

T H E D I C T A T O R S H I P
 O F T H E
 P R O L E T A R I A T
 A N D T H E
 K R E M L I N
 B U R E A U C R A C Y

On the Abandonment of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat
and the "Polemics" which it Arouses
in the International Apparatus
of the Kremlin

by Michel Lancray

Translated from "La Verite", Organ of the Central Committee of the
Organisation Communiste Internationaliste
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THE ABANDONMENT OF THE DICTATORSHIP
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IN THE INTERNATIONAL APPARATUS
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THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT
AND THE
KREMLIN BUREAUCRACY

By Michel Lancray: from "La Verite", Organ of the Central Committee of the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (for the re-construction of the Fourth International), November and December 1977, issues nos. 578 and 579.

1. The Question is an Urgent One Today

Eight years have passed since the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste adopted the theses of its 17th Congress, which defined the period which opened in 1968 as that of the imminence of the revolution.

In the years which immediately followed, events verified that all the political, economic and social processes were resulting in new alignments. The mole of the revolution, of which Marx spoke, dug numerous tunnels in the course of the weeks between the end of summer 1970 and winter 1971.

In Jordan, in September 1970, the butcher Hussein hurled his troops against the Palestinian masses. The banner under which the massacre was effected was that of the Rogers plan to liquidate the Palestinians, which was drafted jointly by Washington and Moscow.

The heroic resistance of the masses of workers and peasants took on very precise forms:

"...despite the calm on the surface at Irbid, a genuine revolutionary activity was developing behind the scenes. In every street the partisans had set up popular committees to take the place of the administration. These committees in turn elected representatives to the committee of the district. These latter, which were made up of commissars of the partisans as well as of the leaders of the people of Irbid who supported the Palestinian cause held meetings each evening to discuss such subjects as

the future organisation of the city and the preparations to be made to defend it. Though their structure was like that of the local soviets which the Bolsheviks formed in the early days of the Russian revolution, these committees seemed to have arisen more or less spontaneously in response to local events without any obvious influence from Moscow or Peking. Before I left Irbid a 'Congress of the People' was convened in the middle of the city and decided to prevent any pro-government officials from entering the city and to resist any attack by the Jordanian army." (Newsweek, 27 Sept: 1970)

In December 1970 the working class rose up at the two extremities of Europe, in Spain and on the Baltic, against Franco who wanted to murder "Izko and his comrades" and against Gomulka who was brutally attacking the living standards of the Polish workers.

Once again, in Poland, observers noticed the characteristic facts:

"In the outbreaks in December the Polish city of Szczecin was transformed into a genuine workers' republic where all power was exercised by the strike committee... The city was entirely paralysed by a general strike which broke out on Thursday, Dec: 17... They set up a strike committee which took into its hands all power in the city, all the functions of the organs of the party and the local authority. A workers' militia, fitted out with arm-bands, was set up to prevent in particular the machines in the factories from being destroyed." ("Politika", a Yugoslav newspaper quoted by "Le Monde", January 2, 1971)

In the same month of January 1971 there began in Bolivia the movement to nominate delegates to the Popular Assembly which came into activity during the spring. It developed directly from the masses of workers, peasants and students and expressed concretely, for the whole of Latin America, the resurgence of organisms of soviet type.

In Jordan, Bolivia and Poland alike the struggle for power sees the re-birth of the soviet forms of organisation of the proletariat.

And it was precisely against them that, two years later, was brought about the Holy Alliance of imperialism with the Stalinist bureaucracy, in Chile. In Chile, the functionary of the Stalinist bureaucracy, Etienne Fajon, declared when he came back from Santiago on September 1, 1973, three weeks after the coup d'etat:

"Certain mistakes which were made were not resisted soon enough with the necessary vigour. The occupation of the factories by the workers, a correct measure of political defence at a particular moment when the counter-revolution is going over to the attack, was transformed in certain cases into seizures of enterprises which had nothing to do with the nationalisation programme."

Fajon gets angry with the peasants as well as the workers, because the peasants occupied lands in an "unconstitutional" way. He prostrates himself before "maintaining discipline in the armed forces", when the soldiers and sailors rose up against their officers.

Three weeks before the coup d'etat, while the army under the leadership of the defence minister of the government of popular unity, Pinochet, was polishing up his armaments against the workers, the Stalinist Fajon was indicating the most important problem:

"There are certain economic theories which were stressing the destruction of the old structures".

The "Old Structures"

The old structures that he meant are the structures of bourgeois society and of the bourgeois state. The new structures are those which the workers and peasants of Chile were installing in the factories and on the soil.

The massacre of the Chilean workers came about a few months after the Paris agreements about Vietnam were signed. U.S. imperialism had the active support of the Kremlin bureaucracy and of the Chinese bureaucracy in obtaining the agreement of the government of the democratic republic of Vietnam to the division of Vietnam into two parts and the recognition of the compradore government and state of Thieu. It demanded that the government of North Vietnam compel the people of the North and the South to give up the revolutionary war. The fictitious "third component", which in reality did not exist,

was a total invention, in order to conceal the acceptance of the maintenance of the Thieu regime.

But at the very moment in autumn 1973 that the counter-revolution was scoring these points, a great turn was taking place in international relations. One after another there were brusque plunges of the political crisis of the bourgeoisie in London, Lisbon and Paris, and these resulted in changing the relation of forces in the class struggle throughout Europe.

In Britain the Heath government staked everything when the miners rose up against its policy of freezing wages. The elections were called to stop the strike but, in anticipation, they encouraged it. The elections swept out the Heath government and brought to power the leaders of the Labour Party, impotent as they were.

The row which was caused by the fall of the conservative government, which all the bourgeoisie were watching, confronted as they were with the threatening economic crisis, resounded all over Europe. The leaders of the Labour Party tried to convert the working-class into "the tail of the capitalist class, its extreme left wing", as Engels said, forcing it to trade the strike for the "democratic", parliamentary order. They failed. Parliament submitted to the strike.

In January 1974 it was the drivers of the trains in the Lorraine mines who opened the new road in France. All other things being equal, and especially the desire of the trade union leaderships to obstruct class-actions, an element of conflict was changed there also. The drivers went further, imposed the united front of their organisations and won.

The Political Bureau of the O.C.I. traced the connection between these events and declared on February 1, 1974:

"The whole business started with the determination of a few hundred drivers of coal-trains to improve their grading. They believed that they were capable of imposing the satisfaction of their demand by their own strength. This aspect is important and must be stressed. They imposed the strike on union leaders who did not want it. The leaders tried to get them back to work by arguing that the employers would lock the miners out, because coal would block the mines up. They made sure that the movement went on until they won complete victory... The determination of the miners and the drivers in England gives a glimpse of what the determination and the will for struggle of the French workers... From then on, the tendency within the working class to grasp the problem of unity in order to impose it for purposes of struggle became more and more urgently necessary. In other words, we are drawing near a situation in which the working class is going to break the bolt, the policy of the apparatuses, which stops them from going forward."

Two months later Georges Pompidou died. These processes which were going on in the working class revealed themselves powerfully in the strike of the bank employees. These were the strongest factor in accentuating the crisis of the French bourgeoisie, the impotence which paralysed all the bourgeois parties.

The precarious agreement between the fractions of the bourgeoisie round Pompidou blew apart. An irresistible force seemed to be lifting up the tops of the regime. The institutions of the Fifth Republic, the authority of which had received a mortal blow in the referendum of 1969, rested on their claim to represent and to unify the disparate interests of the groupings within the ruling class, were now the object of the rivalry of these groupings.

One and all, whether they were trying to pull to pieces the leading party of the bonapartist institutions or whether they were defending its positions in the state, all were leading these institutions to destruction.

At the top and at the bottom of society, the leading figures in the revolutionary crisis were taking up their positions. The coup d'etat of April 24, 1974 was to rise from the summits of the Salazarist state, which was torn apart by contradictions. Those who started it had no other aim, when they replaced the Salazarist dictatorship with a military dictatorship, than to preserve the corporatist structures of the state. The military revolt was quickly brushed aside by the proletarian revolution. The generals and admirals who headed one government of national unity after another, and whom the bourgeois, social-democratic, Stalinist and leftist press did their best to paint up in red, found spreading round their

feet, from the factories to the workers' districts and from the workers' districts to the barracks, committees of delegates, committees by which the exploited masses, workers, soldiers and students, were trying to replace the dislocated state apparatus with another administration, which was in contradiction to the "old structures".

To take up an expression which Trotsky used, beneath the first nation was arising a second.

"A Single Government: The Necessary Condition of Stability"

Indeed, we have to go back to Trotsky to analyse in its most general form the common underlying factor in all these manifestations of working class struggle since 1968:

"Antagonistic classes exist in society everywhere, and a class deprived of power inevitably strives to some extent to swerve the government course in its favour. This does not as yet mean, however, that two or more powers are ruling society. The character of a political structure is directly determined by the relation of the oppressed classes to the ruling class. A single government, the necessary condition of stability in any regime, is preserved so long as the ruling class succeeds in putting over its economic and political forms upon the whole of society as the only form possible...

The political mechanism of revolution consists of the transfer of power from one class to another. The forcible overturn is usually accomplished in a brief time. But no historic class lifts itself from a subject position to a position of rulership suddenly in one night, even though a night of revolution. It must already on the eve of the revolution have assumed a very independent attitude towards the official ruling class; moreover, it must have focused upon itself the hopes of intermediate classes and layers, dissatisfied with the existing state of affairs but not capable of playing an independent role. The historic preparation of a revolution brings about, in the pre-revolutionary period, a situation in which the class which is called to realise the new social system, although not yet master of the country, has actually concentrated in its hands a significant share of the state power, while the official apparatus of the government is still in the hands of the old lords. That is the initial dual power in every revolution." ("History of the Russian Revolution" Vol: 1 Chapter II, "Dual Power", pp 223 - 4, Gollancz edition)

Lenin also spoke, on April 9, 1917, about the situation of dual power, and asked what was the nature of the "Second Government":

"What is the class composition of this second government? It consists of the proletariat and the peasantry (in the uniform of the soldier). What is its political character? It is a revolutionary dictatorship, that is to say, a power which rests directly on a revolutionary act of violence, on the direct initiative from below of the popular masses and not on a law promulgated by a centralised State power." ("Collected Works", Vol: XXIV p. 28)

Lenin was to come back emphatically to this aspect of the matter in his polemic against Kautsky:

"The revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat is a power which is won and maintained by violence, which the proletariat exercises over the bourgeoisie, a power which is not limited by any law." ("The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky")

In the chapter which Trotsky devoted to the general experience of past events from the standpoint of a Marxist and a historian, Trotsky specified:

"It may seem as though this theoretical enquiry has led us away from the events of 1917. In reality it leads right into the heart of them. It was precisely around this problem of twofold power that the dramatic struggle of parties and classes turned. Only from a theoretical height is it possible to observe it fully and correctly understand it." (ibid page 232)

The common features of the movements by which the world proletariat has celebrated in its own way the centenary of the Paris Commune of 1871 demonstrates beyond the slightest shadow of doubt that the new period of the world revolution places on the order of the day the dictatorship of the proletariat, the stake in "the dramatic struggle of parties and classes".

The proletariat goes forward from the positions which it has conquered over the bourgeoisie in each country and over imperialism on a world scale.

The comprador government of Thieu existed only when it and the state and the army were supported directly by the presence of U.S. imperialism in Vietnam, because the revolutionary war had undermined and fragmented the comprador bourgeoisie of Vietnam which was already extremely weak. The army and the administration of Thieu were armed to the teeth and in the terms of the Paris agreements were in a position to wipe out the resistance of the masses of South Vietnam and of the F.L.N.. Yet they were rotten to the marrow and collapsed two years later like a house of cards, opening an enormous political void which the bureaucracy of North Vietnam hastened to fill, for fear that the masses would occupy the empty political arena.

The vital centres of imperialism in Europe have become still more decisively important with the collapse of imperialism in Vietnam, with the amputation of that decayed stump, the military clique of Thieu, as well as the shock-waves in the fragile bourgeois states in Africa, Asia and Latin America which followed.

The struggle has taken different forms in Spain, France and Italy, because the historical development differs between countries, but the general conclusion cannot be avoided. The ruling class is no longer able 'to put over its economic and political forms upon the whole of society as the only forms possible'. In the fires of the class struggle, the 'single government, the necessary condition of stability in any regime', will be swept away.

The Polish workers are standing up to Gierek. The latter not only cannot decisively ensure the power of the bureaucracy, but the short and violent confrontation of June 1976 was settled to his disadvantage. There too, as well as in U.S.S.R. and in China, the 'single government' is under threat.

To be a revolutionary requires at the very least being able to recognise the revolution when it comes. To recognise its features we have only to follow the examples in front of our eyes of the forward march of the working class towards the 'second government'. These are sometimes embryonic and sometimes developed, but the dictatorship of the proletariat is on the order of the day. Its victory depends entirely on the construction of the world party of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Fourth International. The programme of the Fourth International is rooted in the fundamental theoretical acquisitions of Marxism, in particular on the question of the state and of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

2. The Universal Significance of the 'Consultation of the Commune'

The French Communist Party organised in Paris on March 30th, 1977 a debate on the theme of 'The Communists and the State'. There were many militants there to defend, though formally, the objective of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Several days later this interesting passage appeared in 'L'Humanite', from the pen of Clause Prevost (who had already distinguished himself by his attacks on the students after 1968):

"But there were hardly any references to the history of our country from the audience. People talked, to be sure, about the Paris Commune, but as Marx wrote about it. They talked not about the event but about a text from which it would seem that the world was turned upside down and that it alone could retroactively bring the event into existence. But, you know, we must say over and over again, the strategy of the French Communist Party cannot be understood if we do not relate it to the past of the nation, to its unique characteristics and to the class struggle in France for the last two centuries."

This is only one aspect of the campaign since the XXII Congress of the P.C.F. of the numerous Stalinist theoreticians, who are putting their servile pens to work to hail the amazing discovery of 'Socialism in the colours of France', from 'Cahiers du Communisme' to 'Nouvelle Critique' by way of 'France Nouvelle'.

The flunkies like Prevost are suggesting more and more insistently the simple idea that Marx after all was a German wasn't he? Would not his theoretical work have some Teutonic aspects which would invalidate his conclusions?

Pierre Juquin has contemplated the texts of Marx in the retroactive light of the XXII Congress and reached this opinion:

"Is it an accident that Marx's argument in the Critique of the Gotha Programme is not only a theoretical one but is also based for Germany on the reality of the Bismarkian state?"

You have to be careful about these Germans... and don't talk to us about the Russians. Juquin has settled the matter:

"In 1917 in Europe and especially in Russia, to wish to reach socialism without the dictatorship of the proletariat meant not wanting to reach socialism. In France in 1976 we compare the reality which we know to the reality which Lenin knew, and reached the conclusion that to insist on the dictatorship of the proletariat at all costs would on our part, for us French people of today, mean not wanting to reach socialism." ('Cahiers du Communisme' July - August, 1976)

We shall see that this policy of 'socialism in the colours of France', which has nothing whatever to do with socialism has none the less a great deal to do with the colours of France, that is the colours of the French bourgeoisie, the men of Versailles who murdered the Communards.

We must now go back about a hundred years, and will then come to the more recent aspects of the struggle which the Stalinist bureaucrats have been carrying on for decades against the dictatorship of the proletariat.

'The Amputation' of the Repressive Organs of the State

Marx angrily remarked in the 'Critique of the Gotha Programme' that the German workers' party showed in this programme that:

"Instead of treating present day society (and this holds for all future society) as the basis of the State, it treats on the contrary the State as an independent entity, possessing its own intellectual, moral and free foundations".

Engels defined the State as 'this power, born out of society, but which raises itself above it and becomes more and more alien to it'. Marx spoke of the French bourgeois State in 1871 as 'a parasitic excrescence which feeds itself at the expense of society and paralyses the free movement of society', in 'Civil War in France'.

The State unceasingly strengthens itself as a more and more alien entity, as an excrescence in order to adapt itself ever better to its coercive functions as an instrument of the ruling classes against the oppressed masses.

Falsifiers and revisionists have always 'corrected' Marxism in the following sense: of this alien body, the State, they make a neutral organ which is no longer an instrument of the ruling class, but an administrative apparatus servicable to the whole of society and capable of being passed from hand to hand, from 'right' to 'left', etc.:

The universal historical significance of the Commune is contained in its first decree: 'The suppression of the standing army and its replacement by the armed people'. It is about the 'amputation', to use Marx's word, of the repressive organs, the bourgeois state and the creation of 'the State of the armed workers', of which Lenin spoke.

This State which replaces the bourgeois State, this State of a different nature and a different type was outlined by Marx on the basis of its conception by the Commune in the 'Constitution of the Commune'.

That constitution would have restored to society all the forces which had hitherto^{been} absorbed by the State:

"We are not talking any more about a State which is spread over society 'like a membrane' and 'clogs up all its pores', about a state which freezes up the manifestations of social life continually in bureaucratic control from above. The 'legitimate functions' of the workers' State are 'entrusted to the legitimate servants of society'.

Parliamentary trickery is abolished. Consider any parliamentarian country you like... the real business 'of the State' is done in the corridors, in the departments, in the chancelleries and the general staffs. In the parliaments they do nothing but chatter, for the sole purpose of duping 'the common people.'" (Lenin, State and Revolution.)

The Constitution of the Commune utilises universal suffrage 'in the same way as individual suffrage serves any other employer who is looking for workers for overseers and for managers for his business. It is a well known fact that companies, like individuals, when real business has to be done, generally know how to put the right man in the right place, and if they once make a mistake, know how to correct it promptly'.

This 'low cost State' has been proclaimed by the bourgeoisie in its time to get the revolutionary people to follow it. By definition it cannot be the State of the exploiting minority. It is the State of the class of producers who, in their own practical struggle against the capitalist class have separated their interests from those of that class and have formed themselves as an independent class with its own State institutions, a State which is 'no longer a State in the true sense' (Engels to Bebel, 28 March, 1875).

The Constitution of the Commune is thus not based on a parliamentary organism but on an 'active body, executive and legislative at the same time' and its officials are 'strictly accountable'.

This is the new State, the workers' State, which took the place of the bourgeois tatarist State in October, 1917. What is specifically Russian about this first workers' State is not the fact that it is the dictatorship of the proletariat. Precisely in this respect, a victorious commune, it reaches back to the defeated Commune by drawing from it the universal lessons of the proletarian revolution. What is 'Russian' about the first workers' State is that it combines the legacy of backwardness with the most revolutionary political regime in history. This combination meant that power was easier to take in Russia, as Lenin said, but harder to hold than in the more developed countries.

All the proletarian revolutions of this century develop spontaneously towards this Constitution of the Commune, this revolutionary dictatorship which relies on 'the direct initiative of the popular masses from below and not on a law'. All of them go forward to a certain point on the road of the 'amputation' of the repressive organs of the bourgeois state, on the Constitution of the Commune and 'towards the State of the armed workers'.

