Vietnam and the nationalist Chinese in the North. The Indo-Chinese

Communist Party had been urged to rely on the French Stalinists, who composed a third of the coalition government in France, for some kind of agreement over independence.

Vietminh policy was to buy time, attempt to get an agreement that forced the Kuomintang out of the North and consolidate their forces. It is a vulgar myth — propagated in the *Socialist Press* — that an immediate uprising would have been successful against the combined forces of Nationalist Chinese, British and French imperialism.

The Vietminh had approximately 2,000 men under arms. Save in the far North their bases were insufficiently secure to resist a prolonged offensive. The huge demonstrations in the cities were no doubt impressive — but the city populations in Hue and Saigon particularly were not under Communist influence — CP organization in the South was considerably weaker than in Annam and Tonkin.

In addition to these odds, the resistance would have to contend with an economic crisis in the countryside — in 1945 two million Vietnamese peasants starved to death because of the Japanese decision to force them to grow jute instead of rice.

The international balance of forces, the lack of preparedness of the masses in Vietnam point to one conclusion — to launch an immediate nationwide insurrection in 1945 would have been premature and abortive and the Vietminh were correct not to do so. Even when the insurrection was launched in December 1946, the Vietminh found they had to withdraw (it was an orderly withdrawal, they were not 'forced out' as the *Socialist Press* suggests) from Hanoi and the Red River Delta back to the Northern bases.

Except for the specific period of the 'independence' agreement with the French, Ho Chi Minh and the Vietminh leadership never disguised their ultimate intention to smash French imperialism. All Ho Chi Minh's articles and appeals during 1945 have this theme.

Just one example from the declaration of independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam on September 2, 1945, will serve as an illustration:

'The truth is we have wrested our independence from the Japanese and not from the French . . . We, the members of the Provisional government representing the whole Vietnamese people, declare that from now on we break off all relations of a colonial character with France; we repeal all the international obligations that France has so far subscribed to on behalf of Vietnam, and we abolish the special rights the French have unlawfully acquired in our Fatherland.'

The real treachery in 1945 was committed by the Moscow bureaucracy and the French Stalinists. Moscow cynically bartered the Vietnamese revolution for concessions from imperialism, while Moscow hatchet-men in the French government proclaimed their dedication to the French Empire and bitterly betrayed their so-called Vietnamese comrades.

There is no doubt that the links of the Vietnamese leadership to Stalinism, their training in the Stalinist Third (Communist) International and their failure to break or to understand the role of Stalinism, was a grave weakness and compounded the problem. An even more dastardly blow was the murder of the Vietnamese Trotskyists. This is the price paid by the Vietnamese people, and its leadership, for Stalinism.

But to maintain, as the *Socialist Press* does, that the French, 'only reoccupied . . . as a result of the attempts at compromise pushed through by Stalin's main representa-

tive Ho Chi Minh', is completely wrong and utter nonsense. The real purpose of the *Socialist Press* excursion into the post-war history of Vietnam is not to rehabilitate the Vietnamese Trotskyists, but to attack the whole conception of revolutionary leadership.

It is significant, for example, that the 'chronology' contains no less than 14 references to the period 1945-1946, but only four to cover the two decades between 1955 up to the liberation of Saigon in 1975. Yet this 20 years is the most heroic period of the long struggle of the Vietnamese masses against imperialism.

The WSL shy away from an examination of this period because it confronts them with one crucial question — if a revolution took place in Vietnam, if it was the most bitter revolution ever fought in history, if, a small people, with such scant resources, were able to beat the greatest imperialist power in the world — *how did it occur without a revolutionary leadership?*

Military campaigns

When the Thornett clique attempt to answer this question they expose themselves as hostile to Marxism and hostile to the fight for revolutionary leadership. Even worse, they reveal a patronisingly supercilious and thoroughly English middle-class disdain for the colonial peoples as being unable to create a revolutionary doctrine and leadership capable of defeating their imperialist oppressors. Scratch a Thornettite and you will find a petty-bourgeois English patriot. That is the essence of their opposition to the Vietminh and the NLF.

