

THE LESSONS OF OUR HISTORY

(Supplement to "La Verite", No. 548, May 1970)

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First Text of Translation into English:



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

P R E F A C E

There could, of course, be no question of writing the history of the organisation and struggles of the Trotskyists in France, the history of our organisation, within the limits of this pamphlet.

That is not the object of this work. Its object is simply to enable the most important lessons of this history, the lessons which contribute to clarifying our understanding of the tasks before us, to be grasped. It will have attained its object if the discussion which it arouses really arms the comrades in the struggle for the re-construction of the workers' revolutionary party, in the struggle for the re-construction of the Fourth International. This struggle means linking together in practice, in the day-to-day struggle, the tasks of intervention in the class struggle in its numerous forms with the requirements of general strategy. These general requirements follow from the combined crisis of imperialism and Stalinism and from the question which is ripening, that of the proletarian revolution, which is imminent. This question is directly related to the progress of the proletarian vanguard.

The imminence of the proletarian revolution is the reality which is stamped on every aspect of the new period of History which we entered with the French General Strike in May - June 1968 and the rise of the political revolution in Czechoslovakia. The tasks of constructing the revolutionary party in each country are inseparably linked with the tasks of the re-construction of the Fourth International. In each country, the construction of the revolutionary party is at one and the same time a component of and an expression of the struggle to forge the instrument which is indispensable for the liberation of the world proletariat, the International. In this sense the history of the Trotskyist organisation in France is that of the French section of the Fourth International, and, therefore, a contribution to the history of the Fourth International.

Certain political acts and the individuals who accept the responsibility for them will be judged harshly here. But, however keen our criticisms may be, the fact remains that the life of our tendency has been extraordinarily rich and varied. We are proud of it. Those who answered the call of Leon Trotsky (irrespective of what happened to them later on as individuals) were the only people who built the road of the proletarian revolution, by their analyses and their struggles. To establish and to demonstrate this fact in no way implies concealing individual responsibilities and failings. It enables us, however, to analyse and to understand the wonderful history of Trotskyism, which has its roots deep in Bolshevism and the Russian Revolution. It enables us to draw out its lessons.

The theoretical and practical problems of the struggle for the proletarian revolution have been posed solely within the framework of the Fourth International and, therefore, within that of the struggle which has been carried on against its liquidation and for its re-construction.

C H A P T E R O N E

1 9 2 9 - 1 9 4 0: From the Left Opposition to the Fourth International

The Left Opposition

If we are to identify correctly the conditions in which the Left Opposition was born in France, we must keep in mind the features which gave to the construction of the French Section of the Third International, the French Communist Party, its specific character.

In France the Communist Party has never been an authentic Communist Party in the true sense. The few years up to 1923 in which it was trying to become an authentic Communist Party were not enough for a political tradition of the Bolshevik type to strike root in the country. The majority which accepted the 21 conditions for joining the Communist International, at the Tours Congress in December 1920, was hardly less Social-Democratic than the minority organised round Leon Blum and Paul Faure. Parliamentarians like Cachin, municipal reformists like Louis Sellier and prospective ministers like Ludovic Olivier Frossard went to the French Communist Party only to safeguard their seats in the Chamber of Deputies or their positions ^{as} mayors by take advantage of the prestige of the Russian Revolution. There was a sharp struggle tendencies from 1920 to 1924; considerable efforts were successful, under the leadership of the left wing supported by the Communist International, to try to transform radically this Social-Democratic party with a "Communist" label into an authentic section of the Communist International. Very rich lessons can be drawn from this period and every Communist militant should study it.

With the pseudo-"Bolshevisation" which began in 1924, the French Communist Party, which had not had time to become effectively a Communist Party, rapidly changed in a Stalinist party. In April 1924, Marguerite Rosmer wrote to Humbert-Droz, the representative of the International in Paris:

"We are badly tied up in and eaten up with functionaries. They come out on every side; the great majority of them are incapable and lack all political sense, and they always line up on the strongest side so as not to lose their bit of cheese."