This is what happened with the workers' militias in Spain in 1936. This happened in Italy, in France and in Greece when the bourgeois States collapsed at the end of the war. This is what happened with the workers' councils in Germany in 1918 and it was to prevent this happening in 1945 the 'victorious' imperialists and the Stalinist bureaucracy hastened, when Hitler fell to spread a military 'membrane' over German society and to tear it in two.

This is what happened in Hungary, with the Central Council in Budapest, and in Poland in 1956.

The presence in Bolivia in 1971 of the P.O.R. (Workers' Revolutionary Party) enabled the masses to take a number of steps towards national centralisation and 'organising the unity of the nation', as Marx says, on the bases of the Constitution of the Commune.

This is the universal significance of the Paris Commune which was analysed by Marx in May, 1871. When Marx and Engels several years later took up the struggle against the leaders of the German social democracy, the question of the State and of the dictatorship of the proletariat was at the centre of the discussion.

3. Social Democracy against the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

The bitter struggle which Lenin carried on from 1914 onwards against the renegades who led the Second International to treachery and to playing the role of agents of the imperialist butchers is certainly better known than that which preceded it, that of Marx and Engels against opportunism within the German Social Democratic Party. The criticisms by the founders of Marxism of the Gotha and Erfurst Programmes are the most celebrated manifestations of their struggle against adaptation to bourgeois society among the heads of the workers' parties notably on the question of the State.

Marx's 'Marginal glosses on the programme of the German Workers' Party' - that is to say Marx's criticism of the programme which emerged from the fusion of the Eisenachers and the Lassalleans were drafted in 1875 but not published at the time. Wilhelm Liebknecht deliberately confronted Marx and Engels with the Gotha Programme as an accomplished fact, acting

as he frequently did, to judge from the letters which passed between the exiles in London and the leaders of the German party. To accept the proposals and slogans of Lassalle remained in Engels' words 'a disgrace for our party'. Marx and Engels were able to avoid publicly denouncing the programme because:

"...the asinine bourgeois papers took this programme quite seriously, read into it what it does not contain and interpreted it communistically. The workers seem to be doing the same. It is this circumstance alone which made it possible for Marx and me not to dissociate ourselves publicly from such a programme. So long as our opponents and likewise the workers view this programme as embodying our intentions we may allow ourselves to keep quiet about it." (Letter from Engels to Bebel, October 12, 1875.)

All Marx's 'marginal glosses' constantly return to the problem of the State, even when they are not treating it specifically. Thus the criticism of the 'just distribution of the proceeds of labour', the phrase loved by Lassalle, was Marx's starting point for discussing 'the society which will emerge from capitalist society'. This society is the one in which the proletariat 'still needs the State... to repress its adversaries' (Engels to Bebel, March 18 - 29th, 1875).

This society bears 'all the marks of the old society from within which it has emerged'. It needs the State of the State of the dictatorship of the proletariat to get rid of them. It is founded on a general law which Marx said is always 'in principle... bourgeois law, even though principles and practice are no longer in conflict'. This 'bourgeois State without a bourgeoisie', as Lenin was to call it, recognises the principles of 'equality' of bourgeois law for what they are, founded in fact, like all law, on inequality.

It uses the political power as a lever to change the real foundations of society, to go forward to the higher phase of communist society in which in particular 'work will not only be a means of life but will itself become the first need of life'.

The rolling phrases of the Lassallean Gotha Programme, on which according to Marx and Engels, the Eisenachers had capitulated, with all the notions about 'equality' and 'distribution', were good only for concealing their extreme caution in talking about the concrete ways of destroying the bourgeois State, about the dictatorship of the proletariat, about the collective appropriation of the means of production.

"Vulgar socialists... have followed the bourgeois economists in the habit of considering and treating the distribution as something independent of the mode of production and hence in presenting socialism as primarily revolving around the question of distribution."

The question of the State again arises when the Gotha Programme calls for 'the creation of producers' co-operatives with State aid under the democratic control of the working people. These producers' co-operatives are to be called into being in industry and agriculture on such a scale that the whole socialist organisation of the whole of labour will result'.

'A last remnant of shame', said Marx, 'induces them to put State aid - 'under the democratic control of the working people'.

He adds that these 'working people' about whom the Lassalleans talk, 'in presenting the State with demands such as these is expressing its full awareness of the fact that it neither rules nor is mature enough to rule!' Here the struggle against the 'self-management' fiction was already beginning.

Marx criticised the linking of the word 'people' and 'State' which will not bring us 'a flee-hop' nearer the problem of the proletarian revolution. He clearly defined the object:

"Between capitalist and communist society lies a period of revolutionary transformation from one to the other. There is a corresponding period of transition in the political sphere and in this period the state can only take the form of a revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat."

'A Fissure between the German Party and Socialist Science'

These 'marginal glosses' were not published until sixteen years later. Marx was already dead. The German Workers' Party was at last discussing the revision of its founding programme.

The sharpness of the political struggle which the Party leadership round Liebknecht carried on from January, 1891 against the publication of Marx's document can be judged from these few extracts from Engel's letters. According to the Party leadership, Marx had been wrong to counterpose openly the dictatorship of the proletariat to the hash in the official programme about 'the free State'. Engels wrote to Sorge, on February 2, 1891:

"You have read Marx's article in Neue Zeit. Right away it aroused great anger among the socialist pontiffs in Germany... Liebknecht naturally is furious because the criticism is particularly aimed at him and it was he who, along with the pederast Hasselmann begot this bad programme. Imagine the initial terror of these people who up to now would not let the comrades' criticise them except with extreme delicacy, when they now see themselves treated bluntly on this question and their programme denounced as pure absurdity."

The parliamentary group of the party drafted a public declaration disavowing Marx's notes as 'this weapon against ourselves thus put into the hands of our adversaries!'

"The great indignation of the social democratic group on the subject of the publication in Neue Zeit of Marx's letter about the programme..." (Engels to Sorge, March 4th, 1891)

"Liebknecht would never have willingly agreed and would have done everything to stop it being printed..." (Engels to Bebel, May 1st, 1891.)

"Since you have tried to prevent the publication of the article by force and sent a warning to Neue Zeit, threatening that if this happens again the party could take possession of the paper and censor it, it is inevitable that the seizure of the whole of the press by the party will appear in a peculiar light."

Engels accused the party leaders of using the methods of Bismark and acting like 'Prussians' in their own party, and went on:

"Even a weak tension, and all the more a fissure between the German Party and German Socialist Science would all the same be a misfortune and an unparalleled disgrace." (Engels to Bebel May 1st, 1891.)

Marx had died only eight years before and Engels was still alive and in the fight but already Marx's text which counterposed the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat to the demand for socialism 'by state aid' was being denounced as 'a weapon given to the enemy', in the leadership of the German Social Democratic Party and especially its parliamentary group!

The 'fissure' of which Engels spoke, between Marxism, the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the party leadership was truly a breach.

When Engels undertook the criticism of the new programme which was to be presented at Erfurt he immediately identified his principal target when he rejected 'the unceremonious passing over of the old slop into the socialist society'. He said that the political demands had the great weakness that 'we do not find in them precisely what ought to have been said':

"The things must be pushed more to the front. The opportunism which is beginning to spread in a large part of the social democratic press proves clearly today how necessary this is... People now want the party to recognise that the present legal order in Germany can suffice for all its demands to be brought about by the peaceful road. They are convincing themselves and the party that 'society today as it develops is going little by little towards socialism' without asking themselves whether that means that society is not obliged to come out of its old social constitution and to blow up this old envelope with as much violence as a lobster bursts its old shell."

'The Most Pressing Questions...'

Yet again the concrete problems of the destruction of the bourgeois State, and in this instance the slogan of the democratic republic in Germany were manoeuvred out of sight. Engels warned again and again:

"A policy of this kind can only lead the party in the long run down a wrong road. You are putting to the front general abstract political questions and thereby concealing the most pressing questions which will force themselves on to the agenda with the first political crisis."

Engels centres his criticism on the concrete question of the democratic Republic which he defines as 'the specific form of the dictatorship of the proletariat':

"This abandonment of the future of the movement, which they are sacrificing to the present, all this is perhaps done with the best of intentions. But it is and remains opportunism. 'well meant' opportunism is perhaps the most dangerous of all."

This text was not published until ten years later. After Engel's death, the leadership of Social Democratic Party buried itself more and more in 'the transitory interests of the day, the chase after ephemeral success', in brief, the 'sacrifice of the future to the present', to the point that his 'pressing concrete questions' presented themselves twenty three years later on the agenda with the outbreak of the imperialist war.

Lenin traced back this fundamental opportunism on the question of the state, and hence of the dictatorship of the proletariat, in the light of the betrayal of August 1914, if we may put it that way. We find in chapter VI of 'State and Revolution' all the milestones of this 'vulgarisation of Marxism'. Kautsky avoided or omitted constantly the question of the state in his works whether in 1899, 1901 or 1909. He talked about the 'conquest' of the state, which opens the door to all kind of ambiguities. In 1912 Kautsky's polemic against Pannekoek led Kautsky to pronounce against the destruction of the state when he was directly confronted with it. As Lenin quoted in 'State and Revolution':

"Up to now, wrote Kautsky, the opposition between Social Democrats and anarchists was that the former wanted to win state power while the latter wished to destroy it."

The passage which Lenin quoted perfectly exposes the complete collapse into opportunism of the social-democratic leaders in 1912, two years before the events which were to 'write the concrete questions on the agenda':

"The role of the mass strike can never be to destroy the state power; its only object can be to make the government give way on some specific question, or to replace a government hostile to the proletariat by one willing to meet it half way... But never under any circumstances, can it lead to the destruction of the state power; it can lead only to a certain shifting of the balance of forces within the state power... The aim of our political struggle remains, as in the past, the conquest of state power by winning a majority in parliament and by raising parliament to the level of master of the government." (Quoted by Lenin in 'State and Revolution', chapter VI, from Kautsky's book, 'The Premises of Socialism').

This was the political condition of the man to whom Engels had written twenty years earlier that, in order to advance towards socialism, it was necessary 'to blow up this old envelope with as much violence as a lobster bursts its old shell'. Such is the psychology of the bureaucrat who counterposes the 'shifting of the balance of forces within the state power' to the class struggle. From 1875 to 1917, therefore, from Marx and Engels to Lenin, the question of questions from which 'tensions and fissures' and then necessary splits arise within the workers' movement is that of the destruction of the state and of the dictatorship of the proletariat. And we can certainly summarise the Marxist position in the words of Emile Bottigelli in his 1949 preface to Marx's 'Critique of the Gotha Programme' in 'Editions Sociales' published by the Communist Party of France.

The Anarchists and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

The opportunism which ravaged the Second International and destroyed it as a revolutionary organisation, incidentally stimulated anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist theories. They aimed at the destruction of the bourgeois state but replied with confusion of silence to the problem of the transition from one society to the other which was posed by Marx.

Lenin pointed out that Engels described the anarchists' idea of the abolition of the state as confused and not revolutionary. He counter-poses the angle from which Marx and Engels attacked the anarchists to that of the official social democracy. He contrasts such formulations as 'Have these gentlemen ever seen a revolution? A revolution is certainly the most authoritarian thing there is... The victorious party must maintain its rule by means of the terror which its arms inspire in the reactionaries', to 'we accept the state, the anarchists do not'.

The Third International did not have sufficient time to win the anarchist militants to the necessity for the dictatorship of the proletariat, starting from its conviction of the necessity to destroy the state with which it correctly opposed the social chauvinists.

Fifteen years later the revolution and the civil war in Spain gave practical confirmation of the theoretical gulf which yawns in anarchism between the destruction of the power of the bourgeois state and the exercise by the proletariat of its own power. Those who do not aim consciously at the dictatorship of the proletariat can only dream about destroying the bourgeois state but cannot seriously aim at it.

Trotsky frequently described anarchism in theory as nothing but liberalism pushed to its extreme. Here is the report, of the meeting on July 19, 1936, when the workers' militias were covering Spain, between the Catalan representative of the bourgeois state and the anarchist leader Abad de Santillan. It comes from Abad de Santillan's book, 'Why We Lost the War':

"Luis Companys, the President of the Generalitat summoned us to a meeting to find out what we were intending to do. We arrived at the seat of the Catalan government with our rifles in our hands, without having slept and without having shaved for several days... Several members of the government of the autonomous region of Catalonia were shivering with fright with white faces during an interview at which As caso was not present. The governmental palace was surrounded by the body-guard of the fighters who had escorted us. Companys congratulated us on our victory. We alone could have imposed anything we wanted, could have declared the Generalitat to be abolished and have installed in its place the true power of the people.

But we did not believe in dictatorship when it was exercised against us and we did not want it when we could have exercised it to the detriment of others. The Generalitat was to remain, with President Companys at its head, and the popular forces were to organise themselves in militias to continue the struggle for the liberation of Spain."

The bureaucratic degeneration of the first workers' State enables social democracy to identify the hideous mask of Stalinism with the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is another incidental reflex effect. When 'midnight sounds in the century', the dictatorship of the proletariat is opposed, within the ranks even of the revolutionary class, by the combined efforts of the leaders of Stalinism, of social democracy and of anarchism.

4. Stalinism Against the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

Trotsky underlined in 1936 the degeneration of the first workers' state. He went back to the explanatory remarks of Lenin on what Marx and Engels had said about 'the withering away of the state', which justifies the formula of Engels that 'it is no longer a state in the proper sense':

"It has not even begun to wither away, but worse, it has become an apparatus of coercion without precedent in history.

Far from being replaced by the armed people, the army has formed a caste of privileged officers at the top of which the marshals have appeared, while the people 'exerting their dictatorship with arms' find themselves denied in U.S.S.R. even the possession as so much as a dagger."

The Inevitable Necessity for a Privileged Minority

Trotsky goes back to and deepens the analysis of Lenin when he takes up 'the dual character of the Soviet State', and at the same time expressed his 'regret' to the scholastics that the reality does not fit their schemas:

"The workers' state, the State of the dictatorship of the proletariat, has the task of preparing for its own abolition. This task results from its primary function but none the less is absolutely of its essence. The degree to which it can carry out this derived task enables us to verify in a certain sense how successful it has been in executing the dominant idea of constructing a society without classes and without material contradictions. Bureaucratism and harmonising society are in inverse proportion to each other". ('Revolution Betrayed') And Trotsky also said 'The policeman will be the master of man to the extent that man has not sufficiently become the master of nature.'

The problem here is to draw out all the conclusions from the famous principle which Marx laid down in 1875:

"Law can never raise itself above the economic regime or the cultural development conditioned by this regime."

Lenin went on to explain that, when we say "law", we are saying "an apparatus of repression imposing its norms". Such, therefore, is the dual character of the Soviet State. It is socialist to the extent that it defends collective property in the means of production. It is bourgeois to the extent that the distribution of goods takes place according to capitalist standards of value with all the consequences which flow from this fact.

But "the duality of the functions of the state cannot fail to reveal itself in the structure of the state". "If the state of the armed workers is completely consistent with its purposes when it is a matter of defending socialised property against counter-revolution, it is completely inconsistent with its purposes when it is a matter of regulating inequality in the sphere of consumption. Those who have no property are not inclined to create privileges and defend them. The majority cannot show itself to be concerned about the interests of the minority. The workers' state has to defend 'bourgeois law' and finds itself obliged to create an organ of 'bourgeois' type, in short to go back to the policeman and give him a new uniform."

The classless society presupposes that democracy is suppressed by the absorption of the state into society, so that a society is reached which administers itself, without any need of a guardian or of a 'special power of repression', even though it be directed against a minority.

The Soviet democracy is the lever or, as Trotsky calls it, the 'stimulator' of production. It organises the state or rather, in Lenin's words, 'the semi-state', which is the workers' state. When the workers' state encourages and stimulates everybody to produce as much as they can, so that the producers are their own salvation, the workers' state 'cannot avoid having recourse to the methods of remuneration for work which capitalism has elaborated, while it modifies and mitigates them'.

In other words when militants influenced by bourgeois or Stalinist propaganda demand 'guarantees' against bureaucratic deformation in the workers' state, as they often do, it amounts to denying in an idealistic way what Trotsky called in 'Revolution Betrayed', 'the inevitable necessity of forming and maintaining a privileged minority, as long as it is not possible to ensure real equality', along with the necessary transitional period of dictatorship of the proletariat.

Trotsky explains that after the seizure of power, bureaucratic tendencies to stifle society will appear everywhere, even in the most developed capitalist countries. They will do so to the same extent as this semi-state is necessary, this semi-state which, while it enables the most democratic political regime in history to exist, is none the less - a democracy.

People who recoil from the absence of supra-historical 'guarantees' against bureaucracy, idealists, are showing the same petty-bourgeois fear of the practical necessities of the

revolution as the anarchists show. The anarchists demanded that when the workers had once taken the power from the bourgeoisie they should lay down their arms instead of defending that power by their dictatorship. Marx attacked them for this.

That is not where the key to the problem is to be found. On the one hand, 'the poorer is the society which is born from the revolution, the more severely and unrelentingly this law must show itself, the more brutal will be the forms which the bureaucracy must adopt and the more dangerous to the development of socialism it will become'.

On the other hand, this law can only be directly counteracted, especially, by the development of the revolution on the international scale in the advanced capitalist countries. This would permit a gigantic leap forward of the productive forces. It would reinforce the 'socialist tendencies' in the semi-state, those which drive it to its own extinction. The end of 'the struggle of all against all' means the end of all necessary coercion, even democratic coercion.

Then and only then will it become possible to speak of liberty in communist terms and not in the terms of the capitalist, the bureaucrat or the petty-bourgeois, who cannot imagine that liberty can exist without a policeman to guarantee it.

"In a more advanced phase of communist society, when the enslaving subjugation of individuals to the division of labour, and thereby the antithesis between intellectual and physical labour, has disappeared; when labour is no longer just a means of keeping alive but has become itself a vital need; when the all-round development of individuals has also increased their productive powers and all the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly - only then can society wholly cross the narrow horizon of bourgeois right and inscribe on its banner, 'From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs'." (Marx: 'Critique of the Gotha Programme')

The Stalinists Against the Dictatorship of the Proletariat and the Workers' United Front

The isolation of the Russian Revolution and the delay of the West in coming to the help of the first proletarian dictatorship, thanks to the treachery of the social-democratic leaderships, have had a dramatic result. What the Bolsheviks expected to be a truce has become a 'historic period'. The struggle for the necessities of life subdues the working class and the masses to their daily toil. In contradiction there arises the over-developed power of the 'privileged minority' with which the 'bourgeois state without a bourgeoisie' cannot dispense.

We do not rely solely on objective factors to explain the degeneration of the workers' state, and we should gravely vulgarise Marxism and show that we totally mis-understood what the workers' state is if we did so.

The sufferings which the revolutionary masses endured and their heroism in the revolution and the civil war to bring into existence and defend the workers' state did not fall into apathy suddenly. There can be no separating the combativity of the soviet masses, in particular, from the formation of their consciousness by the Bolsheviks, in all their programmatic speeches and governmental acts, which explained that the first proletarian dictatorship in Russia opened the era of the world proletarian revolution.