The WSL 'explanation' of the Vietnamese revolution falls into two parts. First, they attempt to separate the National Liberation Front from the leadership embodied in the Vietnamese Workers' Party. Thus we read in *Socialist Press* of April 3: '... the most important political question now arises for the NLF and the workers and peasants of Vietnam. Is the new unified state merely to fall under the bureaucratic, nationalist leadership of the Hanoi Stalinists?'

The clear implication is (this is confirmed by other 'analysis') that the 'Hanoi regime' did not play a significant role, and certainly not a dominant role, in the struggle in the South. Even the most casual investigation of the history of the Vietnamese liberation struggle will prove such a conclusion to be ludicrous. It was the Vietnamese Workers Party, led by Giap, Ho Chi Minh, Pham Van Dong, Truong Chinh and others that took the initiative and *formed* the NLF.

The cadre of the NLF was made up of the Party members who remained in the South on the instructions of the leadership after the partition in 1954. The formation of the Revolutionary People's Party as the arm of the VWP in the South in January 1962 was specifically to consolidate the leading role of the Party leadership in the southern struggle.

It is incorrect to conceive of the NLF struggle as separate from the whole liberation offensive — it was after all, the principal plank in the propaganda of US imperialism that the South was a separate country, with a separate political tradition, etc.

All the military campaigns of the NLF were under the charge of Giap and other generals, *all* members and leaders of the Vietnamese Workers' Party and the People's Revolutionary Party (for a detailed examination of the military strategy of the war in the South see *Visions of Victory*, McGarvey, Stanford University Press, and *Viet*

Cong by Douglas Pike, MIT Press, which both contain extracts from the military discussion and writing of the 'Hanoi Stalinists' on the correct tactics to apply in the South).

The truth is that the 'bureaucratic, nationalist Hanoi Stalinists' were always the leaders, organizers and tacticians of the struggle to liberate the South. The leadership did not reside in any one town or city, but in the Party — without the Party the victory in Vietnam could not have occurred.

Having declared the division between the Party and the resistance the WSL plough on towards their second tack — the theory of spontaneity. We read: 'Thieu's army had nothing of the revolutionary *unity* and *will to win* exhibited continuously by the NLF, who combined their *determination with outstanding organizational skills.*' (*Socialist Press*, April 3, 1975. Emphasis added.)

Here the revolution is reduced to a complete abstraction, dependent on mystical qualities and organizational skills. Skills, courage, organization, will and unity are meaningless as explanations for a revolution led by the proletariat in alliance with the peasant masses. For such a revolution a Party leadership is required. Revolutions do not occur — they must be organized.

Those who deny this must adopt the anti-Marxist concept of spontaneity and opposition to the construction of revolutionary leadership. The WSL do eventually stumble into this position. We read, finally, in the April 3 edition of *Socialist Press*:

'It must be plain that the peasants, workers and soldiers of Vietnam carried through this struggle *on the basis of their own strength. That strength must not now be broken or shackled by the bureaucracy.* The NLF must not be disarmed.' (Emphasis added.)

Living struggle

All workers have strength. All peasants have tenacity, endurance and courage. These are the qualities of the oppressed. But they mean nothing if they are not mobilized behind a revolutionary leadership. And not a leadership that corresponds to the WSL conception of the NLF — some spontaneous gathering of the oppressed.

The working class do not win revolutions on the basis of their *own* strength, determination and courage. They win because their strength, determination and courage is mobilized behind the revolutionary leadership that strives scientifically to understand the relationship between all classes, the development of the economic and political crisis of capitalism and is able to deepen its understanding of how to lead the working class to victory by entering into a revolutionary practice and positing the new experience so derived on the past body of knowledge.

Predictably the WSL end up sharing their bed with the International Socialism group which will no doubt shortly denounce Vietnam as a 'state capitalist' country and abstain — as they did in the Korean war — from giving any support to the working class and the peasantry in struggle with imperialism.

It was the organ of the state capitalist IS group, *Socialist Worker*, that paraphrased the WSL when it said on May 10: 'How did the Americans lose? Not because they were defeated in open military conflict, but because the spirit and determination of the Vietnamese people, coupled with the skill of their guerrilla tactics, managed to delay the "quick kill" for which the Americans hoped.'

The idea that the National Liberation Front was a fighting force independent of the Vietnamese leadership, or could even have won without the constant massive aid from the North in the form of cadres, troops and regular battalions of the People's Army is ludicrous. Even the most casual investigation of the history of the liberation war will show the VWP's decisive, dominant, political and organizing role.