The fact is that the victory of Stalin and Zinoviev in 1924, the result of the repulse in October 1923 in Germany, had the effect of brusquely interrupting the transformation of the French Communist Party and of diverting it in a new direction which no one - not even Trotsky - foresaw. In a few years this Social-Democratic party of the old type was changed into a party of "the new type", a Stalinist party .

We shall not follow here the details of the work which was accomplished by the first militants who tried to struggle in France on the ground of the Left Opposition. Rosmer was excluded. Monatte was excluded by the Special Conference of December 5, 1924. Souvarine was expelled, and then the opposition which Lorient raised. Then the lawyer Maurice Paz and the engineer Lemire, who was behind the well-known "Letter of the 250" were expelled. Comrades should read what Pierre Broue wrote about this period in his preface to the third part of Trotsky's book, "The Communist Movement in France", under the title of "The Left Opposition": see pages 279 - 289. We must grasp the fact that, as soon as Trotsky arrived in Prinkipo, he took up the task of constructing the Opposition on the international scale. He produced the first issue of the "Bulletin of the Opposition" in July 1929. He did not allow himself to have any illusions, after the various defeats of the workers' movement in the world: on March 31, 1929, he wrote:

"We are approaching times so difficult that every friend of ideas, even every POSSIBLE friend of ideas, must be precious to us. We should commit an unpardonable mistake if we repelled a single one, and even more so a group of them, by an imprudent estimation or an unbalanced, exaggerated criticism of the divergences of views."

(1)

Nor should we forget that at this period the Thermidorean degeneration of the USSR was not completed. The Communist International remained the instrument of the proletarian revolution. The Communist International had not yet become a body totally foreign to the struggle of the masses, despite the Stalinist clique which controlled its apparatus; the historic proof that its revolutionary regeneration was impossible had not yet been provided. Trotsky wrote in 1929, in the preface to "The Communist International After Lenin", (French edition):

"People from different sides are trying to attribute to us the plan to create a Fourth International. This is an entirely false idea... We have no reason to construct a Fourth International. We are continuing and developing the line of the Third International, for which we prepared during the war and in the foundation of which we participated, along with Lenin, after the October Revolution. Not for a moment have we let the thread of the ideological heritage slip."

(2)

This is fundamentally what Nin and Andrade did not wish to understand between 1930 and 1933, when they clung to their "impressions", based on their Spanish situation. They refused to organise a fraction within the official Communist Party. That Party, doubtless, was a skeleton. Entire federations had broken away from it and claimed political "autonomy". But it was a Communist Party which "all the same, possessed historical possibilities outside itself, in USSR and in everything linked to USSR". (See the Trotsky - Nin correspondence). Trotsky added, to the address of Nin, who systematically under-estimated the possibilities of the official Communist

Party and over-estimated the divergences within it:

"There you can see why it seems to me to be dangerous to guide oneself empirical by referring to nothing but the relation of forces of the immediate moment."

Nin gave the impression that, in his impatience, he wanted to move prematurely in the direction of creating an independent party, whatever might be the price of independence. However, we can judge what all this was really worth from the fact that for a long time Nin seemed to regard a centre and a bulletin of the Opposition as superfluous. Consequently, when the orientation towards the independent revolutionary workers' party was on the order of the day, after 1933, the Spanish Communist Left fused with the Catalan Federation, to join it in forming the POUM ("Workers' Party Marxist Unification"), on the Centrist positions, in fact, of the leader of the Catalan Federation, J. Maurin.

For four years the Communist Opposition tried to correct the line of the Communist International. It concentrated its efforts on the German Communist Party, in order to open a way forward for the German proletariat. As we know, events were to overtake it. The suicidal "strategy" which the Stalinist apparatus imposed on the leadership of the German Communist Party was to permit the coming to power, by parliamentary means, of Nazism. The most powerful working class and Communist Party in Europe were swept away at one blow like straws.