Trotsky emphasised 'two dates to be remembered' in the rise of the bureaucracy. In 1923, 'the attention of the Soviet workers was passionately concentrated on Germany where the workers seemed to be stretching their hands out towards power. The panic retreat of the German Communist Party was a painful disappointment for the worker-masses of the U.S.S.R.. That was when the campaign of the bureaucracy against 'the permanent revolution' and the first defeats of the Opposition began. Then in 1926 - 27, there was a 'new rise of hope: this time all eyes were turned to the East, where the drama of the Chinese revolution was unfolding'. After the defeat in China, which Stalin organised, 'a frozen wave of disenchantment passed over the Soviet masses'.

The bureaucracy began to arrest the oppositionists. There can be no better way to express that the two 'tendencies' at work in the workers' state are the particular expression of the world class struggle. The defeats and the retreat of the world proletariat comforted and re-inforced everything bourgeois in this 'bourgeois state without a bourgeoisie'. The

proletarian dictatorship and the vanguard of the revolutionary workers are organically linked to the movement of the world proletariat.

In this way the defeats of the world proletariat, to which the bureaucracy itself contributed, emboldened the bureaucracy to drive the workers out of the control of their state, at first by cunning and then brutally. At the moment when help from the world proletariat seemed most remote, the bureaucracy declared: 'The opposition is prepared to throw us into a world war for the sake of the international revolution. Enough upheavals. We have earned some rest. We shall build the socialist society at home. Rely on us, your leaders'. This propaganda about 'rest' which cemented a bloc of the officials and the officers, without any doubt found an echo among weary workers, and even more in the peasant masses' ('Revolution Betrayed')

The 'new ruling layers had its ideas, its sentiments, and what is most important, its own interests.'

These interests, within the U.S.S.R., are in daily contradiction to those of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The bureaucracy raises them against the movement of the masses towards the dictatorship of the proletariat in Europe and the world.

The struggle of Stalinism against the revolution has had variations adapted to meet different circumstances. It is not without interest to recall these variations, before we tackle the 'polemics' of today about the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Stalin and the Kremlin bureaucracy have used two divisive instruments against the proletarian revolution. In appearance these two are opposed to each other, but in reality they both serve the same object. In 1933 - 34 the Stalinist parties addressed an ultimatum to all the workers who were not organised in the Communist Parties, to declare themselves for the 'dictatorship of the proletariat'; they counter-posed this to the class-unity of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. As was expected, the broad masses of the workers refused to obey the orders of the Stalinist bureaucrats, a refusal for which the bureaucrats were prepared. They systematically accused the workers not merely of opportunism but of 'fascism'. The Stalinists threw indiscriminately into one sack all the bourgeois parties together with the mass of social-democratic workers, whom they found guilty of 'treachery'. They labelled the sack, 'Fascists and Social-Fascists'. This Stalinist tactic clearly was in opposition to all the gains from experience of workers' struggles, and particularly as it was expressed in the theses of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International on the 'unity of the proletarian front', that is, the workers' united front.

In this first counter-revolutionary variant, the bureaucracy used the Stalinist party as a battering ram to break up the growing regroupment of the class and to discourage its spontaneous seeking for unity. It organised provocation, the ultimatum to the social-democracy which it treated as 'social-fascism' against workers' democracy. The workers' vanguard was consciously cut off from the mass and directed against the mass which was held to blame for the delay in the seizure of power. This was the way in which Stalin closed the road to the German revolution, exhausting the German proletariat in internal struggles and provocations which opened the road to Hitler.

The coming to power of the 'brown plague' provoked a sharp reaction throughout the working class of Europe, especially in France and Spain, and a passionate desire not to 'let pass' the fascist rabble.

Then the Stalinist bureaucracy replaced their adventurist commands ('Soviets everywhere') with popular fronts, a new form of division.

The 'dictatorship of the proletariat' which yesterday they had promised for tomorrow, and which they used as a provocation against the united front, was put off for the indefinite future, on the ground that before it must come numerous and undefined intermediary stages. What had now become most urgent was the widest possible alliance between the workers' parties and the parties which the Stalinist bureaucracy baptised as 'progressive', against the fascist menace. As before, it was against the united front and against marshalling the proletariat as a class that the Popular Front was directed. There was, however, this difference. The Popular Front came into existence as a direct obstacle to the revolutionary rising tide. It had to be presented as the united front, and at the beginning, moreover, in 1934, it bluntly usurped the very name, 'united front'.

Thus we can see the same specialists in counter-revolution passing in turn from one 'period' to another, from a 'sectarian' slogan to a 'unitary' one, but the two tunes both played on the same counter-revolutionary key-board.

In France and Italy at the time of the Liberation the Stalinists made themselves responsible for the reconstruction of the bourgeois state, which would not have been possible without them. They then put forward a third variant, that of the 'sacred union', the union of the nation, the gathering together of all Frenchmen. Maurice Thorez called for 'only one police force, only one army, only one State'.

We are now in a new period of the world revolution. We can now see how the Stalinist bureaucracy gets into the position of weaving together, of simultaneously or in combination using these three different variants of its counter-revolutionary policy against the proletariat.

5. The 'Polemics' between the Stalinists 'about' the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

There was an article in the 'International Herald Tribune' of March 18, 1976, by Victor Zorza, which gave an interesting view of the discussions between the Kremlin chiefs and the secretary-general of the Italian Communist Party.

"When the Italian Communist leader, Enrico Berlinguer, used the word 'pluralism' a murmur ran round the hall, to indicate to him the hostility of his hosts to this term, according to the report which the Italian delegation made. In the soviet political dictionary, 'pluralism' is a dirty word. Moscow regards it as a capitalist strategem intended to induce the Soviet Union to authorise the existence of several parties and thus to destroy the Soviet system.

But the Kremlin was obliged to publish the full text of Berlinguer's speech, in the Soviet press. The Italian delegation went through it with a fine tooth-comb before they approved the Soviet translation. But the word had disappeared.

The Russians replaced it with the word 'multi-form' which lacks the explosive resonance of 'pluralist'. They explained to the Italian delegation that, in Russian 'pluralism' is used as a philosophic term, and that it could confuse the readers. The Italians accepted the modification. None the less their experts in Soviet affairs knew perfectly well that the word 'pluralist' had been used, as a political term, in the Soviet press. This incident tells us something about the Italian Communist leaders as well as about the Soviet leaders. As Berlinguer said recently, there are some people in the West who hope that the Italian Communists are acting as a 'fifth column' in the inside of the Soviet system. As for him, he refuses to act like that."

As we know, the political 'pluralism' that Enrico Berlinguer talks about goes under the title of 'the historic compromise' and means the alliance of all the Italian bourgeois and workers' parties, which are spoken of as the 'constitutional spectrum'. This sacred union, which exists today in the form of the reactionary Christian Democratic government, supported by a 'governmental pact' which joins it to the Italian Communist Party, is aimed directly against the Italian working class. The Italian working class is moving in the direction of sweeping away the Christian Democratic 'order' which rests on the corrupt parliamentarism at the top of the bourgeois state.

'Pluralism' of that kind is certainly not going to embarrass the Kremlin bureaucracy, which is the organiser of defeats of the world proletariat, which is strengthened by those defeats and which has everything to fear from the proletarian revolution in Europe. But none the less the simple word 'pluralism' raises a spectre before their eyes. It is the spectre of the re-birth in the U.S.S.R. of the proletarian democracy which it has crushed beneath its jack-boots, with its firing squads and in its camps. It is the spectre of the working class calling into question the monopoly of political expression which the bureaucracy keeps to itself and defends with its police. The whole forward march of the political revolution for thirty years in the U.S.S.R. and in Eastern Europe is expressed particularly in the search by more or less conscious vanguard for the right of expression independently of the bureaucracy.

The 'pluralism' which the bureaucracy fears above all is that which arises and will arise from the political revolution, and which the Transitional Programme expresses:

"The struggle for the freedom of the trade unions and the factory committees, for the right of assembly and the freedom of the press, will unfold in the struggle for the regeneration and development of Soviet democracy... The workers and peasants themselves, by their own free vote, will indicate what parties they recognise as soviet parties."

It is certain that that is not the kind of pluralism that the Stalinist Berlinguer wants to see in the U.S.S.R., while he is fully engaged in blocking the road to the proletarian revolution in Italy, where every step forward of the political revolution in the U.S.S.R. will encourage the Italian workers to break through his road-blocks. This is why this linguistic quarrel in Moscow could so smoothly be settled.

Today we hear of nothing but the 'polemics' between the Kremlin Stalinists and the 'Euro-Stalinists', the proclamations of independence by European Stalinist Parties. We can start by clearing away all confusion on one point. Today as yesterday, there is perfect agreement between Stalinists on the objective which they are pursuing. It is to dam up, to block the proletarian revolution in Western and in Eastern Europe alike.

One after another during the last two years the Stalinist parties in Portugal, France, Spain, Japan and Britain have abandoned the simple reference in their statutes to the objective of the dictatorship of the proletariat. At the end of summer 1975 there appeared inspired articles in the official press of the U.S.S.R. defending as a question of principle the necessity for the working-class in all countries to have recourse to 'violence', to the 'dictatorship' to bring about and to maintain its power.

The Twenty-second Congress of the Communist Party of France abandoned the reference to the dictatorship of the proletariat at the beginning of 1976. 'Pravda' published on March 17, 1976 a speech by Suslov denouncing 'those who slander real socialism and try to sweep away the revolutionary essence and bring harm to the cause of the working class'.

Formal 'Contradictions'

The heart-rending choir of Stalinist bureaucrats based in the capitals of Eastern Europe was chanting its verses from March 15 - 20:

"Soviet Communism represents the best model of communism (Vasil Bilak - Czechoslovakia)"

"A particularly violent attack on 'anti-communists', who 'try to find compromises on questions of principle such as proletarian internationalism and the dictatorship of the proletariat' has recently been launched at Ostrava by M. Josef Kenny, member of the Presidium and secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party".

"At Plovdiv, the secretary of the Communist Party of Bulgaria, M. Todor Jivkov, attacked those who had modified the 'Internationale', turning into a vulgar pop tune". (From 'Le Quotidien de Paris', March 15, 1976)

Another analytical element comes into the calculation here. The Communist Parties of Western Europe want to abolish the notion of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' because it evokes the proletarian revolution. The Kremlin bureaucracy regards the notion of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' as synonymous with its absolute power in the U.S.S.R. and that of the satellite bureaucracies in Eastern Europe. There is danger in playing with fire. The formula of 'dictatorship of the proletariat', identified with the monopoly of political power which it exercises has to be preserved. This 'contradiction' between the Communist Parties and the Kremlin bureaucracy is only a formal one. It results from the particular conditions in which they each operate one and the same counter-revolutionary policy.

In 'France Nouvelle' of January 24, 1976 an article by Yvonne Queles announced that the 'concept' of the dictatorship of the proletariat, 'like everything else that lives', has to develop and to die. She went on:

"In this connection, we are really obliged to note the kind of stupor, more or less assumed, in which most of the communistologists seem to have been thrown by the latest

television appearance of Georges Marchais. It shows at least a hasty and superficial analysis of the determined and resolute advance of the Communist Party along a road which Maurice Thorez had already foreseen at the end of the war.

But something has completely changed between that time and this. What was then foreseen as a possibility has now become a necessity. For France socialism will be approached by way of the democratic choice of a majority or not at all."

What Thorez foresaw is in his declaration to the London 'Times' in 1947, according to which 'we can conceive of the advance to socialism being by other roads than that followed by the Russian Communists. In 1966, 'Editions Sociales' reproduced the Botigelli preface to the 1949 edition of the 'Critique of the Gotha Programme', which we have already quoted. It treated this 'presentiment' of Thorez as completely justifying the dictatorship of the proletariat:

"But looking for 'specific routes' which make the approach to socialism less arduous (Dimitrov) in no way means that it is possible to pass over to socialism without suppressing class antagonisms. And that cannot be done without the dictatorship of the proletariat".

Yet once more we may leave aside the 'theoretical' wrappings which the ideologists of the bureaucracy apply to their 'polemics' with the 'communistologues' about the 'presentiments' of Marchais. Let us look for the real motive forces of the contradictions which are expressed within the international apparatus of the Kremlin.

Between Those Days and the Present

So what is it that has changed in the international situation, and especially for the Kremlin bureaucracy, between those days and the present?

Between those days and the present the world order of the counter-revolution which was constructed at Yalta and Potsdam has entered into its phase of break-up.

Between those days and the present the class struggle has called into question the agreements which were made between the great imperialisms and Stalin, on the backs of the working class and the oppressed people, in Western Europe, in Eastern Europe, in China and in the former colonies of imperialism.

Between those days and the present the revolution has gone round the undertakings of Stalin and has expropriated imperialism in China. The revolutionary war in North Vietnam and the collapse of the comprador regime in South Vietnam have inflicted new defeats upon it.

Between those days and the present the political revolution confronted the Kremlin bureaucracy in 1953 with the direct threat of the destruction of this bureaucracy with a return to soviets, with the conquest and the re-conquest by the proletariat of the U.S.S.R. and the countries of the East of their political power.

Between those days and the present the bureaucracy has had to abandon the policy of 'pressure' on imperialism by which Stalin 'negotiated the price of his counter-revolutionary action'. Those were the days when Maurice Thorez, the minister of General De Gaulle, could exploit to the full the credit of the October Revolution and the victory of the Soviet masses at Stalingrad, to oblige the French proletariat to accept the reconstruction of the bourgeois state. Thorez called on the workers to 'roll their sleeves up' in the name of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the U.S.S.R. and of the dictatorship of the proletariat to come in France, while the Stalinists denounced strikers as agents of the trusts.

Between those days and the present, the spectre of communism, of the real dictatorship of the proletariat has begun to make its appearance in Berlin, Budapest and Prague and is haunting the outskirts of the Kremlin.

The margin of manoeuvre which the bureaucracy used to have, the possibility of a policy of 'pressure', of a 'controlled mobilisation' of the masses by its national agencies, to convince the imperialists to make deals with the bureaucracy, all this has disappeared. They all pre-supposed that there was in the proletariat no serious idea of political independence from the bureaucracy. All those strikes in 1947, 1953, and 1955 in Western Europe, like the strikes and uprisings in the East (1953 - 1956) have wrecked this Stalinist policy.

Between those days and the present the Stalinist bureaucracy has had to line itself up totally with the requirements of imperialism, and primarily American imperialism, as the front rank of world counter-revolution.

'The Spirit of Helsinki'

Between those days and ours, the world crisis of the capitalist mode of production has begun to strike directly at all the economies. This crisis was deferred after the war by the monstrous support of the armaments economy and by inflationary palliatives which could only prepare a greater conflagration. One after another, the Bonn-Moscow agreements, the Bonn-Warsaw agreements, the declarations of Kissinger, of Nixon, of Ford, of Carter, the Helsinki agreements - all hit the same nail: the penetration into U.S.S.R., Eastern Europe and China of imperialist commodities and capital must be speeded up; the markets which have escaped from the orbit of imperialist exploitation must be re-integrated in it. This is the 'spirit of Helsinki'. We may judge from the following quotation what contradictions the bureaucracy has to deal with. The quotation comes from an article in 'Le Monde' in June 1976, devoted to the situation in Hungary at the moment when the Hungarian Stalinist President, Gyorguz Lazar, was a guest at a banquet of the C.N.P.F., the organisation of the big employers in France.

The article is entitled, 'Hungary is moving towards an economy of hard work':

"Our object, declares M. Gado (of the national office of the Plan) is to direct man-power towards firms which are efficient or which ought to increase their output. The maintenance of full employment is the business of the central government and not that of individual firms. He insisted that this means that employers must not retain wage-earners whom they do not need.

The same concern to reform the balance of external payments by an increase in productivity has led the government to project for the next five-year plan a slowing up of purchasing power and a better distribution of incomes."

We might that Messrs. Lazar and Gado had followed with deep anguish the results of the efforts of their Polish colleagues. They too had the same ambition to make the working class accept 'a slowing up of purchasing power, in that very same month of June, 1976. Without doubt all the 'national' bureaucracies, and that in the U.S.S.R. most of all, saw many of their hopes shattered at Ursus and Radom, just as pitilessly as at Gdansk five years before. The working class will not allow the bureaucracy to apply the decisions contained in the 'Helsinki baskets' without resistance.

Between those days and ours, what has changed is that a new period of the proletarian revolution opened in 1968. The class struggle of the proletariat no less than the crisis of the capitalist mode of production are exerting increasing pressures on the Kremlin bureaucracy and cracking its monolithic international edifice with fissures.

The period which opened in 1968 concentrates all the contradictions which accumulated during the preceding periods. The characteristics of the Stalinist bureaucracy, that of a historic accident, of usurpation, of duplicity and of fraud, of a cancer on the body of the workers' state, are all projected now to the front of the stage.

Let us recall the judgment and the forecast of Trotsky:

"Its leaders have betrayed the revolution of October but they have not yet overthrown it. The revolution has a great capacity for resistance which co-incides with the new property-relations, with the living force of the proletariat, the consciousness of its best elements, with the hopeless situation of world capitalism and the inevitability of the world revolution.

The counter-revolution going towards capitalism will have to smash the resistance of the workers. The workers going towards socialism will have to overthrow the bureaucracy. The question will be definitively settled by the struggle of two living forces on the national and international arena."

Must the bureaucracy today take definite steps in the direction of restoring capitalism? How can it, in the face of the proletariat? How can it not take them, in the face of the

demands, the pressures and the compulsions which imperialism has at its command?

Some of the bureaucrats say that to keep things as they are, to maintain the status quo, is to prepare an explosion. Others say that to modify the relation of forces, to provoke the proletariat, means to prepare for an adventure. The discussions which went on before the tanks went into Prague, the successive retreats in Poland, the various hesitations about the scale on which to mount repressions, are milestones along the tortuous road of the bureaucracy. They bear witness to the lines of contradiction within the bureaucracy in the face of the rising revolution in Eastern and Western Europe.

Today these lines of fracture within the Kremlin bureaucracy are being extended into its national agencies. Conversely, the consequences of the class struggle in each country for the Stalinist parties are a source of particular contradictions which lead each of these parties to take its place and play its own role in the crisis of the international apparatus.

Is it surprising that the leaderships of the big Stalinist parties in Western Europe and Japan, which are responsible for defending the bourgeois order in its key sectors, are located today principally in the most openly restorationist 'shading' of the Kremlin, encourage it and urge it to be more determined? Are not they better fitted than anyone to gauge the urgency for the whole imperialist system to enjoy still great goodwill from the bureaucracy? After all, they are the people who have to attend to all the contradictions on their bourgeoisies in their state of decomposition.

At the same time, we can easily understand that many of the leading Stalinists in the U.S.S.R., Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary are less enthusiastic about strong action because they recognise what would be the consequences for them of any offensive against the working-class. That they call this conservatism 'a defence of the principles of Marxism', or of those of 'internationalism', or of 'the dictatorship of the proletariat' has as little importance in itself as the opposed theoretical pretensions of the other fractions.