We can see now the whole method of the Thornett clique. They cannot start from the living struggle of class forces. They examine a revolution of the scale, length and bitterness of the Vietnamese liberation struggle, and attempt to fit it into a pre-ordained scheme, fixed in their minds.

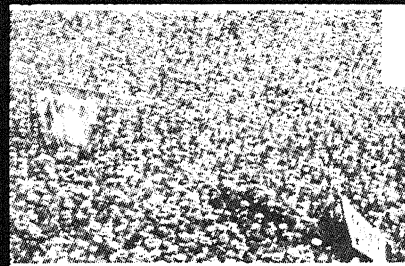
The motivating force behind their method is hatred of the British revolutionary leadership — the Workers Revolutionary Party. Because they bring this twisted subjectivism into play they are incapable of making an objective and serious investigation. In contrast the members of the Workers Revolutionary Party must see in the Vietnamese revolution the signal that the time has come for the British revolution. We approach the Vietnamese revolution by means of the living class struggle not through sterile abstractions which are arrived at arbitrarily. The true solidarity between the masses of Vietnam and the working class in Britain will be forged in the coming revolutionary struggle that will smash the oldest imperialist power on earth, Great Britain.

TROTSKY'S WRITINGS ON BRITAIN

PART ONE: BRITISH HISTORY AND CULTURE

PART TWO: THE DECLINE OF BRITISH IMPERIALISM 1908-1926

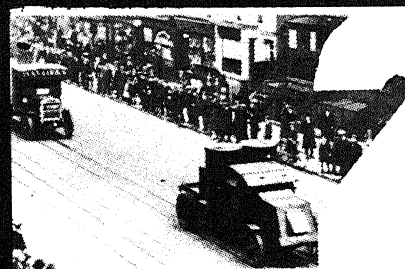
PART THREE: THE BRITISH LABOUR MOVEMENT 1906-1924



PART ONE: WHERE IS BRITAIN GOING? (1925)

PART TWO: PROBLEMS OF THE BRITISH LABOUR MOVEMENT (1925-1926)

PART THREE: LESSONS OF THE GENERAL STRIKE



PART ONE: FROM WORLD SLUMP TO WORLD WAR 1929-1930

PART TWO: TROTSKYISM VERSUS CENTRISM IN BRITAIN

PART THREE: BRITISH IMPERIALISM AND NATIONAL LIBERATION STRUGGLES



Available from the Paperbacks Centre, 28 Charlotte Street, London W1, or cut out this advert and post to: New Park Publications, 186a Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UG. A set of three £4.95 plus postage 65p; individually £1.65 plus postage 23p. Please tick those you require.

Vol 1

Vol 2

Vol 3

Amount enclosed

Name

Address

BOOKS - PAMPHLETS - PERIODICALS

OTHER TITLES

History of the Bolshevik Party, by G. Zinoviev (illustrated)	£1.50
From NEP to Socialism, by E. A. Preobrazhensky	£1.25
Heroes of the Russian Revolution (illustrated)	.50
Lenin's Last Struggle, by Moshe Lewin	cloth £1.50
Revolutionary Silhouettes, by A. Lunacharsky	cloth .75
Lenin, by G. Zinoviev	.10
Absolutism and Revolution in Germany, by Franz Mehring (illustrated)	£1.80

DOCUMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS OF THE TROTSKYIST MOVEMENT

Transitional Programme — The Death Agony of Capitalism and the tasks of the Fourth International	.10
Trotskyism versus Revisionism. A Documentary History. 6 volumes, each	£1.50
Documents of the 1923 Opposition — an anthology	.75
Platform of the Joint Opposition	£1.10
In Defence of Trotskyism	.35
1923-1933 The First Ten Years (History and Principles of the Left Opposition) by Max Schachtman	.40
Behind the Moscow Trials, by Max Schachtman	.40
Moscow Trials Anthology	.65
Stalinism in Britain, by R. Black	cloth £2.50; paperback £1.50
An Introduction to Marxist Philosophy, by Peter Jeffries	.30
Karl Marx, by Cliff Slaughter	.10
Class Nature of the International Socialism Group, by Cliff Slaughter	.05
Who are the International Socialists? by Cliff Slaughter	.10
Reform or Revolution? by Cliff Slaughter	.04
Balance Sheet of Revisionism, by Cliff Slaughter	.10
Theory and Practice of Revisionism, by Michael Banda	.15
Socialist Labour League and Revisionism, by Cliff Slaughter	.04
The Moscoso Affair: a case history of revisionism	.02
Ceylon: the Great Betrayal, by G. Healy	.10
Measured Day Work and Productivity Deal Swindle by Bernard Franks	.15
We Demand the Right to Work (Record of the historic Young Socialist Marches of 1972)	.15

WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY POCKET LIBRARY

No. 1 The case for a General Election	.10
No. 3 The Social Security Swindle	.05
No. 4 Why a Labour Government	.05
No. 5 Containerization: Case for nationalization of the docks and transport industry	.30
No. 6 Marxism and Rank-and-File	.10
No. 7 Reformism on the Clyde (The Story of UCS)	.30
No. 9 Falsifiers of Lenin	.10
No. 10 A Reply to the British Agents of the OCI liquidationists	.35
No. 11 Victimization at Cowley	.35
No. 12 Revolt in Portugal	.35
No. 13 The Transitional Programme and the Workers Revolutionary Party	.15
No. 14 James P. Cannon — a critical assessment	.40
No. 15 Oppression & Revolt in Ireland. Pages from Irish History	.60

Subscribe to Fourth International

Fourth International is the theoretical journal of the International Committee of the Fourth International.

Fourth International continues the work of **Labour Review** which concluded its 12th year of publication with its issue of Summer 1963, the fifth number of volume 7.

Fourth International continues the work and traditions of Revolutionary Communism since the death of Lenin.

Fourth International represents the unbroken chain of theoretical journals in the Bolshevik tradition, whose continuators were the Left Opposition led and inspired by Leon Trotsky.

Fourth International follows in the tradition of that Opposition and in the traditions of the Fourth International of Leon Trotsky.

Fourth International is the product of decades of continuous struggle of Marxists in the International Labour movement against Stalinism, Reformism and Revisionism.

Fourth International represents the successful fusion of Marxist trends in this International Labour movement, from Trotskyist to Communist, Social-Democratic and Trade Union movements.

Fourth International, with its first issue, commenced a new period of activity in the International Labour movement and continues to prepare and equip the Marxist movement for its intervention in the battles of the working class which will eclipse and transcend all previous struggles in their historic magnitude.

To: New Park Publications Ltd.
186a Clapham High Street
London SW4 7UG

I enclose cheque/postal order/money order/draft for £ to pay for issues of

Fourth International. Volume..... No.....

Price 25p (postage 11p per issue)

Name

Address

.....

.....

Some writings by Leon Trotsky

First Five Years of the Communist International (2 volumes)	each £1.50
Revolution Betrayed	£1.25
Stalin School of Falsification	£1.50
In Defence of Marxism	cloth £1.50; paperback £1.00
Whither France?	£1.25
Germany 1931-1932	cloth £2.50; paperback £1.50
Permanent Revolution	£1.00
Political Profiles	£1.00
Where is Britain Going?	.37
Problems of the British Revolution	.35
Problems of the Chinese Revolution	cloth £2.50 paperback £1.50
Lessons of October	.60
The New Course (1923)	.65
History of the Russian Revolution (3 volumes). The set	£1.50
The position of the Republic and the Tasks of Young Workers	.10
May Day in the West and in the East	.15
Perspectives and Tasks in the East	.10
Through What Stage are We Passing?	.10
Class and Art	.15
The Intelligentsia and Socialism	.10
Radio, Science, Technique and Society	.10
The Class Nature of the Soviet State	.35
Stalinism and Bolshevism	.20
Their Morals and Ours	.40
Leon Sedov	.10
Stalinism and Trotskyism in the USA	.10
The Age of Permanent Revolution (anthology)	.25
Tasks before the 12th Congress of the CPSU	.50
Culture & Socialism	.15
Young People Study Politics!	.25
Marxism and the Trade Unions	.25
In Defence of the October Revolution	.15

To: New Park Publications Ltd.
186a Clapham High Street
London SW4 7UG

I enclose cheque/postal order/money order/draft for £ to pay for

Name

Address

.....

.....