Trotsky then declared: "Stalinism in Germany has met its August 4"⁽³⁾ Soon after, asked himself what would be the eventual restorative effect on the other sections of the Communist International of the tragic experience of Germany. We should remember that the leadership of the Czech Communist Party refused for a time to accept that what happened in Germany should be briskly wiped out. When the Kremlin crushed all criticism, Trotsky understood the need to orient towards the construction of a new International, the Fourth. The Left Opposition conceived the struggle for this International in the form of a re-groupment. This explains why the Russian Left Opposition signed a joint call for the construction of the Fourth International, with the Centrist organisations, such as the S.A.P. and the two Dutch parties, the R.S.P. and the O.S.P. The declaration of the Plenum of the International Left Opposition in September 1933 states:

"The Left Opposition took part in the Conference (of August 1933 of the "Left Socialist and Communist Organisations") under its own banner, for the purpose of assisting the process of demarcation on questions of principle from the reformists and the Centrists and of drawing together revolutionary organisations of the same nature."

In this way the work of the revolutionaries in this re-groupment with Centrists was conceived first and foremost as a struggle on principles in order to speed up the evolution of the Centrists in the process of breaking with Social-Democracy and Stalinism. Two points must be borne in mind if we are not to fall into the schema

with which people like Isaac Deutscher defend their anti-Trotskyism. The necessity for a new International, consciously recognised, is not at all the same thing as the creation of a new International. The tactic of reconstruction pre-supposed a confrontation and a discussion with the Centrist parties and groups produced by splits from Stalinism and Social-Democracy, whose political profile was not yet fixed and whose doctrine was not yet crystallised. This did not mean in the slightest that the new International could be a heterogeneous gathering: "It is, of course, out of the question that the new International can be constructed by organisations which rest upon deeply differing or even contradictory foundations of principle." But the new International is constructed through the process of open political struggle within a re-grouping, in which the Trotskyists would have to defend their positions in order to clarify those of the others and to encourage the developments of the elements who can be won to the standpoint of the supporters of the Fourth International.

It is likely that the strategic turn which was operated in the course of the year 1933 was never assimilated by the great majority of the Trotskyists during the pre-war period and even afterwards. In fact, they regarded "Stalinists" and "Trotskyists" as "enemy-brothers". The nature of the Stalinist apparatus was really not understood. We shall see later that this mistake was the most important factor in the crisis through which we lived in the organisation.

Entrism into the Social-Democracy

The French nucleus of the international Trotskyist organisation gathered at first round "La Verite", which appeared for the first time on August 15, 1929. In April 1930, the fraction which formed the Left Opposition in France organised itself under the name "Communist League". We must note, though we cannot discuss further, the problems which were raised by the formation, and, especially, by the political role of the "Unitary Opposition", of which the Communist League formed a part. The militants of the League did not gain from this politically correct experience what the League could have gained, because some became involved in trade-unionist illusions and others in somewhat ultimatum efforts to regenerate the Party. Reduced in numbers and having lost ^{their} ~~the~~ most distinguished figures, the militants of the League soon had to face up to the violent attacks which the Party bureaucrats mounted against them from 1932 onwards, for example, at the meeting at the Bullier Hall.

This was the nucleus which the events of 1933 in Germany and those which followed in France at the beginning of 1934 were to find confronted with the strategic turn towards the Fourth International and with the tactical implications that had to be worked out. The little band of Bolshevik-Leninists in 1933 - 34 was, to be sure, weak in numbers, but was even weaker politically. They had no real experience of mass work. They had no real assimilation of Marxism. The reasons are to be found in their extreme youth and in the history of the French Communist Party, which, as we

have emphasised, had never really taught to the French workers the thought, the methods and the organisational forms of Bolshevism.

A period of radicalisation began in 1934 after the events of February 6 - 12, especially in France. This period is a decisive stage for the French working class movement, which underwent a change. Up to that time, the French working class retained many of the specific characteristics of the years before 1914 (dispersion in small workshops, predominantly individualistic or "labour aristocratic" traditions). For example, the industrial development in the Paris region with its large enterprises dates from the years 1920 - 1930, such as Renault, Citroen, Chausson, the electrical machinery manufacturers, etc.

It is true that the General Strike of 1920 gave the signal that the French proletariat was taking part in the world-wide revolutionary crisis. But the weight of the reformist bureaucracy and the immaturity of the minority had postponed for a whole period a resumption of the class struggle on a higher level. It was only in 1934 that the French proletariat could really join again the movement of the working class on the international scale and its struggle could really be integrated in the world-wide revolutionary crisis which had been opened by the Revolution of October 1917.