This support which the Communist Parties of Europe and of Japan bring to the most restorationist wing of the bureaucracy is a first insight into the concealed motives behind what look like 'polemics' about the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The 'Polemics' of Summer 1975

There is also another insight. During summer and autumn 1975 we heard the French and the Portuguese Stalinist parties in chorus against the social-democracy about the 'Republica' affair. At this period, too, articles appeared in the U.S.S.R. about the 'violence' to which we have referred.

The two parties in Portugal and France have both 'given up the concept' of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The two parties in Spain and Italy had likewise discarded this embarrassing 'concept', but they defended the right of 'Republica' to appear. Each of these parties had its own reasons for what it was saying. All of their reasons were equally reactionary - which in no way prevented us from taking advantage of the contradictions between them.

Let us look for a moment at the contradictions of the Portuguese and French parties. The Portuguese Stalinists had to do their utmost to divide the proletariat which had just given a Communist Party - Socialist Party majority to the Constituent Assembly. Their job was to clear the way for the military men of the Armed Forces Movement to 'restore order'. That explains the provocation against the Socialist Party, which they accused of playing the game of fascism.

The French Stalinists had to do their utmost to divide the workers in order to turn back the current which had shown itself in the working class in the Presidential elections, in anticipation of the legislative elections and in the class struggle, to bring into being a united front against the Fifth Republic. This is why they were polemicising against the Portuguese and French Socialist Parties, of which they made an amalgam to suit these particular needs.

They had to do this - just as they did several times and again in summer 1977 - within the

framework of preserving the Union of the Left - Popular Front as a necessary obstacle to the revolution.

We can see that these 'polemics' are borrowed from the well-tried arsenal of division of which we have spoken. They are a feeble echo from the epoch of 'social-fascism' blended with the necessities of preparing the popular front, the last defence against the revolution. There is one difference. They no longer launch these accusations against the social-democratic parties in the name of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat', as they did in the 1930's. Let us repeat, theory has nothing to do with it.

'Pravda' and 'Izvestia' rush into the battle with their declarations about 'revolutionary violence' because their language is not restrained by the same considerations. Behind the medley of appearances and the deliberate confusion about words there lies the same reality, that of a Stalinist apparatus in crisis which has to prepare and prepare itself for the counter-revolution. Now let us come to another aspect of this 'abandonment' of the 'concept' of the dictatorship of the proletariat, as Althusser would call it, and which is by no means the least.

Marchais and the Employers

The proximity of the proletarian revolution in France and in Europe is going to lead the Stalinist parties into open struggle against the tendency of the proletariat to establish and to centralise its Soviet forms of organisation of the 'institutions' of workers' power.

They have to get their apparatus and their militants ready to fight this movement towards setting up organs of workers' power at each moment in the concrete forms which it will adopt. All the more it has to prepare its apparatus and its militants to hunt out every conscious expression of this movement, to go after every conscious defender of the dictatorship of the proletariat within the workers' movement as an 'agent of the bourgeoisie' and an enemy of 'socialism in the colours of France. This is what people like Juquin, Prevost and Quiles try to hint in the articles which they write to order.

This is the sense of the ridiculous declarations by Marchais and the other leaders of French Stalinism about the 'collectivism' of Giscard. This is the sense of the insults which Marchais hurls at those who 'cling to the concept of dictatorship':

"Do you believe that you will get to socialism by this road? On the contrary I can tell you that you will certainly be contributing to keeping the bourgeoisie in power" ('Le Figaro', April 26, 1977).

Juquin says today that wanting the dictatorship of the proletariat is not wanting to go to socialism.

We are talking here about large scale preparations. The Stalinist apparatus is going to have to stand up to the revolutionary proletariat in each country. It is going to have to counterpose 'thorough democracy' (about which Marchais and Berlinguer have been making declarations) to the revolutionary dictatorship, to the 'direct initiative not resting on any law', which comes up from below, to use Lenin's words.

The Stalinists are getting ready to counterpose to the movement towards collectivism, that is the expropriation of the capitalists and the seizure of the means of production by the working class, the promises which Marchais, that 'thorough democrat' made to the conference of the C.N.P.F., the big employers' organisation. Following the no less democratic Mitterand, he promised:

"As far as the private sector is concerned, the new laws which our programme proposes will not call into question the authority of the heads of undertakings." ('L'Humanite', April 22, 1977)

In fact it is precisely this question - who has the authority in the factory? Who has the authority in the whole of society? Is it the workers or is it the employers? that the class struggle will pose in the entire coming period.

What is more the Stalinists are trying to kill two birds with one stone as they take their calculated steps forward. On the one hand they want to discredit and to fight against the dictatorship of the proletariat and collectivism as the political aim which the revolution

will counterpose to the Popular Front and to 'thorough democracy'. On the other hand they want partly to disown the crimes of Stalinism in which the whole French Stalinist apparatus is deeply implicated and which they loudly applauded. They will do all this while they protect the Kremlin bureaucracy on the essential point and spare it any hindrance in its repression of the militants in the U.S.S.R. and in the Eastern countries.

Kanapa wrote an article in 'L'Humanite' of February 3, 1977 as a contribution to the international 'polemic' to meet these different requirements:

"People must not say to us, 'It is all very well for you to talk about socialism but you have not yet constructed it.' Because we are struggling and we are calling upon the workers to struggle for socialism in the hard conditions of capitalism. Socialism is our business too. When having said that we talk about our history it is true that we also find errors and mistakes. Not to stir up the past or out of academic interest - we are not here for that - but from political vigilance. For the past includes some lessons which come not by accident but are fundamental. In particular they are about the relations which should join socialism and democracy.

It is our opinion that socialism is and should be 'thorough democracy'. Our XXII Congress made this the axis of its work. It means the continual flourishing of individual and collective liberties and the active participation of the members of the new society in the discussion and the leadership of political affairs... This besides conforms to our ideal - and it is in the name of that ideal that the XX Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, more than twenty years ago, rightly denounced the practices of Stalinism. This is why we can see no justification for replacing repression (censorship, discrimination, trials and penal sanctions) for the discussion on the spot of those who express and circulate opinions different from those of the government and of the party in this or that socialist country, or for not sufficiently using the means which exist (institutions, organisation and press) to give to the democratic debate the breadth and fruitfulness which it should have."

The alert 'theoretician' Pierre Juquin has struck a blow against this:

"In 1956, the XX Congress of the C.P.S.U. criticised the 'Stalin Period'. What happened then in the course of the preparation of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviet Union is rich in lessons for us French today, and Georges Marchais has summarised them..."

The 'Stalinist' errors and crimes do not call into question this revolutionary choice (by Lenin) ... The study of them contains general lessons for our party."

Let us note in passing that Juquin thinks that there are 'general lessons' to be drawn from 'the study of the crimes', which is not at all the same thing as 'the study of the errors', but events follow each other so quickly that we cannot blame a Stalinist for getting the variants of his lies mixed up. Juquin went on:

"Important and instructive as were the negative aspects of the historic forms which the dictatorship of the proletariat took, they have by no means determined the decisions of our XXII Congress. What has led to our decisions has been the examination of the changes on the international and national levels which change the concrete conditions of the revolution for France." (This quotation comes from 'Cahiers du Communisme', July - August, 1976)

In short, Juquin doesn't agree with Kanapa but none the less he does agree with him just a little bit. These are some of the facets of the contradictions and the real problems which are involved in the 'polemic' about the dictatorship of the proletariat. We must now go on to examine the concrete manifestations of the real movement of the international proletariat as it seeks the roads to its own power, and the policy of Marxists designed to help this same movement to raise the obstacles which are erected in its path.

So far in this article we have traced how Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky posed the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and how they polemicised fiercely against all the revisionists and all the opportunists, the logic of whose position led to the preservation of the bourgeois state.

We have studied what the policy labelled 'Euro-Communism' of the Stalinist parties in

Europe and Japan really is. We have understood that the Stalinist parties of the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe are following the same unified counter-revolutionary policy of defence of existing bourgeois regimes, while they have their own bureaucratic reasons for retaining their references to the dictatorship of the proletariat, and are not really different from those who have ceased to use that 'historic' reference.

Now we will tackle other aspects of the question and, in particular, deal with the idea that the Stalinist parties could be aiming to get power in order to organise a 'reformist alternative'.

Georges Marchais and Henrico Berlinguer issued a joint declaration on November 18, 1975, when they defined the 'objective' with which the French and Italian Stalinist parties are to replace their 'former' references to the dictatorship of the proletariat:

"Italian and French Communists believe that the advance to socialism and the building of the socialist society which they propose as a perspective in their respective countries has to be brought about within the framework of a continuing democratisation of economic, social and political life. Socialism will be a higher stage of democracy and of liberty, democracy carried through 'to the end'. In this spirit, all the liberties which result either from the great bourgeois democratic revolutions or from the great struggles of the people in the 20th century, the leadership of which has been taken by the working class, must be guaranteed and developed."

They spoke of the 'socialist transformation' of society in these terms:

"This transformation can only be the work of wide-ranging struggles and powerful mass movements which draw the majority of the people round the working class. It demands the existence of democratic institutions which are fully representative of popular sovereignty, the guarantee and extension of their powers, the free exercise of universal direct suffrage and proportional representation. Within this framework the two parties, which have always respected and will respect the verdict of universal suffrage, conceive the accession of the labouring classes to the leadership of the State."

6. 'Thorough Democracy', 'Eurocommunism'... and the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire

We have already seen how the Stalinist parties are pre-occupied above all with keeping the existing regimes in Europe in their present state, to meet the needs of the Kremlin, and are paying little heed to ensuring some 'theoretical' coherence in their efforts.

In France the P.C.F. is doing its utmost to prevent the parties of the Fifth Republic from being defeated. Their defeat would inevitably lead to the collapse of this bastard Bonapartism. The election of a majority of deputies of the Socialist and Communist Parties would be a considerable political victory for the working class and the exploited masses. It would express the relation of real forces between the classes and would give a national and centralising political expression to the class struggles of the proletariat. It would rouse the proletariat to sweep away the debris of the Fifth Republic, to bring to power a government of the workers' parties, the Socialist and Communist Parties, to form a new power, to construct a new state. The P.C.F. is unleashing all its forces to prevent this happening, but its policies are carefully disguised by all those whose mission it is to feed the prejudices and illusions of the masses. Accordingly all the bourgeois journalists do their utmost to present the attacks of Marchais on the Socialist Party and on the aspirations of the masses for the unity of the Socialist and Communist Parties as 'hard' attacks (against capitalism).

'Insignificant' Difficulties

Large numbers of people reject the policy of division which aims at keeping Giscard and Barre in power. Those bourgeois parties and newspapers which are always depicting Marchais as if he were struggling for power are really helping Marchais to retain the grip of the P.C.F. on the working class.

In October 1977 Georges Marchais in Parliament was denouncing a 'sterile and sustained' opposition to Barre. He introduced an alternative draft budget for the coming year, the year for which Barre proposed an 'austerity budget', 'regardless of whether it affected his

electoral chances'. Marchais' budget was remarkable in that it was not based on the assumption that the Barre government would be brought down and was, in fact, to be carried out by the present government of Barre. 'L'Humanite' made this clear on October 14, 1977, in the strip-cartoon entitled 'Those Dreadful People' (which is often revealing). In one of the pictures, one of the 'dreadful' Stalinists was handing Marchais' budget to Barre and saying, 'Now here is a constructive budget. Why don't we discuss it?'

To be sure, the entire press from 'L'Humanite' to 'Figaro' remembers nothing about this incident except the budgetary proposals that were 'to the left' of the Socialist Party. When the Socialist Party abstained from voting on the proposals of the P.C.F., the P.C.F. attacked it for having made 'a class choice' and 'a new turn to the right'. But these bourgeois journalists are not the only ones who give to the P.C.F. a certificate that it is trying to take the power and 'defeat the right'.

There are others too, who after mature consideration have reached the conclusion that the leaders of the P.C.F. really want to occupy ministerial chairs. We wish to discuss now the analysis which the L.C.R. has made over the last five years of the common programme of the Union of the Left as an 'all-embracing reformist alternative', an analysis which remains in force.

As we all know, this analysis is counter-posed to that of the O.C.I.. The O.C.I. regards the Union of the Left, with no barrier to the Right, and the alliance which extends through the Communist Party and the Socialist Party to the left Radicals and the Left Gaullists, as a new incarnation of the Popular Front. The O.C.I. regards it as the counter-revolutionary alliance of the workers' parties with the so-called 'democratic' parties of finance-capital, for the purpose of strangling the proletarian revolution.

As we all know, the presence of the left Radicals and Gaullists create difficulties for the L.C.R.'s theory of an 'all-embracing reformist alternative'. However, our theoreticians have easily enough got rid of these theoretical 'difficulties' by pronouncing them to be 'insignificant'.

Let us see how Denis Berger justifies the support which the L.C.R. gives to the Union of the Left, writing in 'Rouge' for October 20, 1977:

"The Union of the Left which was agreed in 1972 does not appear to be like the alliances of the past in any way, so great are the differences between today and 1936 or 1945."

None the less there might well be militants of the L.C.R. who were not impressed, because they found this 'significant' support for 'insignificant' Left Radicals and Gaullists embarrassing. Denis Berger went on:

"All the same, we cannot just repeat that neither the Communist Party, nor the Socialist Party, nor the Radicals, nor their common programme are the same as before. It is preferable to look for what is really new and what consequences it involves.

Consistent Reformism.

First let us look at the French Communists. The new feature is Euro-Communism. This strange term refers to concrete reality. Today the P.C.F., like its counterparts in Spain or in Italy, fixes its perspectives primarily in relation to what is going on on the national and Western European plane. What matter to it are the rhythms of evolution of this zone, as well as the bourgeois institutions. It has not broken with the U.S.S.R.. Its denunciation of the ulcers of Soviet society does not take the form of a criticism of Stalinism. It retains from its past a totality of perfectly rooted bureaucratic practices. But it takes into account first and foremost the necessities of the situation in France when it determines its policy. The days are gone when a telegram from Moscow changed the party line at one stroke. This is a correction of the first importance."

According to Denis Berger, we have here the sources of the 'consistent reformism' of the P.C.F.. This, we are to understand, is determined by the needs of the French bourgeoisie, just like the policy of a social-democratic party.

How the L.C.R. Explains the 'Remarkable Tenacity' of the P.C.F.

According to Denis Berger the P.C.F. began its slow ascent towards winning a 'reformist' majority in Parliament in 1958:

"The victory of the President-General (De Gaulle), in the absence of conspicuous reactions from the workers, signified a practical condemnation of the policy which the P.C.F. followed since the Liberation."

Denis Berger has not the excuse that he only began his political experience in 1968. None the less his memories are doubtless blurred. To read his phrase, we would get the impression that De Gaulle had managed to overcome the opposition of the P.C.F. in the form of 'conspicuous reactions from workers' to his seizure of power, despite their efforts to raise them.

Let us help to refresh his memory by recalling what the leaders of the P.C.F. actually did in May 1958:

"On Monday, May 19, during the General's press conference, the Union of C.G.T. trade unions of the Seine called upon workers to stop work in all undertakings. On Tuesday, May 27, the C.G.T. issued a strike call for two o'clock. The two demonstrations had certain features in common: on the 19th, the Departmental Union of the Seine called upon the workers to gather 'at the place of work' and to form anti-fascist committees. Thus there was to be no public demonstration. The same applied to the 27th. The fact is all the more characteristic because the same issue of 'L'Humanite' as published the call of the Departmental Union of the Seine also published the Government's prohibition of public demonstrations, on which it commented:

'It is a remarkable conception of defending the republic which consists of letting the apprentice dictator De Gaulle hold a meeting in Paris and preventing the working class, democrats and organisations from demonstrating for the Republic of which they are the essential safeguard'.

Despite all that, the Departmental Union and the Communist Party bowed down to this 'remarkable conception' and adopted it in practice...

In fact the leadership of the P.C.F. and of the C.G.T. had at least one opportunity to unleash a strike movement to involve more people than the Stalinists themselves. This was on the 30th, on the occasion of the strike which was called by the F.E.N., the teachers' union.

The fact is that when the leadership of the F.E.N. informed M. Mauvais of their decision, the latter confined himself to applauding an initiative which he himself was very careful not to imitate."

(Quoted from, 'How De Gaulle Took the Power', by R. Langlade)

However there is a precise purpose in manipulating and twisting history and the facts. Their present requirement is to show that the offensive of Marchais against the unity of the P.C.F. and the Socialist Party is derived from his concern to win power by electoral means. Berger's methods and his purpose are equally worthless.

Let us read on. He says that the victory of De Gaulle:

"was accompanied by a great electoral retreat. More than a million and a half votes were lost in the first elections of the Fifth Republic. If they had not made a turn they would have been in decline. So the French Communists looked for a road to recovery within the system. The electoral law of the day excluded them from getting not only a majority but even a serious basis in parliament for alliances. Since 1962 Waldeck Rochet was talking about a Common Programme. With remarkable tenacity the P.C.F. tried to make it a reality."

This is an interesting contribution towards recommending Euro-Communism. Denis Berger dates back to 1962 the beginning of the period in which the P.C.F. 'takes into account first and foremost the necessities of the situation in France' without worrying about telegrams from Moscow. But why not go further back?

Let us suggest some historical formulations to him. Suppose we say: 'From 1929 to 1933,

the leaders of the German Communist Party were deaf to the bidding of Stalin and were seeking an electoral strategy to enable them to get a majority in the Reichstag. But the 'turn to the right' of the German Socialist Party obstructed this alliance'.

'The absence' of conspicuous reactions from the workers when Hitler seized power 'was accompanied by' the physical destruction in thousands and thousands of the militants and cadres of the German Communist Party. Only the earliest anti-communists, as Georges Marchais would call them, have claimed yesterday and today, with Trotsky and the Fourth International, that this was precisely Stalin's object: sooner Hitler than the German proletarian revolution, sooner the massacre of the militants of the K.P.D. than the workers' united front and Soviets in Germany.

Those who like Trotsky proclaimed the Fourth International did so after having established that the Third International was totally subjected to the Kremlin bureaucracy and its interests and had definitely passed over to the defence of the bourgeois order on the international scale. The Kremlin bureaucracy showed that it preferred to see Europe under the jackboot of fascism rather than that the banner of the United Socialist States of Europe should float over it, regenerating the workers' state and cutting out its bureaucratic cancer.

When in 1958 we analysed the policy of the Kremlin and the 'remarkable tenacity' of Maurice Thorez and of Waldeck Rochet, we detected a precise purpose in it. That was to set up a stable bourgeois order in France by means of Gaullist Bonapartism. This is the reason why on May 20 the P.C.F. deputies supported the vote of confidence in the Pflimlin government and its special powers, which were going to open the road to De Gaulle.