This rise in the class struggle in France took place at the time when the French Communist Party was irretrievably and completely in the grip of the international apparatus of Stalinism. The leading nucleus (Thorez, Duclos, Frachon, Monmousseau, Raymond Guyot, Fajon, Henaff, etc.) had been self-selected in the struggle against Trotskyism between 1925 and the beginning of the 1930's. This Stalinist apparatus of the French Communist Party had been hand-picked by Stalin. The successive zigzags which were dictated to it reduced its membership from 120,000 at Tours to 35,000 in 1929. Between 1932 and 1933 it was around 25,000. This figure did not double until the middle of 1934. The last period, the so-called "Third Period"⁽⁴⁾, which laid down the offensive everywhere and at all times, left the French Communist Party exhausted. It repelled numerous workers into the arms of the S.F.I.O. (Socialist Party), which, at its Congress at Tours in 1934 had developed in the opposite way from that of the French Communist Party, rising from 50,000 at Tours in 1920 to about 130,000 in 1932. But this was only one sign among others of the reality which Trotsky explained immediately after the Nazi victory in Germany:

"The disastrous policy of the Communist International, supported by the authority of the workers' state, has not merely compromised revolutionary methods; it has allowed to Social-Democracy, which is filthy with crimes and betrayals, the possibility to raise once again above the working class the banner of democracy as a banner of salvation."

He spelt out a little later:

"Obviously there can be no question of a serious or durable regeneration of reform-

ism. We are dealing, properly speaking, not with reformism in the broad sense of the word, but with instinctive aspirations of the workers to defend their organisations and their 'rights'."

This is the general perspective within which the policy of entrism into Social-Democracy is to be understood. It is on the basis of a new upsurge of the masses on the European and North American arena, the first wave of which was rising at that moment, especially in France and in Spain. In the first stage which was opening and which, in a sense was announcing in advance that the entire working class was about to force its way into the arena of the class struggle, it was urgently necessary to effect a connection with the radicalised workers who, by entering the ranks of the workers' parties, were expressing the pressure of the whole class. To effect this connection meant ensuring a serious implantation in the masses, because the first stage of the radicalisation of the masses, that which precedes the first phase of the proletarian revolution as well as forming a large part of the first phase, necessarily makes its way through the great traditional organisations.

Such was the general perspective. It was combined with the relative and precarious recovery of Social-Democracy, which took in numbers of workers who were seeking a framework of organisation for their political activity and who were repelled by the methods of Stalinism. This fact was especially noticeable in France, for the reasons given above, because from February 1934 onwards a United Front was in operation between the Communist League and the Seine Federation of the S.F.I.O. (Socialist Party), which was led by the Left of the Party . . .

Furthermore, the Socialist - Communist agreement (the pact concluded in July 1934) met a double need which both of the two apparatuses felt. It enabled them to yield ground to the very strong longing of the workers for unity, and it also enabled them to place themselves at the head of the United Front in order the better to divert and pervert it when the problem of power, of confrontation with the bourgeois state, presented itself. It was necessary for the militants who had been the first to demand the United Front to be able to be an influential element in it in order to act as the yeast in the revolutionary dough.

Trotsky wrote: "This United Front, we must be within it in order to make it fruitful; otherwise in a few months it will be diverted."

Finally, we should also note that the reformism of the S.F.I.O. had been compelled to assume a "left" face and that the S.F.I.O. had driven out of its ranks the "Neo's", who had explicitly repudiated any reference, even formal, to Marxism and to the class struggle. This amputation, carried out on the right-wing of the party, had a by no means negligible importance. It was accompanied by the birth of left-wing currents within the S.F.I.O. A kind of double movement was taking place: as Trotsky wrote:

"The tendency of Centrism to replace reformism... the tendency of Centrism to radicalisation."