Khrushchev cared no more about the French Communist Party losing hundreds of thousands of votes, provided that the class struggle was suppressed in France in 1958, than Stalin and he (at that time an obscure staff executioner of the Soviet proletariat) cared about the massacre by Hitler of tens and thousands of German Communists. But to hear Denis Berger you would think that that was the time when there was beginning in the P.C.F., with Waldeck Rochet, the struggle to 'win the parliamentary majority' over De Gaulle - apparently under the mask of being totally subordinated to Moscow, and while the French Stalinists were pouring torrents of mud over the massacred Hungarian workers. We know the 'remarkable tenacity' with which Georges Marchais followed up this day-to-day obsession... it led the Stalinists to declare in autumn 1977, 'An electoral agreement is not on the order of the day', when the majority parties had difficulty in pulling together 45% of the votes.

'The Axis of the Union...'

But now, says Denis Berger, the P.C.F. is 'in a blind alley':

"The allies themselves are no longer the same. The Left radicals are no longer the shadow of the fat-bellied Radical Party of the past. To be sure, Robert Fabre and his friends are the avowed defenders of free enterprise. To accept them as partners signifies that we are willing to remain within the framework of the established order. This confirms the Common Programme, no measure of which breaks with the logic of the capitalist system.

But the Left Radicals do not constitute the axis of the union."

How naturally the words, 'to be sure', trip off Denis Berger's pen, to explain the movement of his thought! But he has written clumsily. He wanted to explain that the Left Radicals are 'insignificant'. He did not mention the Left Gaullists of the 'Fourth Component', perhaps because they are even less significant and can be ignored. Why had he to speak of the Left Radicals as a 'shadow'? What unconscious motive arose in his mind to stuff up his demonstration of support for the Popular Front - Union of the Left, with this unfortunate word. This is exactly the word which Trotsky used to describe the Popular Front in Spain. Stalin found nothing by the 'shadows' of the bourgeois parties for Franco had won all their substance, but with these shadows he prepared the victory of Franco over the workers' militias of Spain.

Over this faulty demonstration by Denis Berger there falls the shadow of Trotskyism, of the Trotskyist programme. But are not the floodlights of the bourgeois mass media which

paid so much attention to stressing the absence of Krivine from the central meeting of the Union of the Left in the municipal elections, able to drive away these disturbing memories?

Denis Berger brushes aside the Left Radicals with his casual phrase 'to be sure'. He goes on to say 'but' the Left Radicals are not the axis of the Union. In plain language this 'to be sure' and this 'but' mean that 'avowed defence of free enterprise' does not constitute the axis of the Union.

The axis of the Union according to Denis Berger:

"... is determined by the relations between the Communist Party and the Socialist Party. A renovated, dynamic Socialist Party which defeats the Communist Party in the elections and has won back a certain support in the working class. More than ever a party of government but on the scale of capitalism in crisis. A party the deepest thoughts of which are modulated by the technocrats behind Mitterand, who are ready to manage the bourgeois state and to guide it along different lines from Barre".

The Extreme Left of the Union of the Left

Denis Berger goes on:

"Confronted with this situation, the P.C.F. finds itself in a difficulty which it did not encounter in its earlier 'unitary' periods. Georges Marchais says that there will be no change of strategy. That is true. He cannot refuse to enter the government without ruining his last fifteen years' work".

We have underlined the last six words. None of us forgets, for example, the desperate efforts of the P.C.F. to drive out de Gaulle and enter the government in 1968!

Let us pause a moment before this dazzling demonstration. We had the 'to be sure' and the 'but'. Now we have the 'confronted with'. Is the P.C.F. to be 'confronted with' the Socialist Party, which for its part is ready to manage the bourgeois state? 'Confronted with' that the P.C.F. is to be 'in a blind alley'. In plain English the words 'confronted with' mean opposition or hostility. Please tell us, Denis Berger where are the policies with which the P.C.F. 'confronts' the management of the bourgeois state?

Are we to conclude that the P.C.F. 'confronts' the management of the bourgeois state by a policy which Denis Berger indicated in a cross heading - 'consistent reformism' - but of which he has given no further demonstration?

Doubtless this policy of 'confronting the management of the bourgeois state' is that conceived by Schmidt, Soares and Harold Wilson? Why do you not use the arguments which they hold out to you?

Of course, Denis Berger has to be a bit 'to the left' of Marchais and his 'fifteen years' tenacious efforts' to enter the government! This is how he finishes:

"But it can only be to carry out a policy, which we can rightly call bourgeois, because it does not propose to call into question the framework of the bourgeois state."

You will understand, ladies and gentlemen of the mass media, that we have to be just a little bit 'Trotskyist'. We say that Marchais is to the left of Mitterand. But we have to say at the same time that 'one may well call his policy bourgeois' if one is consistent. This is how we draw the distinction between them: Mitterand wants to 'manage the bourgeois state' while Marchais, 'confronting' it and 'in a blind alley', 'does not propose to call into question the framework of the bourgeois state.

Please note that we have said 'to be sure', 'but' and 'confronted with'. In return you 'might' say that the policy of the P.C.F. is just a little bit 'bourgeois'. There is nothing there to deprive us of our place as the extreme left of the Union of the Left.

Let us now examine how 'tenaciously' three Stalinist parties have tried to get into government. In October 1977 the French Communist Party widened a little the framework of its 'perspectives primarily in relation to what is going on on the national and Western European plane', to quote Denis Berger. It sent Charles Fiterman to investigate the 'convergent preoccupations' of the Communist Parties of France and of Japan at the Congress of the latter.

The 'Euro-Communism' of the Japanese Stalinist Party

'L'Humanite' devoted on October 18th, 1977 a full page to an interview with the general secretary of the P.C.J. before the Congress opened. As we all know the parliamentary regime in Japan had been hit by a violent crisis of decomposition. The majority party was discredited by a succession of financial and political scandals. Kenji Miyamoto noted that the Conservative Party had dropped from 57.8% of the electorate in 1958 to 41.7% in 1977, and went:

"This explains why the national press is greatly interested in the question, 'What will be the political form of the government when the P.L.D. loses the absolute majority of seats?'

The reactionary forces are getting ready for this. A good many proposals have been put forward outside and within the opposition parties. The right wing of the Socialist Party and the anti-Communist Parties of the centre (the Democratic Socialist Party and the Komeito) have already formed 'The Association for a New Japan' with the intention of isolating the Communist Party and getting a coalition government with the right.

On the other hand, the Liberal Democratic Party has had a small split from which has emerged a 'Liberal New Club', a formation which won a certain success in the General Election last year. Besides all this there have been numerous lists and candidates in the recent senatorial elections to which you refer, and this has made the outlines of an alternative more obscure.

Our party calls for the formation of a progressive bloc which will bring together the Communist Party, the Socialist Party and the other democratic forces. It is the internal quarrels in the Socialist Party which prevent it from making up its mind."

Denis Berger would call this a 'blind alley'. Faced by it, the P.C.J. has to take note that a policy of substitution would, for the moment, pull in the popular votes:

"While the crisis is worsening and the sufferings of the Japanese people are increasing, the forces of the left have not yet succeeded - for example, the Socialist Party - in offering new perspectives which are CREDIBLE.

A public opinion poll during the senatorial election campaign revealed another factor. A CLEAR MAJORITY of the persons interrogated said that they wanted a 'Grand Alliance' reaching from the P.L.D. to the Socialists, while a minority wanted a Socialist Party-Communist Party alliance.

If it is true that the crisis is the crisis of State monopoly capitalism, there still exist illusions among our people about the possibility of resolving the difficulties within the framework of the power of the monopolies. We can say that in Japan a lack of experience aggravates the absence of unity of the democratic forces."

We have inserted the emphasis in this quotation. What Miyamoto is saying is that a 'national and democratic united front' must be formed in Japan. The forces in this front should have a 'stable parliamentary majority'. This 'stable majority' for which Miyamoto is making his 'tenacious efforts' does not exist. It remains only to button it up:

"It is necessary to respect the verdict of the elections and political pluralism, to defend and to extend democracy and its liberties."

This leads to a 'bitter' conclusion:

"We used to say at one time that it would be possible to form a democratic government in the 1970's. The timetable will perhaps be a little delayed, but the formation of such a government is inevitable."

If we properly understand the Japanese 'Euro-Communists' whom Charles Fiterman has been assuring that their 'preoccupations converge' with those of the P.C.F., then:

- a). The crisis is worsening and it is going to be necessary to change the government.
- b). No Socialist Party - Communist Party government is possible because the Socialist Party does not want it.
- c). The reactionary forces propose a broad alliance from the Conservative P.L.D. to the

Socialists.

- d). A 'clear Majority' of the population supports these 'reactionary forces'.
- e). For the moment it is necessary to respect the verdict of the ballot box on the P.L.D. by comparison with which the French 'majority' with its 46% looks as if it were widely popular.
- f). A government allying the Communist Party, the Socialist Party 'and the other democratic parties' must be postponed until the 1980's.
- g). If the P.L.D. were to collapse between now and then, it would be necessary to respect 'pluralism' and the 'clear majority' of the people who favour a 'Grand Alliance' without the Communist Party.

It is relevant to the analysis of Denis Berger that the Japanese Communist Party lost votes on this policy in the election. We await his article telling how the Japanese Communist Party is going to begin its tenacious efforts to recover and to conquer power.

'Thorough Democracy'

We return to the French and Italian Communist Parties. The journalists or the L.C.R., the experts in 'Euro-Communism' believe that the P.C.F. made up its mind in advance for a parliamentary alliance which would permit it to operate an 'all-round reformist alternative' based on national criteria. We should note that those involved are much less concerned about the quality of their alliances.

For example the official 'tactic' of the Italian Communist Party which claims to be aiming at a 'reformist' government consists at the moment in operating an agreement at governmental level with the Italian equivalent of Giscard, Lecanuet, Servan-Schrieber, etc.:

The French Communist Party meanwhile, whose official 'tactic' for getting a so-called 'reformist' government lies in the Union of the Left, attacks everyday the reactionary parties of the French equivalents of Andreotti, Zaccagnini.

They get on none the worse for that and each warmly approves what the other does. The fact is that they believe that 'strategy' is something different:

"The two parties are developing their action in different concrete conditions. For this reason each of them operates a policy which corresponds to the needs and the characteristics of the country. At the same time they are struggling in developed capitalist countries and are aware of the common character of the essential problems which are posed to them and the consistence of the solutions that they must bring to them."

We are obliged indeed to note that the Stalinist parties believe the 'essential' to be elsewhere than where the L.C.R. sees it. This is as clear from the declaration of the French and Italian Communist Parties of November, 1975 as it is from their declaration of April, 1976 or from the meeting of Marchais and Berlinuer in Paris as from the meeting of Marchais and Miyamoto at Tokyo.

The 'strategic' essential is 'thorough democracy', independently of the chances of alliances and governments. So what is this 'thorough democracy'? Marchais and Berlinguer say that it is the answer to 'the crisis of the institutions of civil life'.

This is not a governmental formula. But it is a formula about the State. It means preserving the institutions of the bourgeois State at all costs, whatever may be the turns, the betrayals and the contradictions.

'Thorough democracy' means thorough Giscard-Barre, thorough P.L.D. in Japan, thorough Andreotti, thorough Suarez, thorough Videla, Bermudez and the lot. This is the aim of the 'tenacious efforts' of the Stalinist parties. This is the 'blind alley' into which they want to lead the workers of the West European, Asiatic and Latin American countries and elsewhere, if possible until the 1980's, as Miyamoto said.

Confronting the European Revolution

These are the desperate efforts of the Kremlin bureaucracy and its national agencies. These agencies are, more than ever, the Communist Parties. They struggle to hold back the revolutionary crisis which is already beginning to come to the surface in several Western European countries. This crisis cannot be confined to these countries. It is ripening in all the Western European countries and no less in the East, as the strikes of the Romanian coal miners, the Polish metal workers, the resistance of the Russian workers to the bureaucracy and the crisis of the latter all bear witness.

Each of the revolutionary crises which are coming to the surface or ripening in all the countries of Europe has its particular features and its own tempo. Whether they are calling into question capital, the bourgeois and the capitalist mode of production, or the parasitic bureaucracies, they form part of the same chain that of the proletarian revolution in Europe, the European revolution.

The European revolution is inevitable. The content of the policy of the European Communist Parties is to delay it and disorganise it as much as possible. This policy which is in full agreement with the Kremlin for sound reasons is what is labelled 'Euro-Communism'.

The victory of the proletarian revolution in each country in Europe and on the scale of the continent requires that there shall be established or re-established the dictatorship of the proletariat and the democracy of councils, of soviets. Therefore the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat and of the ways and the methods which lead to it have become a political question of burning immediacy. The Communist Parties have taken up their positions. They are against and they say so. They are against today when they support the existing governments and regimes. They will be against tomorrow in the name of 'thorough democracy', of 'Popular Fronts' and other 'Unions of the Left'.

They will try to justify their attempts to defend the last bastions and the last shifts of the bourgeois order and the bourgeois state. They will have to rise up to the government and ministerial level in order to defend the bourgeois state against the masses. The masses will be calling it into question, trying to destroy it, trying to put in its place their own state, that of the dictatorship of the proletariat, of the democracy of councils, of soviets.

These 'thorough democrats' will then find excuses for everything they try to do to defend the last shift and the last bastion of the bourgeois order and of the state, the Popular Front.

In the hour when they have at last to mount the governmental and ministerial battlements to defend the bourgeois state when the masses are storming it these 'thorough democrats' will thoroughly defend the last traces of the bourgeois state against the new 'institutions of civil life' which will be the soviets of the proletarian revolution.

This is the 'strategy' of the Communist Parties. The proper name for it is Stalinism. It is counter-revolutionary, it is a worthy continuator of the work of those who exterminated the Bolsheviks, of those who 'thoroughly' divided the German workers' movement until Hitler destroyed it.

What the Stalinist parties present as their aim, the restoration of parliamentary democracy is one thing. What is their real aim, the preservation of the present forms of all the bourgeois states is another.

Now we come to parliamentarism itself. Let us feel its historic pulse. Sixty years after Lenin wrote 'The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky'.

7. The Bankruptcy of Parliamentarism

Euro-Stalinists like Marchais, Berlinguer and Miyamoto talk about a 'higher stage' of democracy:

"A liberal naturally speaks of 'democracy' in general; but a Marxist will never forget to ask: for what class? Everybody knows, for instance (and Kautsky the 'historian' also knows it), that the rebellions of and even the strong ferment among the slaves of

antiquity immediately revealed the fact that in essence the state of antiquity was the dictatorship of the slave owners. Did this dictatorship abolish democracy among and for the slave owners? Everybody knows that it did not.

The 'Marxist', Kautsky, uttered absolute nonsense and an untruth, because he 'forgot' the class struggle...

In order to transform Kautsky's liberal and lying assertion into a Marxian and true one, one must say: dictatorship does not necessarily mean the abolition of democracy for the class that exercises dictatorship over other classes; but it certainly does mean the abolition (or very material restriction, which is also a form of abolition) of democracy for that class over which or against which the dictatorship is exercised." (Quoted from 'The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky', Little Lenin Library, published by Lawrence and Wishart, p. 18)

Lenin went on to write about 'pure democracy', the social-democratic ancestor of the Stalinists' 'thorough democracy':

"'Pure democracy' is the mendacious phrase of a liberal who wants to fool the working class. History knows of bourgeois democracy which takes the place of feudalism and of proletarian democracy which takes the place of bourgeois democracy...

Take the fundamental laws of contemporary states, take their administration, take the right of assembly, freedom of the press, and 'equality of all citizens before the law', and you will see at every step evidence of the hypocrisy of bourgeois democracy with which every honest and class conscious worker is familiar. There is not a single state, however democratic, which does not contain loopholes or limiting clauses in its Constitution guaranteeing the bourgeoisie the legal possibility of despatching troops against the workers, of proclaiming martial law, and so forth, in case of a 'disturbance of the peace', i.e. in case the exploited class 'disturbs' its position of slavery and tries to behave in a non-slavish manner...

Even in the most democratic bourgeois states the oppressed masses meet at every step the crying contradiction between the formal equality proclaimed by the 'democracy' of the capitalists and the thousands of real restrictions and deceptions which make the proletarians wage-slaves. It is precisely this contradiction which the agitators and propagandists of socialism are constantly denouncing before the masses, in order to prepare them for the revolution!

And now that the era of revolution has begun Kautsky turns his back on it and begins to extol the charms of bourgeois democracy in its death agony!"

Thiers, Gambetta, Jules Ferry: The Third Republic

The official history in the school and university text books does not weary of praising the republican virtues of the 'founders' of the Third Republic. The great work in public education of Jules Ferry is flanked on one side by Gambetta's beard and on the other by Clemenceau's moustaches. But let us look for a moment at what these men were doing in the last years and hours of the Second Empire against which they are supposed to have defended the 'Republic'.

There were two kinds of republicans at the finish of the Second Empire, the moderates and the radicals. Moderates like Emile Ollivier and Picard aimed at 'bringing the government to concede liberty in order to avoid a new revolution'. Picard 'announced to his colleagues that their quiet days were ended and ironically advised them not to shake the imperial edifice too hard for fear that it would crumble on their heads. He had a habit of saying that happiness for a politician consists in outright opposition to a strong government which you are sure you are not going to be able to bring down'.

The 'radicals', the left republicans round Jules Ferry, Jules Grevy and Gambetta, whom the Paris electors had just sent to the Chamber of Deputies with the well-known democratic mandate of the Belleville Programme - what about them?

"This man, whom the 'revolutionary socialists' of Belleville elected, did not fear to state in June 1869, at Marseilles, with a sense of the opportunism which was already the most outstanding of his many talents:

'I intend to prove the intimate alliance of the radical policy and of big business'.

These radicals are not revolutionaries any more than they are Jacobins in their programme." (Quoted from J. Azema & M. Winock, 'La IIIe Republique'.)

200,000 Parisiennes marched up the Champs-Élysées on January 12th, 1870 for the funeral of the journalist Victor Noir, whom a member of the Bonapart family had murdered. It was the largest demonstration in all the reign of Napoleon III. Yet 'apart from Rochefort, not one member of the parliamentary left was with the demonstrators and Rochefort was attacked in parliament by... Emile Ollivier, who had him arrested.

Lissagaray (who at one time courted Marx's daughter Eleanor) wrote in his 'History of the Commune, 1871':

"The second liberal act of E. Ollivier, who introduced the law about trade unions, was to turn the troops on to the workers at Le Creusot, who were demanding the right to manage themselves the pension fund to which their pennies were contributed."

Look today at the apostles of 'pure democracy' of that time. The army of Napoleon III was crushed at Sedan on September 3, 1870 and he was taken prisoner and surrendered. When the defeat was announced on the following day the mob invaded the seat of government, the Palais Bourbon. Lissagaray described the scene:

"By one o'clock the people were cramming the seats despite the desperate efforts of the Left. The hour had struck. The deputies, who wanted to become ministers, were trying to take over the government. The Left supported this manoeuvre with all its strength and denounced any mention of a Republic. They were shouting the word, 'Republic' from the public gallery and Gambetta made unheard-of efforts to persuade the people to wait for the result of the debate. The result was known in advance. It was that the Assembly would appoint a commission to govern; Bismark's peace terms would be accepted at any price; there was to be a more or less parliamentary monarchy, the lowest depth of shame. A new wave of people broke down the doors, filled the hall, and drove away or overwhelmed the deputies. Gambetta was forced on to the platform and had to pronounce the end of the abdication of Napoleon. The people wanted more: the Republic! They carried off the Left deputies to the Hotel de Ville to proclaim it." (ibid. p. 57)

These were our glorious 'founders' of democracy, 'the doors broken down', 'driven away or overwhelmed' and 'carried off' by the masses into the Republic...

Then came the Commune. It confronted these liberal bourgeois, whom the proletariat terrorised and who were doing their utmost to patch up the Empire, with what Marx called 'the true antithesis of the Empire'. This was the 'social republic', the low-cost government, the first workers' government, the direct opposite of bourgeois parliamentarism.

What were the 'Republicans', the 'defenders of democratic liberties', doing while the workers' blood was drying on the bayonets of Versailles and while the proletarian convicts were rotting in Guiana? Everyone knows. In 1875 the 'Wallon Amendment' to the Constitution placed the vote of a 'President of the Republic' above that of the majority, five years after September 4. This was the shameful form in which the bourgeoisie imposed 'the regime which divies us least'.

Gambetta was in fact one of the political pioneers of the Republic, this bourgeois democracy with which finance capital in the end lined up. He is in good company with Thiers, who declared in the Chamber of Deputies in December 1870:

"I am speaking to those who want this attempt, the loyal attempt to get a republic, to succeed, and I am sure that this means speaking to everyone here, but I am speaking particularly to those to whom the Republic is a continual concern, and I am one of them".

What was really going on? Azema and Winock, from whom we have already quoted, explain:

"The Republicans, with Gambetta in the lead, had perfectly well understood the game that Thiers was playing. All the time that the conservatives, inspired by the Duke De Broglie, curbed what Thiers was trying to do, there was a tacit alliance between Thiers, as President, and Gambetta. In 1872 Gambetta was making speeches all round France praising a bourgeois republic, based on the peasants, well ordered, hard-working and peaceful..." (p. 75)

The 'Peace-Loving' Murderers of the Communards

Here is what was going on in the winter of 1871 - 72 in Gambetta's well-ordered and peaceful Republic, according to Lissagaray:

"November 28: a man called Ferre tore off the blindfold from his eyes and pushed aside the priest who was approaching him. He straightened his spectacles and looked straight at the firing squad. The condemnation was read and the officers brought down their sabres. Rossel and Bourgeois fell backwards. Ferre remained standing, wounded in the side. They fired again and he fell. A soldier put his gun into his ear and blew out his brains and gave the same coup de grace. They spared Rossel that much. Then there was a flourish of trumpets and the troop of soldiers filed in triumph past the corpses as if they were savages...

November 30 at 7 a.m.: Gaston Cremieux was taken to the Pharo at Marseilles, a wide open space by the sea. He said to his guards 'I will show you how a Republican dies'. They put him against a post where a month earlier they had shot the soldier Paquis who had gone over to the insurrection. Cremieux asked not to be blind-folded and to give the order to fire. They agreed. He said to the soldiers 'aim at my chest, do not strike my head. Long live the Repu.....' Death cut off his last word...

The firing squads awaited the victims which the courts-martial sent them, gun in hand. On February 22nd, 1872 they shot Herpin-Lacroix, Lagrange and Verdagner, who were alleged to have murdered Clement Thomas and de Leconte and whose innocence was the best established in the debates. Standing at the same post as Ferre they shouted 'Long live the Commune' and died with joy in their faces. Preau de Vedel was executed on March 19th. It was the turn of Genton on April 30th. The wounds which he had received on the barricades had re-opened and he dragged himself up the rise on his crutches. When he reached the post he threw them into the air shouting 'Long live the Commune'" (ibid p. 417)

Gambetta, in his 'peace-loving' bourgeois republic was pronouncing his notorious speech at Grenoble only a few months after the workers' blood had been shed in floods:

"Yes, I feel, I sense, I announce the coming and the presence of a new social layer in politics, which has already been in politics for 18 months and, to be sure, is not inferior to those who went before it."

To be sure it was inferior neither to those who massacred the workers in June, 1848 nor to those who did so in May 1871. It was to surpass them in the holocaust of the workers in 1914.

These radical predecessors of Robert Fabre quickly got the ear of big capital. Azema and Winock very correctly note that capitalism is not doctrinaire:

"The representatives of the commercial bourgeoisie occupied a strategic place in the centre of the Assembly. The commercial bourgeoisie had recovered their optimism thanks to a notable recovery of the Stock Exchange after the slump of 1873. They wanted an end to uncertainty. The bourgeois republic could and should at last be established to serve the interests of big business. Big capital understood that it would be a mistake to place itself in opposition to the wishes of the masses. The important thing was that it should retain the levers of control in the state. It was not concerned about the colour of the regime." (p. 83)

The massacre of the Communard freed French capitalism for a time from the threat of the proletariat. French capitalism needed to have available a political representation which would permit it to stand up to the other capitalist powers of Europe by intensified exploitation of the proletariat and at the lowest cost.

At the same time, it had been necessary to rally the bourgeoisie behind the landed proprietors, the clericals and the monarchists of the 'Assembly of the Rurals', which met at Bordeaux against the Commune, in order to let the blood of the proletariat. Thiers lost the Presidency because he accepted republicanism and the restorationist right wing took the power in May 1873. MacMahon declared the need for 'the moral order':

"With the help of God, the devotion of our army which will always be subject to the law, and the support of all honest men, we shall continue the work of liberating our

country and re-establishing its moral order."

The Catholic church was mobilising support by those reactionary meetings and mass demonstrations which it called pilgrimages. The basilica of Sacre Coeur was built on the place where the Commune came into existence, as if to expiate the sins of France. The Catholic church was firmly anti-Republican. As always it wished to press home its advantage after the defeat of the revolution, to subject French society to the black rule of the priesthood and naturally to keep to itself the 'proper' education of children. The ultramontanes, the partisans the Pope, drunk with the blood of the Communards, dreamed only of finishing off the Republic, which they nicknamed 'the whore'. Monseigneur Pie, a leader of the Catholic church, told an audience at La Chatre on May 28th, 1874 'France wants a leader, France wants a master.'

Martial Delpit, the reporter of the Commission of Enquiry into the Commune, declared:

"No society is possible without the restraint of a moral authority. We cannot conceive of or maintain the moral authority without the sanction of the authority of God."

But the masses wanted the Republic. The monarchist and bonapartist regimes wore themselves out in the class struggle. Even the funeral procession of Thiers was the occasion for a Republican demonstration. A clerical journal impassively wrote that Thiers' funeral was... 'The Commune taking its revenge'!

'Where Are Our Krupps and Our Rockefellers?'

The aspirations of the masses were for the republic of Ferre, Cremieux and the communards. But they voted for the parties of Thiers and Gambetta and for the bourgeois Republic which had massacred the communards and marched past their corpses behind a fanfare of trumpets. The capitalists became more and more anxious about the opposition of the clergy to the regime which was necessary because it could politically guarantee a long period of 'social peace', that is the unrestrained exploitation of the proletariat, if the levers of the 'levers of State' were in their hands.

The Chamber of Deputies brought together on February 20th, 1876, a large 'Republican' majority of 360 against 200 monarchists and bonapartists. Conditions were ripe for the coming of the 'democracy of the rich' of which Lenin spoke. Thiers had announced in November 1872 'the Republic will be conservative or it will not exist'.

Pope Pius IX did not give way and the ultramontane Veuillot cried 'These elections are the continuation of the massacre of the hostages and, still more, a revenge for our pilgrimages.'

Certainly the capitalists had to bring to heel this Church which was threatening the bourgeois republic by its adventurism. The bourgeois republic asked merely to finish the work of 'pacification' which had begun on the barricades of the Commune and with the firing squads. What folly it would be to let the proletariat exclusively expropriate the slogan of the Republic. The proletarian vanguard was in exile, massacred or in prison. It was in no state to explain to the broad masses the difference between the republic of the workers and the republic of the men of Versailles who had suppressed it. This was the moment to bring together the capitalist citizen and the worker citizen under the banner of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, for the better exploitation by the one of the other. MacMahon was forced out of the government and Grevy, Ferry and Gambetta took the stage. They were going to manage the board of directors of the 'rentier capitalism' which French imperialism was becoming. The bourgeois Third Republic was responsible for the while terror of the men of Versailles and so feared the proletariat that it reached the point of fearing industry itself. Ferry said in 1885:

"We have won all those who have the vote in the countryside. Let us guard them well. Let us not make them anxious. Let us not let them get tired of us... They are the reason why our social edifice is the most solid in Europe and the best protected against social revolutions."

This explains the timid prudence of French capitalism which was to cost it dear under the Fourth and Fifth bourgeois republics. The authors of the book which we have quoted ask 'Where are our Krupps, our Carnegies and our Rockefellers?'

This was the political structure of the Third Republic. This is why the democracy of the rich had to get rid of the forces of the Pope, who were making too much of a nuisance of themselves. This explains the role of Jules Ferry and the struggle about non-clerical education.

This imperialist, who massacred the peoples of Indo-China, aimed at replacing the religious cement of bourgeois society, which was already losing its efficacy, with that of the non-religious ideal of national unity and social order. One of his biographers has written:

"Equality in education should first and foremost put an end to the social struggle by creating intellectual and moral conditions for collaboration between workers and employers. It should then bring to an end the political anarchy which arises from the persistent struggles between the Ancien Regime (before the Revolution of 1789) and republican society, by developing scientific education and extending this education to women."

Particularly, there were economic and technical reasons why French capitalism could no longer adhere to the sound doctrine which Thiers pronounced just after the repression of the Paris workers in June, 1848:

"We should close the teachers' training colleges. The parish priests should be in charge of public education. Even so they will still be teaching too much to the people, who need morality more than knowledge."

The 'Republican' bourgeoisie had to go further than it would have liked in alliance with the teachers and the workers' movement against clericalism. It had to protect itself from the Boulangist and anti-Dreyfusard adventures and from the pressure of its clerical and royalist allies of yesterday against the Commune.

The concessions which it had to make to un-denominational public education in order to restrain the monarchist, clerical party, were to become a heavy burden to it in the period of expansion of the European imperialist powers, like its concern not to alienate the voters of the countryside. The ministers of national education of French imperialism in decay, in the Fifth Republic, went back past Ferry to Thiers, and fought against 'knowledge' in favour of 'adaptability', that is in favour of ignorance.

The democracy of the rich was established, the democracy of the property-owners. The bourgeois republic established 'the intimate alliance of radical politics and big business'. Meanwhile the rights and the social conquests of the French proletariat were less advanced than those which the workers of Germany won in struggle from the Kaiser or those of Britain won from the parliamentary monarchy.

'Property and Liberty'

Parliament today is a historic survival. We have to go back to the classical origins of parliamentary democracy to find the basis for this contradiction.

Michelet, the talented bourgeois historian, consciously their partisan, had an extreme hatred for Marat, whom he described as 'that creature of the darkness', 'that toad with the protruding eyes', and who 'disgraced the platform with his filthy cap and dirty clothes'.

It was Marat, a century before September 4, 1870, who already grasped that parliamentary assemblies reach the decisions which the people expect of them only when the people post groups of armed men round the doors and stop the deputies from leaving until they have reached these decisions.

Michelet for his part dreamed of a French Revolution that stopped with Danton:

"Everyone wished for property and wished it to be sacred. Those who did not yet have property looked forward to having it tomorrow.

This was the thought of the Revolution: all should have property, and have it easily, by paying little, solidly and fairly from their own work and saving. The property which we get for nothing, as in a dream, leaves us as in a dream. Therefore the Revolution did not give people property, it sold it to them. It asked of every man to prove by his effort and his activity that he is a man, that he deserves to have property. Property obtained in that way is sacred, it endures like the will and the toil of which it is a

legitimate fruit.

The Constituent Assembly and the Legislative Assembly had already begun to provide liberty.

But liberty is not secure except to the extent that it is sheltered, as is natural, by property.

That ought to have been the work of the Convention, and would have been, if we had not had our terrible disagreements. Its work ought to have been to lay the basis for property for everyone, for the poorman's hearth and home, a solid hearth and home, the nest for his family.

The two propositions of Danton were of great significance, because they marked out the scope of the task of the Revolution. The Revolution itself established its principle and marked out its own limit, in the terrible upheaval of everything. Its principle was the right of man to govern himself freely. Its limit was the right of man to keep the fruits of his own free activity.

There could be no serious contradiction between liberty and property. Property was simply the supreme achievement of free activity. All the time the placing of these ideas in opposition to each other endangered France and created two parties. Some feared for liberty. Others feared for property. A disastrous misunderstanding about these two ideas was dividing France and the Convention, the image of France. Everyone was going to fight. They were sincere, but they were also blind, because they were really in agreement. From the first day Danton proposed to formulate this agreement to enshrine together the two principles in a simple text containing peace."

Michelet was an idealist, but none the less he gave a concrete content to 'liberty'. Property is only the 'consecration of free activity' and therefore it is the concrete content of 'liberty'. 'Property' finds its most complete expression in private property in the means of production and exchange. At that point, we have to find out what liberties correspond to this essence of liberty, which is private property in the means of production and exchange. Those liberties are what are indispensable to the defence and development of private property in the means of production and exchange, to making it effective, that is, what permit, encourage and guarantee the 'free' exploitation of those who possess no property but their labour power. Democracy equals liberties for the rich against the poor, for the possessors against the non-possessors.

The enormous contradiction of the French Revolution exploded in 1793 and 1794. The 'free development of bourgeois property demanded that all the remnants of the old feudal and aristocratic society be swept away in the name of the 'liberty' of possessing, and of doing business. Nothing but the action of the propertyless plebian masses could carry that task out. But could they do so without interfering with 'free' property, 'free exploitation', the 'free' circulation of commodities 'freely' sold? No indeed! 'Freedom meant something else to them. Freedom meant the 'law of the maximum', which fixed the price of bread; it meant confiscating the property of the rich: it meant political measures to these ends.

Danton's two 'principles, the right of man to govern himself freely and the right of man to keep the fruits of his free activity, were not inherently contradictory, because the 'man' about whom Michelet was talking was essentially a property-owner.

The class struggle has produced an explosive contradiction. The 'liberty' of some is not the same as the 'liberty' of others. That is why we get, not peace, but the class war. Even before Thermidor (July 27, 1794) repression was coming down on the masses and crushing

popular liberties. The tumbrils of Thermidor took to the guillotine at the same time those who defended the 'liberty' of the bourgeoisie to govern itself. The bayonets of Bonaparte then dispersed the Thermidoreans themselves. They might well be an Assembly of property-owners, but it was sufficient that they were an Assembly at all. The preservation and growth of bourgeois property and the 'liberty' to own it required that the bourgeoisie renounce for the first time the liberty of governing itself.

The Price of the 'Luxury' of Democracy

In June 1848 Cavaignac machine-gunned the proletarians who saw a 'serious contradiction' between bourgeois property and the 'social republic' - for the latter was the content of the 'liberty' which they won in February 1848.

The 'republican' murderers in the Second Republic were driven out in their turn by the second Bonaparte. They voluntarily gave up their political liberty to save their social power, bourgeois property. In later years the IIIrd Republic was forever looking out of the corner of its eye for some Bonapartist soldier of fortune, from MacMahon in the 1870's to Boulanger in the 1890's and from Boulanger to Doumergue and Flandin in the 1930s, and finally threw itself in 1940 into the arms of Petain.

In the historic constellation of bourgeois parliaments and of classical parliamentary democracy, the Convention of 1792 is no more than a remarkable shooting-star. Far from certifying the democratic virtues of parliamentarism, it confirms on the contrary the celebrated axiom of Lenin, from 'Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky':

"The more developed democracy is, the more imminent is the danger of massacre and civil war in connection with any profound political divergence which is dangerous for the bourgeoisie." (Little Lenin Library edition, p. 28)

We put in the place of the metaphysics of Michelet about 'liberty' the materialist method which concretely analyses liberties, and defines their historic and class content. Capitalist society in the period of domination by monopolies, which opens the period of the decay of bourgeois society, consists of a system of exploitation of the lower layer of the property owners on a large scale - in the name of the same metaphysic of 'liberty'.

Bourgeois republics organise democracy only for the use of the property owners and to ensure better their class domination over the exploited classes. But that is not all. Imperialism in its death-agony, which is historically its periods of wars and revolutions, is 'reaction all along the line' against political, organisational and cultural liberties.

That is why it is quite inappropriate to counter-pose ideologically 'parliamentary roads to socialism' and soviet power, as the Mao-ists sometimes try to do, by flaying the Stalinist parties with quotations from Lenin against Kautsky. Lenin said that Kautsky was already defending parliamentary democracy in its death agony at a time when the era of wars and revolutions was beginning.

After the first world war, as Trotsky wrote in the 'Transitional Programme':

"Democratic regimes, as well as fascist, stagger on from one bankruptcy to another. The bourgeoisie itself sees no way out. In countries where it has already been forced to stake its last upon the card of fascism, it now toboggans with closed eyes towards an economic and military collapse. In the historically privileged countries, i.e., in those where the bourgeoisie can still for a certain period permit itself the luxury of democracy at the expense of national accumulations, (Great Britain, France, United States, etc.) all of capital's traditional parties are in a state of perplexity bordering on a paralysis of will."

The policy of the Stalinist parties has nothing whatever to do with restoring parliamentarism. Everywhere they are the faithful defenders of the most corrupt and discredited parliamentary 'majorities'. In Spain and in Latin America, where Fascist and military dictatorships exclude parliamentarism, they propose governmental pacts to the existing dictatorships, in opposition to Cortes or Constituent Assemblies. They supported Indira Gandhi, who imprisoned not only the leaders of workers' organisations but even the liberals and social-democrats of the parliamentary parties.. So much for their 'tenacious

efforts' to secure parliamentary alliances with a view to getting power.

But you may ask, what about the Popular Front? Is not the justification for struggling within the institutions of bourgeois democracy that it defends the interests of the working class? Quite the opposite.

The Popular Front and the State: 1936 - 1940

Historical truth deals the sharpest snubs to those who defend the Popular Front and the Union of the Left at the very point which, they believe, best confirms the effectiveness of 'progressive' parliamentary alliances.

Every parliamentary party, right and left alike, rose up as one against the general strike of June 1936.

The Matignon agreements, against the 'beginning of the revolution' in France, were ratified by...571 votes to 5!

Bourgeois democracy, the democracy of the proprietors, every party from the extreme right to the Stalinists, benevolently handed the Matignon agreements to the leaders of the workers' organisations, so that they could act as a barrier and turn back the proletarian democracy that was arising in the factories.