There was also a technical sense in which fraction work in the S.F.I.O. became even more timely. The internal regime of the S.F.I.O. at the time offered possibilities for it. This regime, moreover, resulted largely from the position which the S.F.I.O. occupied on the political chess board of the French working-class in the years 1934 - 1935, and not from any inherent qualities of the party itself. Any work in the Stalinist party - or, to put it more accurately, any fraction work there, since the tasks of the Opposition there had already been fulfilled - was absolutely out of the question for an organisation as weak and inexperienced as the Communist League in France. Most of the Trotskyist militants had been excluded from the French Communist Party and the slightest demonstration, however timid it might be, which could be interpreted as a tendency to Trotskyism attracted immediate exclusion from the ranks of the French Communist Party.

In these conditions the technical arguments corroborated those of principle, in favour of an entry into the S.F.I.O., such as took place a little later successfully into the American Socialist Party, led by Norman Thomas, and with varying fortunes in other countries, such as Belgium and Britain.

Entrism implied no concession of principle. The Trotskyists entered the S.F.I.O., the social composition of which was broadly working class in 1934, not in order to reform the apparatus, but in order to strengthen the revolutionary current and to offer to it a pole for re-groupment in order to gather more important forces. The duty of the Trotskyists was to take advantage of the living experience, to discredit the bureaucratic leadership and to struggle for the destruction of this obstacle to revolutionary action which remained standing in the very centre of the working class.

The discussion on entrism was an extremely difficult one. Serious opposition to the tactic revealed how many of the French Trotskyists failed to understand the place of the Social-Democracy in the class struggle. Pierre Frank and Naville declared that they would not enter the S.F.I.O. on any account, as the symbol of treacherous social-democracy, corrupt reformism etc. These things had all long been well known, and repeating them did not advance by one inch the problem of tactics at the given moment. In fact, this hostility expressed illusions on the part of these comrades that Stalinism was "more revolutionary" than social-democracy. These illusions had nothing in common with a scientific analysis of the ways open to the vanguard to construct the revolutionary party.

The fraction work in the S.F.I.O. was not conceived as something isolated. It had to have its effects, not merely in the S.F.I.O. itself, but also in the French Communist Party. Trotsky wrote in "Once Again, Whither France?":

"The Left wing of the Socialist Party is growing. In the Communist Party, criticism is stifled, as hitherto. But the growth of the revolutionary wing in the S.F.I.O. will inevitably open a breach in the deadly bureaucratic discipline of the Stalinists: the revolutionists of the two parties will extend their hands to

one another in joint activities."

In fact, the opposition within the French Communist Party of "Que Faire?", Ferrat and Kagan, was the only one to reach any size in this period, and it did not extend its hand to the Trotskyists! In reality, the Trotskyists gathered together what they won from their work in the S.F.I.O. in such conditions that it could not claim to have encouraged, even indirectly, the beginning of a clear division in the ranks of the French Communist Party. The practical verification of Trotsky's forecast did not take place, but that did not make the forecast wrong. The weakness and the political immaturity of the Trotskyists did not permit the correct, principled line to bear its fruits.

The conference of the Bolshevik-Leninists decided in August 1934 to enter the S.F.I.O.: the Trotskyists formed a tendency within the S.F.I.O./^{and} the "Bolshevik-Leninist Group" (G.B.L.) published its organ, "La Verite". The first results were important. The G.B.L. controlled the Socialist Youth in the Department of the Seine and exerted a considerable influence in the Department of Seine-et-Oise. When the Trotskyists decided on the orientation to entrism, ^{their} motion obtained 1,000 votes in the Seine organisation/^{of the Socialist Party} and appreciable votes in the provinces, 157 votes, for example at Nevers. At the Mulhouse Congress of the S.F.I.O. (June 1935) two Trotskyists were elected to the Permanent Administrative Commission, Jean Rous as a full member and Pierre Frank as a substitute member. A process of differentiation was taking place within the "traditional" left, at that time called "Bataille Socialiste", led by Zyromski and Pivert, and Marceau Pivert broke to the left from Zyromski and "Bataille Socialiste".

The full possibilities of going through the S.F.I.O. had by then been had. In June 1935, Trotsky wrote to the International Secretariat: "The correctness of our entry into the S.F.I.O. is now proved by objective facts. Our section, thanks to the entry, has changed from a propaganda group into a revolutionary factor of the first order... (But) the Bolshevik-Leninist Group must know how to effect a new turn, which is the logical development of the previous stage."