The Socialist Party (S.F.I.O.) and the P.C.F. were forcing the working class to accept a 'pause' and 'to know when to end a strike', as Thorez put it. Meanwhile the same Chamber of Deputies set to work to re-establish the authority of the State. The Blum government shot people down at Clichy. It continued the shootings by Clemenceau of the mutineers in the French army in 1917 and echoed the shootings by Thiers of the Communards. The bourgeois IIIrd Republic had merely enrolled left and right alike to give the order to fire.

This unanimity lasted until the final hours of the IIIrd Republic. Of the Chamber of Deputies which was elected in 1936 with its Popular Front majority 401 were present on July 9, 1940. They voted by 398 to 3 to revise the constitution and abolish 'democracy'. The deputies of the P.C.F. were not there, because they were illegal, but they were soon to negotiate with the Nazi authorities to allow 'L'Humanite' to appear.

The National Assembly, deputies and senators sitting together, voted by 569 to 80 with 20 abstentions on July 10, 1940 for a statement by the government which read:

"The National Assembly gives full powers to the government of the republic, under the authority and signature of General Petain, to promulgate in one or more acts a new constitution of the French State. This constitution must guarantee the rights of labour, of the family and of the fatherland. It will be ratified by the nation and applied by the assemblies which it will create."

The last 'left' of this Assembly of the IIIrd Republic was worth as much as that of September 4, 1870. 90 deputies and senators of the S.F.I.O. voted for Petain. 6 abstained. 36 voted against, of whom Blum was one. The radicals voted briskly to bury the 'whore', with 13 exceptions. One of the 13, Marcel Astier shouted: 'Long Live the Republic anyway'. He did not know how well he spoke. From September 1870 to July 1940 the bourgeois Republic succeeded in making the interest of the State prevail over democratic chatter, right up to committing suicide as a regime.

The Chamber of the French Popular Front was not dispersed by a Pinochet with rifle shots. It welcomed Petain as a saviour. For the masses the result was the same.

Was Fascism a Historic Accident?

At the moment when the fascist regimes in Italy, Germany and Japan were collapsing in the later years of World War II, all the bourgeois and workers' parties were proclaiming that the time had come to restore parliamentary democracy everywhere in the dismantled bourgeois states.

Fascism, they said, had been nothing but a tragic episode in the upward march of democracy. Parliamentary regimes were to be re-established in Germany, Italy and France. In some

places the bourgeoisie were totally discredited and could not credibly claim to be 'democratic'. In some places military defeat had dismantled the state apparatuses. There the social-democratic and Stalinist leaders undertook to turn back and to break the movement of the workers, with their militias, to install their own organs of power. They pleaded for bourgeois democracy against proletarian democracy. Stalin at the same time was trying to restore bourgeois democracies in Eastern Europe. But the situation created by the liquidation of the former State apparatuses which the defeat of the Nazis had swept away, and by the presence of the Red Army, made this difficult.

Above all he had to accept reality. He had done his utmost to prove his counter-revolutionary goodwill. His relations with the imperialist victors were the same as those with Hitler, the alliance with whom had been broken in 1941. Imperialism would not resign itself to the existence of the U.S.S.R.. In despair of getting a deal Stalin constituted the 'frontier zone' of the six Eastern European countries. In these countries capital was expropriated by bureaucratic means. The working class was held down by police terror to prevent any rise of soviets.

In Western Europe the bourgeois democracies were re-established on extremely precarious bases, from the point of view of the real needs of the capitalist classes. The bourgeoisie had to make numerous concessions to permit the apparatuses which were participating in the governments to get the working class back into the bed of bourgeois democracy.

In France a whole series of legal measures permitted the proletariat to increase its social and political weight and its class position in bourgeois society. These were in addition to Social Security, the new rights of workers, which applied both to workers in general and to workers in particular trades, access to education and so on.

The Fourth Republic was a historic survival and resulted from the contradiction between the revolutionary wave of 1943 - 1947 and the counter-revolutionary policy of the social-democratic and Stalinist apparatuses.

The Fourth Republic went into a decline after ten years, but on the morrow of the war capitalism had no other solution. When De Gaulle offered himself at that time as a candidate for Bonapartism, he was politely shown the door. The class relations demanded the chloroform which the leading apparatuses of the workers' movement dispensed.

So De Gaulle went off to his country house and bided his time. The political crisis took the French bourgeoisie by the throat in 1958. The unsolved problems of French imperialism were concentrated in the colonial problem. De Gaulle did his best to solve this problem and, to use his own words, to change the form of the State by liquidating democracy.

As in 1940, to be sure, all the "parliamentary democrats" rushed to scuttle the Parliament, under the excuse of saving the bourgeois state and to get their snouts into the Bonapartist trough. The leaders of the workers' organisations rushed to join the corporatist organisations of De Gaulle (the "Commission of the Plan", "wage-control" and so on) to help him to destroy what the workers had gained at the Liberation.

What Parliamentary Democracies really are

What have the 'democracies' become during these years after the 'historic accident' of fascism? During those years the fascist men-at-arms held the proletariat under their jackboot, with the benevolent support of all the imperialists in Europe and U.S.A... There were some years in Greece of a bastard parliamentary 'democracy', of which the film 'Z' gives a pretty good impression. Then in 1965 the armed branch of the bourgeois state took the power and placed Greece in a state of siege.

While De Gaulle was pursuing his efforts to liquidate the parliamentary regime in France, political crises were shaling parliamentary democracy in Germany and Britain. These originated from the inevitable tendency which arises from inside bourgeois states to liquidate liberties by police methods. In Germany we have the law about the state of emergency. In Britain we have restrictions on the right to strike.

Outside Europe the uprisings of the peoples whom imperialism has colonised are leading to the establishment of politically 'independent' regimes in Africa and in Asia, especially now that the European imperialist powers cannot stand up to the pressure of American imperialism.

But what do they all add up to? Numerous 'republics' were set up in 1960 in the old French Empire in Africa. Music competitions were held in France to offer national anthems based on the Marseillaise to these republics as independence-presents. The most savage police terror ruled in 1977 in Benin, Zaire, the Central African 'Empire', Haute-Volta, Mali, Niger, Chad, etc.

When it comes to massacres, the monarchy in Morocco, the police Bonapartism in Tunisia, the military dictatorship in Algeria have no need to fear comparison with the blood-thirsty clown Amin Dada or the old sergeant of the French army in Indo-China, Bokassa 1st, whom Giscard d'Estaing welcomed ceremoniously as 'Mr. Life-President'.

What is the state of parliamentary democracy? The democratic deputies who have not joined the military dictatorships have joined the worker militants before firing squads, in the prisons and labour camps.

In Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, nothing but revolutionary war has been able to liquidate the military dictatorships. There was no room even for an attempt at bourgeois democracy. The bureaucracy has had to fill the power-vacuum in order to avoid the proletarian revolution.

Then what about the parliamentary democracies in the developed capitalist countries? The political crisis in U.S.A. deepens. Conflict between different fractions of the bourgeoisie has cost two presidents their job or their life in twelve years.

The stake is nothing but the necessity to replace the historic gains of American democracy with a centralised police and military Bonapartism. However corrupt these gains may be, they are still too much for the most powerful imperialist power in the world, which must crush the proletariat under its jack-boot. But this proletariat also is precisely the most powerful in the world. These democratic gains have a content for the proletariat; they consist of the rights and liberties which it has won and which are written into existing institutions. It is the power of the working class which dictates the form of the crisis which is ravaging the political summits of the American bourgeoisie.

Senile Survivals

Then what can we say about the democracies in Italy or in Japan? They are in their death-agony. They hold out no other possibility to the Stalinist parties than openly supporting the discredited 'majority' parties - 35% of the votes in Italy and 41% in Japan. The devotion of the Stalinists to parliamentarism is well expressed by Carrillo, who fights in the King's Cortes against the protest by Socialist deputies against one of their number being beaten up by the police, and who supports the Franco-ite minister of the Interior.

In France Georges Marchais would immediately place under observation any P.C.F. militant who was to recite in 1977 the training lesson which he learned at the P.C.F. school. This lesson, on the un-democratic character of the Fifth Republic, will be found in the annexe to this article.

The P.C.F. defends and approves the Bonapartist constitution, the Bonapartist nuclear strike force and all the Bonapartist reforms and institutions. It fiercely defends the Bonapartist government's 46% majority. It defends the 'personal rule' of Giscard through to 1981. Its orientation was well expressed by a leading Stalinist in a city in the North of France, who asked, 'For whom will you vote in the second ballot?' He answered:

"Today I see nothing to choose between a Socialist Party - Communist Party majority and the majority of the right."

The P.C.F. certainly has deserved the praises expressed by Sanguinetti, the 'left' Gaullist, as 'Le Progres-Dimanche', Lyon, reported on October 23, 1977:

"Now Alexander Sanguinetti is praising the 'robust common sense' of the Communists. We arbitrarily put them on the left. We talk of the right as the dominance of the State. But what is really the most important thing about the Communists? Is it not that the Gaullists and the Communists both have the same idea about France? I think so."

The time has come to go back to the Transitional Programme and to Lenin. Yes, bourgeois democracy is a rotting corpse. Where the sick democracy has not been finished off, this 'luxury' is the greatest pre-occupation of the bourgeoisie, who are seeking a way out in a

strong State. One big difference is clear at once between 1938 and today. The bourgeoisie cannot call today on political means to replace the rotting democracies with regimes like those of Hitler, Petain, Mussolini and Franco.

These last installed themselves on the basis of the defeats of the working class, organised and prepared by the Popular Front or by the offensive against the united front carried out in the name of the 'theory' of social-fascism.

The forces and the power of the European proletariat are intact; even better, they have grown.

The defeat of the proletariat in Chile was followed by the beginning of the European revolution in Portugal. The bloody lessons of the Popular Front in Chile were not caused by the discouragement or demoralisation of the world proletariat. The fists of the workers of Europe were not clenched less hard against capital. The lesson of Chile, which has been tirelessly explained by those who are constructing the Fourth International, is going to be written into the rising movement of the proletarian revolution, while the European candidates for the counter-revolutionary reaction can only stammer, like Chirac, tangled in contradictions: 'Democracy is a regime of authority'.

These Bonapartist regimes, fascist regimes, military dictatorships, are not just 'historical accidents' on the upward road of 'thorough democracy, the higher stage of bourgeois democracy'.

These regimes show the truth of a law which we explained in the brochure on 'Parliamentarism, Bonapartism and the Revolutionary Crisis' which was written for the training camps of the O.C.I.:

"The tendency to Bonapartism is always present in the existence of the bourgeois state. The classical parliamentary republic does not do away with it. It contains it and prevents it from becoming dominant. Every crisis of the bourgeois political system liberates and nourishes it. The Presidents of U.S. from Wilson and Roosevelt to Nixon, have shown this tendency whenever U.S. capitalism was up against difficult problems."

Unlike in the 1870's, bourgeois parliamentary democracy today is only a survival. The bourgeoisie has renounced it because it no longer permits them to solve their problems. The crisis of the bourgeoisie, the collapse of the Fifth Republic, the irruption of the masses, may result in what looks like a revival of parliamentarism. This will be no more than appearance. The links between the class struggle in France and the class struggle in Europe and the world are such that the revolutionary crisis in France will frive forward and harden out the European proletarian revolution. We should not direct ourselves towards a revival of parliamentary bourgeois democracy but towards a life and death struggle between the revolution and the counter-revolution. The importance of the struggle against the institutions of the Fifth Republic and of the struggle for democratic liberties is all the greater, but we have to give it its proletarian content."

8. The Political Revolution and Parliamentarism

The Stalinist bureaucracy, the Thermidorean reaction against the October Revolution, has politically expropriated the proletariat. But the social relations which resulted from October still live in the consciousness of the masses. Though the bureaucracy has betrayed the revolution, it has not been able to overthrow it. The relations of production, which are based upon the collectivisation of the means of production and the monopoly of external trade remain directly antagonistic to the capitalist relations of production and the imperialist system.

The bureaucracy in the Kremlin has set up and perfected over half a century a gigantic totalitarian police apparatus in order to exterminate the Bolsheviks and to maintain its counter-revolutionary control over the masses.

The Complete Stifling of Society

The democratic rights and liberties which exist in the bourgeois democracies, decaying though they are, are non-existent in the U.S.S.R... All opposition is tracked down. The

monopoly of political self-expression of the parasitic bureaucracy is the factor which unites all its rival fractions. It brings them together against the slightest warning coming up from the proletariat.

The bureaucracy attracted all the national oppression inherited from Tsarism and the various Holy Alliances in European history when it extended its bureaucratic, police and military control over the countries of Eastern Europe.

This is why the Stalinist police terror arouses, pell-mell, beneath its yoke:

- proletarian demands tending towards the reconquest of the conquests of October by means of the political revolution:
- National democratic demands of countries economically and administratively annexed by the bureaucratic and military control of the Kremlin, which come to add to the national demands which arise within the U.S.S.R. itself:
- the widest aspirations to political liberties to organise, liberty in the arts and in literature, etc.

We know that for the Stalinist bureaucracy to come to power was a sort of turning-back of history. The attacks of the Stalinists against workers' democracy have given an unexpected lustre to social-democracy, whose petty bourgeois liberalism appears to many workers to be opposing the Stalinists' provocation and crimes.

Another reflex effect was being outlined at the time when the new revolutionary period opened in 1968. The margin of manoeuvre of the bureaucracy was contracted and permitted it no possibility but to be the direct auxiliary of imperialism.

Oppositions to the police and military power of the bureaucracy are springing up everywhere, under all kinds of forms, tending to weaken the totalitarian grip of Stalinism. The bureaucratic 'membrane', of which Marx spoke in connection with the Bonapartist bourgeois state, clogs up all the pores of the society, with all the more force because the Stalinist regime is more fragile than the bourgeois state which rests on private property in the means of production.

The hallucinatory image of Stalin in 'One Morning of Joseph Stalin', liquidating certain layers of the bureaucracy by cart-loads and whole categories, because they are tending to dislocate the police system, well illustrates how society is completely stifled.

This movement is governed by the inevitable rise of the proletarian political revolution. As the 'Transitional Programme' says:

"A fresh upsurge of the revolution in the U.S.S.R. will undoubtedly begin under the banner of the struggle against social inequality and political oppression. Down with the privileges of the bureaucracy! Down with Stakhanovism! Down with the Soviet aristocracy and its ranks and orders! Greater equality of wages for all forms of labour!

The struggle for the freedom of trade unions and factory committees, for the right of assembly and freedom of the press, will unfold in the struggle for the regeneration and development of Soviet democracy. The bureaucracy replaces the soviets as class organs with the fiction of universal electoral rights - in the style of Hitler and Goebbels. It is necessary to return to the soviets not merely their free democratic form but also their class content."

For the Regeneration of the Soviets and of Proletarian Democracy

The movement is already in action. It took physical form in the discussions between the workers of the Szczecin strike committee who, in 1971, under the chairmanship of Edmund Baluka, dragged first secretary Gierak in front of the genuine proletarian tribunal which their assembly was.

At the same time everyone who aspires to the most elementary democratic liberties understands that Stalinism and Nazism oppose the proletarian revolution and democratic liberties like twin stars.

There are numerous reasons for the very great confusion and illusions which get in between

the consciousness of the masses, who hate the bureaucracy, and the proletarian programme:

- The Bolsheviks and the Left Opposition were exterminated in the U.S.S.R.. The continuity of Marxist organisation has been broken for several decades.
- The oppositionists and militants who try to re-establish connection with the proletarian programme are those who are persecuted and 'broken' with the greatest ferocity. Certain fractions of the bureaucracy, the most restorationist wing, then permit a controlled expression to the opposition currents which align themselves with the 'Western democracy' which the 'Helsinki Agreements' would defend.
- Bourgeois democracy appears to offer greater possibilities of self-expression than the universal suffrage of the Hitler-Goebels kind, which consists of the electors approving the governments of the bureaucracy by 99.9%, or even 101% when certain layers of bureaucrats are excessively zealous. This is the evidence that the soviet regeneration will not be able to develop from a 'democratisation' of these withered institutions, antennae of the bureaucratic and police apparatus, which today are called 'soviets' in the U.S.S.R..

The proletariat will have to forge its own organs of power in its class struggle against the bureaucracy. The only criterion will be that of proletarian democracy, of total independence from the Stalinist bureaucratic apparatus. This will leave open numerous possibilities for the forms by means of which the real proletarian soviets will replace the bureaucratic police organs, the fighting arms of the degenerated workers' state today.

The whole society will be seized with convulsions when the political revolution begins and develops and the movements of the masses boldly tears open the bureaucratic membrane. The masses will passionately seek the road to their own power. They will go forward along this road with all the more confidence when the Soviet, Polish, Hungarian and other sections of the Fourth International are being built and fighting to open this road.

Sections of the Fourth International: An Imperious Necessity

But we cannot exclude in advance the temporary resurgence of forms of representation like parliamentary democracy, when we take account of the factors which we have listed, and especially of the last, the embryonic state of the new generation of Bolshevism in the U.S.S.R. and the Eastern countries. This is all the more so because the problems of national independence suggest constituent assemblies independent of the Kremlin for the numerous oppressed nationalities in the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe.

It is equally quite possible that the imperialist and Stalinist counter-revolution is seeking some communication trench by which to gain time by governmental initiatives that look like parliamentarism, when they face new and genuine soviets, and when the debris of the bureaucracy try to keep the levers of command of the bureaucratic apparatus in their hands by this device.

But in any case, the important thing is not to lose sight of the essential. Bourgeois parliamentarism has bourgeois property as its social basis. The degenerated and bureaucratically deformed workers' states have collective property in the means of production and exchange as their social base. Bourgeois parliamentarism rests on a ruling class. It is antagonistic to the social basis of these states. The social relations of production, in U.S.S.R., in the countries of Eastern Europe and in China, lead the movement of the class towards a soviet regeneration. Whatever be the convulsions and confusions, the hybrid or transitory forms of representation of the masses, the conflict of power will be settled by the struggle to the death between the proletariat and the pro-imperialist counter-revolution, whether it is carried on directly by imperialism, or by the debris of the reactionary bureaucracy, or by a combination and the direct co-operation of both at once. The alternative of 'socialism or barbarism' will pass from the status of a historic perspective to that of political actuality.

It can be settled from the side of the proletariat only by the installation in the U.S.S.R. and the bureaucratically deformed states of workers' and peasants' governments, resting on the organs of power of the working class, installing their class dictatorship. It is against these workers' and peasants' governments that the bourgeois and Stalinist counter-revolution will be let loose.

So much is certain. It leads to something else, no less certain. This is that sections of the Fourth International are imperiously necessary in these countries, conscious, concentrated expressions of the struggle of the world proletariat for the Universal Soviet Republic, and, more particularly, for the solution which at last has been found for the economic, political, social and cultural crisis, the crisis of civilisation, in Europe: the Socialist United States of Europe.

The proletariat is a class in bourgeois society. From being a class 'in itself', a class enslaved by capitalist exploitation, it has to become a class 'for itself' in order to take power, to become the ruling class and, as such, to repel every restorationist attempt by the old ruling classes of the exploitative society.