This new turn is the orientation towards an independent party, towards the Fourth International, in the form of a re-groupment of all the revolutionary elements which the last turn by the Stalinist Communist International (the Laval - Stalin Pact) would arouse in every workers' party. General analysis showed that they should quickly leave the S.F.I.O., all the more so because the change in the situation showed itself very quickly in the behaviour of the Social-Democratic leaders. Since the Mulhouse Congress, they began to persecute the Trotskyists mercilessly. Only a few days before, they hoped to use the Trotskyists as elements which could hold the S.F.I.O. together and dispute the ground with the Stalinists. After it, the Trotskyists had become obstacles, now that the union between the Socialist Party and the French Communist Party had been made on the basis of "national defence", in the way of

the agreement which they had reached behind the backs of the masses.

This was the period in which the radicalisation of the masses, touched off by their attack on February 12, 1934 and then temporarily checked by the strengthening of the anti-working class offensive of the bourgeoisie through the governments of Doumergue and Laval (the deflationary decree-law which cut pay in the public service by 10%), resumed its forward movement.

In July 1935 the Social-Democratic bureaucracy struck at the Socialist Youth of the Seine. They excluded thirteen leading members of the Alliance of the Young Socialists of the Seine, who consisted of the Revolutionary Socialist Youth (J.S.R. - Zeller group⁽⁵⁾) and the Leninist Youth (politically led by the Bolshevik-Leninists).

At that moment the pre-revolutionary events in the sea-ports of France supervened. The deflationary decree-law hit the workers in the naval shipyards. They reacted in Toulon with a demonstration of 8,000 workers and at Brest with a long procession across the ship-yard led by a red flag. The following day the repression led to two deaths, one in the morning and the other in the afternoon. A worker who was trying to fly the red flag from the flagstaff on the prefect's office building was shot by a fascist (Croix-de-Feu) lieutenant. On July 8, 1935, the workers in Toulon held the streets for the whole day against the police, who fired on them, and there were mutinies on the ships of war.

Trotsky wrote, when drawing the balance:

"We must say to ourselves: the transitory period of adaptation to the regime of the S.F.I.O. is drawing to its natural end. We must orient ourselves in practice towards the revolutionary party with the shortest possible delay, opening up the period of independent action among the masses."

The strategy was clearly laid out. If it had been correctly and firmly carried through, it would have ensured a development of the revolutionary party.

The Independent Revolutionary Party is Proclaimed

The Bolshevik-Leninists had increased their numbers in the S.F.I.O. but their social composition had not ^{been} noticeably improved, especially at the level of the leadership. On the contrary, the leading nucleus of the French Trotskyists remained confined to the small team of petty bourgeois intellectuals (Naville) and de-classed elements such as Frank and Raymond Molinier. Its recruits, the intellectuals Jean Rous and David Rousser were of the same kind.

The problem of the social composition is not a secondary one. It betrayed the fact that the leading nucleus had not really assimilated Bolshevism - either in a real understanding of Marxism in theory and practice, or in its methods. This meant that the leading nucleus delayed the necessary process of reaching political homogeneity among the advanced elements which had come from different backgrounds at the

level of the leadership, and prevented the youth and the workers from occupying the place there which they should take.

This leading nucleus was riven by clique conflicts and personal rivalries. These poisoned the atmosphere with useless quarrels over prestige. It communicated petty bourgeois pressure and morals directly into the ranks of the Trotskyist organisation: gossip, inefficiency elevated almost into a system and inability to be committed to a firm organisational policy. This is why the leadership broke up just at the very moment when the results of entrism, in re-inforcement and in greater cohesion, should have been gathered.

As we have seen, entrism was accepted by the organisation only after a severe political struggle. Leaving the S.F.I.O. was to lead to decomposition. Whereas Pierre Frank was declaring in August 1934 that he would never join Social-Democracy, at the moment when Trotsky was giving the signal to leave, in letters, telegrams, interviews and discussions, Frank no longer wanted to leave... Social-Democracy! He argued in the Internal Bulletin of the G.B.L. that neither the threats uttered at Mulhouse nor the exclusion of the thirteen leaders of the Alliance of the Socialist Youth at the Lille Congress of the Lille Youth Congress modified in the slightest the earlier perspectives, as he saw them.