In history the process of political maturity of the subordinate class, as it prepares to replace the old power with the new, corresponds to certain very general laws. We have seen how Trotsky posed the question of 'dual power', sketching the comparison between the bourgeois and the proletarian revolutions.

A Well-Worked and Fertile Field: from Prague to Moscow

We can establish in particular, though in a very general form, that a revolutionary class, as it advances, tries to use all the faults, footholds and resting places which the cracked wall of the old society offers, just like a mountaineer who fights against material walls by utilising the irregularities of their surfaces.

Pierre Lambert recalled during the days of study of the O.C.I. in June 1977 that the States General in 1789 was an institution of the Ancien Regime, from within which the new institutions had sprung as a social and political necessity. But in the black funeral procession of the Third Estate, which filed respectfully behind the two privileged orders, no one, not even the little lawyer from Arras, Maximilien Robespierre, (as Michelet says), was thinking of anything but a constitutional monarchy. It was the existing power, lost in its contradictions, which prepared physically the splits within the orders because it stupidly refused to let the States-General meet in their official meeting hall. So people looked around - and then they found the Salle du Jeu de Paume!

Something like this happened in Czechoslovakia. In August 1968 the official authorities of the bureaucracy had convened the XIVth Congress of the Communist Party of the country. Rather than run the risk of seeing develop an opposition to its absolute police powers in the framework of the official institutions, the Kremlin bureaucracy invaded the country. By doing so, it greatly speeded up the process which was leading to the political revolution, while avoiding its explosion, in order finally to turn it back.

The XIVth Congress of the Czechoslovak Communist Party met illegally in a factory in Prague. Without the participants being aware of the fact, they proclaimed by their actions that they were breaking from the international Stalinist apparatus.

No State institution or party of the bureaucratic regime, nothing but the savage violence of the tanks, could have been advanced to give a shadow of legality or of continuity to the counter-revolution. On the contrary, the whole of society was placed in front of this demonstration that hence forward they would have to direct their efforts tirelessly to liquidating the old institutions, under the blows of repression. These institutions were marked by the infamous seal of violence. They would have to be replaced by the authentic representation of the masses. The masses drew their conclusions according to different laws and especially at different tempo from that of theoretical generalisation. But theoretical generalisation, in the persons of the builders of the proletarian revolutionary party, will find a well-worked and fertile field in the years to come along the road from Prague through Warsaw to Moscow.

There is a considerable difference between the position of the revolutionary bourgeoisie and that of the revolutionary proletariat in the old society. The century-old compromises between the bourgeoisie and the absolutist centralised monarchy were based on the convergent interests of the propertied classes. Louis XI in his wars against various dissident nobles regularly sent to the bourgeois of his 'loyal cities' his proposals for economic agreements. According to whether they opened or closed their cities to one of the contending armies, the bourgeoisie of the cities saw their independent institutions, their communal liberties and

their legal prerogatives in the monarchist state strengthened.

'Bits of Revolution...'

The positions of the proletariat in bourgeois society are not provided for in the property relations. Its social and political conquests mark positions, fortresses, provisional or long-term encampments in the struggle, that is to say, the war of the classes, and the proletariat starts from these to engage in new assaults.

These positions contradict the unrestrained exploitation which is the logic of the capitalist system. The class enemy always threatens them sooner or later, because it constantly seeks to drive the proletariat back from being a 'class for itself' to being a 'class in itself', the raw material for exploitation.

For that reason, articles in our journal, 'La Verite' have treated Social Security as a 'revolutionary socialist conquest'. Jacques Juilliard quotes in 'The Fourth Republic' something which was said by Victor Griffuelhes, the revolutionary syndicalist, in 1909:

"I am far from being hostile to the organisation of social insurance. That the worker shall have a more secure and better life is the whole purpose of trade union action. We should do wrong if we opposed anything like that. But social insurance would be a bit of the revolution. The bourgeoisie will never vote for it."

Griffuelhes was right. Social Security is as much a 'gift' from the bourgeoisie of the Fourth Republic to the proletariat as you could call the immense stocks of war material which are surrendered after a battle to the victors by the conquered a 'gift'.

Despite Griffuelhes's lack of precision, the term which he uses suits us. The workers' organisations, their social conquests, their derived social conquests such as education and the right of association, are like 'bits of revolution' in bourgeois society. The proletarian class constantly tends to bring these 'bits of revolution' together into a block, or a battering-ram against bourgeois institutions.

Michelet got into a political and moral impasse with his 'Liberty and Property'. On the order of the day today is the dialectic of democratic liberties and of the proletarian revolution in the struggle of the proletariat for power.

The Importance of the Forms of the Bourgeois Dictatorship

This is why the Marxist vanguard of the proletariat - consisting today of the Fourth International in the process of reconstruction, puts the greatest importance on the forms by means of which the class dictatorship of the bourgeoisie is exercised. Engels vigorously supported the slogan - which we would today call a 'transitional demand', of the 'Republic' against the German Emperor and Bismark. He saw it as a concrete means of encouraging the class process of bursting open the envelope of the old society, 'with as much violence as a lobster bursts its old shell'.

The demonstrators in Madrid and Barcelona raise their fists against the Franco-ite state and its police with shouts: 'Tomorrow Spain will be a Republic'. With a sure instinct the masses reach out to grasp the weapons which democratic liberties offer, the liberty to organise, to hold meetings, to have the legal or partly legal possibility of confronting the bourgeois state.

The Kremlin bureaucracy and Carrillo are of the same opinion. Their policies erect the Moncloa Pact with the monarchy against the masses and the slogan of 'Republic in Spain'.

The Popular Front was formed in 1936 on the slogans of 'Peace, Bread and Liberty'. In 1977 it comes together - or falls apart - with cries of respect for the Gaullist Constitution, the Gaullist institutions and laws against non-religious education!

The Spanish and Italian Stalinist parties participate directly and openly in reinforcing the police methods of the State. They openly discuss with the representatives of the police and the army the repressing re-enforcement of the state apparatus to fight against 'international terrorism' - in the sacred union of all police against the real enemy, the proletarian revolution.

The defence of democratic liberties is one moment in, a component element of, the proletarian revolution. It tends to become intermixed with the proletarian revolution today more than in the past, when imperialism had greater resources to call on. Everywhere the masses are grasping for democratic liberties, more and more, in the forward march to the revolutionary crisis and in the crisis itself. The peoples who are grasping for the right of self-determination will be faced by a major contradiction in bourgeois society: On the one hand the apparatuses defend the bourgeois state machine at all costs, in the name of 'historic compromises', popular unity, unions of the left and 'governmental pacts'; on the other hand, the proletarian class struggle and its conscious expression, the Fourth International, marks out the only road to guarantee democratic liberties, which is the rule of the working class, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Marx's demonstration is a thousand times more true today than it was in 1870 - the Commune-State is the only 'anti-thesis' of the repressive bourgeois State, centralised against the exploited masses. It is the only 'low cost government' possible in the period of decaying imperialism, because it is a workers' government.

Lenin's demonstration is a thousand times more true today than in 1918 in 'The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky':

"Is there a single country in the world, even among the most democratic bourgeois countries, in which the average rank-and-file worker, the average rank-and-file village labourer, or village semi-proletarian generally (this is, the representative of the oppressed masses, the overwhelming majority of the population), enjoys anything approaching such liberty to use the best printing workers and largest stocks of paper, to express his ideas and to protect his interests, such liberty to promote men and women of his own class to administer and to 'run the state as in Soviet Russia?'"

The Maximum of Democracy for the Masses

Only the strategy of the workers' and peasants' government can unify and organise the defence of democratic liberties. The proletariat and the exploited masses try more or less consciously to bring to power a government of the workers' parties, a government which they think ought to be their government and the expression of their power.

This strategy is made up of political activities which open up that road. These consist of demonstrating at each moment that the United Front of the workers' parties and organisations can and must be brought into existence to deal with every problem. They consist of demonstrating concretely that the first condition for bringing the United Front of the workers' parties into existence is that they break with the bourgeois parties, and that they appeal from the bourgeois parties to the initiative of the masses, to force the workers' parties and organisations to form the United Front, up to the point of the formation of a government of these parties, without the inclusion of any ministers representing the bourgeois parties or organisations.

But - will the traditional organisations and parties of the working class break with the bourgeoisie? Will they bring the United Front into existence? Whether they do so or not, this is the direction by which the exploited masses will provide themselves with the means to overcome the obstacles on the road to the formation of a genuine workers' and peasants' government. By going in this direction the masses will break the party apparatuses which stand in their way. They will form their own class organisms, the councils, the Soviets, the Parliament and the Executive of the working class, open to all its organisations and parties.

The organisations which are faithful to the programme of the Fourth International will construct revolutionary parties, with decisive influence among the masses, by fighting on this orientation. In this way the conditions for forming a genuine workers' and peasants' government will be brought together. Already the workers and the exploited masses are grasping democratic liberties in and for this struggle. They will develop them and give them a proletarian content. The proletariat is the only social and political force which can regenerate the whole of society, can purify it of all the factors of barbarism and destructive of civilisation which germinate and grow in the soil of this exploitative society. The proletariat will give an unprecedented breadth to liberties of

political and cultural association, because these are indispensable for managing the new society and advancing towards Socialism.

The outcome of the strategy for a workers' and peasants' government is the dictatorship of the proletariat. The dictatorship of the proletariat means the maximum of democracy for the masses.

9. For Collectivism! For the Dictatorship of the Proletariat!

In an appendix to this article, readers will find the first part of the document on the training of the cadres and militants of the O.C.I.. This was adopted by its Central Committee on September 8 and 9, 1977. It goes back to the conditions in which the problem of constructing organisations of the Fourth International was posed at the end of the 1930's.

Trotsky pointed out the opportunities which the crisis provided, by provoking the re-groupment of the masses on new axes. He tried to analyse the means to construct the revolutionary party by studying the processes going on in the working class. There can be no doubt that Trotsky worked out very precisely the best tactics for revolutionaries to intervene in the conditions of crisis in the workers' leadership, in his analyses of the 'beginning of the revolution' in France in 1935 - 36.

The ascent towards the general strike was beginning, expressed in 'strikes, protests, scuffles in the streets and open revolts'. Trotsky sharply identified the condition for the victory of the proletariat: 'the liquidation of the present leadership':

"It is a life and death question for the revolutionary masses to break the resistance of the united social-patriotic apparatuses. The left centrists believe that the 'unity' of these apparatuses is an absolute good, above the interests of the revolutionary struggle."

The Crucibles in which the Revolutionary Party is being Formed

The job of the proletarian party is to help the masses to provide themselves with the political means to 'break the counter-revolutionary resistance of the apparatuses of the parties and the trade unions'. The way to do this is through 'committees of action'. These committees are necessary in order to liberate the masses from the treacherous leadership of the social-patriots. They can be formed as an apparatus for struggle, as revolutionary representation of the masses in struggle, including at the same time representatives of the traditional organisations, trade unions and parties. From one side the masses raise their demands on these organisations, while from the other side the apparatuses of these organisations do their best to keep the masses under control and impose their counter-revolutionary policy on them.

The conflict between the counter-revolutionary apparatuses and the needs and aspirations of the masses are sharpened within the very framework of such committees. It leads on towards the solution, which will be positive if the revolutionary party is constructed and fulfils its task, and negative if it does not.

Trotsky said of these 'committees of action' that they could become the 'crucibles' of the revolutionary party. He rigorously defined the relations between these committees of action and the trade unions:

"The masses go into struggle with all their ideas, their groupings, their traditions and their organisations. The parties continue to live and to fight. During the elections to committees of action, each party naturally will try to get its supporters elected. In relation to the parties, the committees of action can be called 'revolutionary parliaments'. The parties are not kept out. On the contrary, it is essential for them to be there. At the same time their activities are kept under control and the masses learn to liberate themselves from the influences of the corrupt parties."

The movement of the working class itself leads it today inevitably into open conflict with the institutions of the Fifth Republic in France and those of the Francoite monarchy in Spain. The movement which has already entered the struggle as the revolutionary crisis approaches finds the proletariat coming into the fight with 'its ideas', its groupings, its traditions and its organisations. The political frame of the class movements in France since 1973 - 1974 is the emergence of workers' United Front organs, joint strike committees elected from the trade unions, which foreshadow in outline the construction by the class of its own organs of power. To prepare, and to prepare ourselves, for the coming revolution in France means

today that we follow with the closest attention these still fragmentary and dis-united signs of the proletarian movement and act politically to open up the road of workers' councils.

Acting politically means basing the construction of the revolutionary party on active intervention to promote the political processes which go on within the working class, and on its political movement to liberate itself from the guardianship of the leading apparatuses, so as to set up the 'apparatuses of struggle'.

The Accomplishment of the Tasks of the O.C.I.

The construction of the O.C.I. is decisive for the construction of the revolutionary party, in the present period of preparation for the revolutionary crisis. It is taking material form in meeting its target of recruiting hundreds more branch leaders, and thousands more sellers of 'Informations Ouvrieres'.

The conscious intervention of the revolutionaries along the line of 'committees of action', as Trotsky proposed them, meets and nourishes the objective movement of the class. As one class advances towards the revolutionary crisis it is trying and will try to set up its own organs of power, confronting the more or less dismantled bourgeois State.

In the celebrated passage of the Transitional Programme which calls upon revolutionaries to 'be bold when the hour for action arrives', Trotsky ends:

"The Fourth International has shown that it could swim against the stream. The approaching historical wave will raise it on its crest."

The revolutionary wave which followed the second world war was contained. The 'approaching historical wave', which will witness the concentration of the epoch of wars and revolutions in a struggle to the death between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, has already begun to rise. Its banner will be Workers' Governments, throughout Europe and the world. Its banner will be that of collectivism, of the dictatorship of the proletariat, of the Republic of Soviets.

There are no other parties to raise these banners at the head of the masses than those of the Fourth International. There is no other means but that of Bolshevism to construct these parties.

October 15, 1977

Appendix I

For the Fourth International

In the course of the coming months, the O.C.I. (Organisation Communistes Internationalists, for the Re-Construction of the Fourth International) must win thousands of new readers for 'Informations Ouvrieres', recruit several thousands of new members and set up hundreds of new branches.

These targets signify that the O.C.I. is at a turning-point in the history of its own construction. It has to take this turn because of the development of the political situation in France. We have analysed the period as that of the development 'from the crisis of the bourgeoisie to the revolutionary crisis', The O.C.I. itself cannot develop if it does not make this turn.

These targets cannot be reached unless hundreds of new leaders, new branch officers, are educated.

This turn is made possible by the 'objective' conditions. The objective conditions in themselves are not enough. Neither the construction of a revolutionary party, founded on the programme of the Fourth International, nor even simply a strengthening of the organisation which is constructing this party, flows automatically from a political situation developing towards a revolutionary crisis. There are abundant examples of this in history.

The advance towards the revolutionary crisis in France and towards the revolution in Spain in the years 1934 - 1938, and the opening and development of these events, were far from

resulting in the construction of the revolutionary party. On the contrary, they dislocated the organisations of the Fourth International.

It is true that the revolutionary crisis in France and the revolution in Spain were the last in a chain of revolutions in the revolutionary period which stretched from 1917 to 1938, all of which, except that in Russia, ended in defeat.

Today we are at the beginning of a new period of the world revolution. This will last for many years, and will open a thousand possibilities. In 1938 Trotsky had to explain that a whole generation of militants had been crushed flat by defeats. The members of the organisations of the Fourth International were generally only on the fringe of the proletariat. A new historical period would set free the tendency of the working class to regroupment on a new axis. This would afford enormous possibilities for the construction of the Fourth International and its parties.

Certain favourable conditions are appearing for the construction of organisations of the Fourth International, that is, revolutionary parties with mass influence. Trotsky forecast these opportunities and suggested a policy which would enable them to be utilised.

Without reckoning what would have happened if the policies which Trotsky proposed had been applied, and without re-writing history after the event, we can still feel sure that the course of the class struggle would have been different, not only in France, in Europe, but in the world, even if the victory of the revolution had not been guaranteed.

In any case, the history of the construction of the Fourth International and of its organisations would not have been the same. The struggle of the classes, like the struggle to construct the revolutionary party, the second being inseparable from the first, are living struggles, made up out of the practical activity of the classes, the organisations and the members of the organisations. Their outcome is the result of this living activity, and therefore, the outcome is never decided for certain in advance, even though it depends on determinate causes.

Thus this way of approaching the class struggle and the struggle for the construction of the revolutionary party does not lead to some sort of fatalism. On the contrary, it leads to rigorously analysing the 'why' and the 'how' of their development, so that we can fight better.

Appendix 2

What a Training School of the French Communist Party Used to Teach about The Gaullist Constitution...back in 1961

The Constitution of 1958 (brought in by De Gaulle) takes away their essential rights from the elected representatives of the nation.

The Constitution gives all power to De Gaulle and to the ministers whom he appoints and who are responsible only to him. These are the direct representatives of the monopolies and the State officials, the clerks, who simply carry out the policies of big capital.

Even after De Gaulle had set up his personal rule, the Parliament still had certain powers, and the workers and peasant masses could exert pressure on the elected members and make some of their demands effective. They could even play some role in the direction of the affairs of the country, for example, get laws passed favourable to the workers and peasants. But now the National Assembly has been stripped of all its powers and it becomes more difficult for the masses to make their will heard.

The personal rule of De Gaulle encounters hostility among the popular masses and since he came to power he has made his rule more authoritarian. He does everything he can to shelter the executive power from the pressures which the different layers of the people, whom the policy of the monopolies damages, could bring to bear on it.

The infrequent prerogatives which the Constitution still allows to Parliament are in fact scoffed and obstructed.

De Gaulle openly proclaims that liberty is an encumbrance to the personal regime.

The monopolies and great bankers do not conceal their intention of moving towards another revision of the Constitution, to increase the powers of the President still further.

In particular the election by universal suffrage of the President of the Republic is to confer increased powers on him.

The propagandists of the presidential power present this idea as a 'modern' form of government, a regime of 'direct democracy', in the hope of disguising its ultra-reactionary character, because it is really intended to strengthen the rule of the monopolies and to get rid yet more completely of the rights of the Parliament, of the elected representatives of the people and of democratic liberties.

OUR PROGRAMME TO RENOVATE REPUBLICAN INSTITUTIONS AND THE NATIONAL LIFE

This programme is for the election of a Constituent Assembly. Its first task would be to work out a new Constitution, a democratic system of government.

We are not going back to the Constitution of yesterday. That was inadequate. Nor are we going to cobble the Constitution of today. It provides for one-man rule. We are going to promote a real Republic, to renew democracy and to restore it at the same time.

Our Party makes clear in this programme what must be the essential characteristics of a renovated democracy which it proposes to include in the new Constitution.

It stresses the principle upon which a truly democratic government must rest.

The supreme power belongs in the Republican state to the representatives of the people, elected by universal and direct suffrage and proportional representation, meeting in a single-chamber National Assembly, with the government which comes out of it responsible to it.