Frank's political mistake in summer 1935 was of the same kind as the earlier mistake which he committed in 1934: his refusal to enter Social-Democracy was an idealisation of Stalinism and, consequently, a complete failure to grasp the objective place in the class struggle of the traditional organisations. Pierre Frank did not want to leave the S.F.I.O. at the moment when the radicalisation of the masses was moving from its elementary stage, following February 12, despite the apparent re-inforcement of the bourgeois reaction, to the stage of direct intervention by the workers in work-places and in the street.

This showed that the leading nucleus did not in any way look forward to constructing the revolutionary party by means of a direct, independent and coherent intervention in the concrete class struggle. The problems of the revolution and the construction of the revolutionary party retained an abstract, intellectual character. Revolutionary declarations were not the same thing as militant appeals and effective intervention in the class activity. The Trotskyists presented themselves as "oppositionists", making the construction of the revolutionary party depend merely on the movement of the apparatuses. This located their activity (if it can be called that) exclusively within the political framework bounded by the traditional organisations.

The question of leaving the S.F.I.O. opened a crisis which resulted in a split, produced by Molinier and Frank, working on the basis of a clique. This must not conceal the responsibilities of the others. The three tendencies which ran through the G.B.L. that of Molinier and Frank, on the one hand, and those of Naville and of Rous on the other, in fact shared fundamentally identical viewpoints. The pamphlet by Nicolle

Braun (Erwin Wolf), which is reproduced in "The Crisis in the French Section: (1935 - 1936)", Pathfinder Press, New York, 1977, shows that Trotsky judged all three tendencies with equal severity.

There was total confusion in the "tops" of the G.B.L. They dramatically marked time politically. "La Verite" appeared only a fortnight after the decision by the S.F.I.O. leadership to exclude the thirteen adult Bolshevik-Leninist militants. It was exclusively devoted to... the peasant question! Then in December 1935 Molinier and Frank broke with the organisation of the G.B.L. The G.B.L. then directed itself, with most of the Revolutionary Socialist Youth, to forming an independent pole of attraction, the outcome of which was the formation of the Workers' Revolutionary Party (P.O.R.), on May 31, 1936. In this way the G.B.L. demonstrated that it agreed at least formally with the line which Trotsky advocated.

Molinier and Frank had earlier proposed to torpedo "La Verite" in order to make an alliance with Pivert on the basis of their own capitulation. They suddenly founded, in December 1935, a journal entitled "La Commune", which they presented as "an organ of the mass". They issued the organisational slogan of "Groups for Revolutionary Action" (G.A.R.)! These G.A.R. were an incredible mixture. On the one hand, they were conceived as the embryos of Soviets. This was a typical mistake, which showed that they did not understand what Soviets are - independent organisational forms which correspond to the revolutionary aspirations of the masses, born and developing in the process of the class struggle itself. They substituted for the living experience of the masses a bureaucratic formalism reminding of the "Third Period". This infantile error was duplicated by an opportunist aberration, because, on the other hand, the G.A.R. were likewise regarded by Frank and Molinier as heterogeneous political tendencies, some of which (such as the "front-ist" group of the old Radical, Bergery) were openly hostile to Marxism. The G.A.R. set themselves the task of constructing the revolutionary party on the basis of five slogans (!):

1. Creation of committees of workers and of communes:
2. Creation of people's militias and arming the workers:
3. Revolutionary defeatism:
4. Workers' and Peasants' Government:
5. Reconstruction of the revolutionary party.

The programme of the revolutionary party was literally debased and mixed up in a combination that had no future. It was a complete failure. After this political bankruptcy, Frank and Molinier formed the Internationalist Communist Party (P.C.I.) in March 1936. A few weeks later, at the beginning of June, the P.C.I. fused with the P.O.R., which had been formed shortly before from the G.B.L. - J.S.R. re-groupment, to form the P.O.I. (Parti Ouvrier Internationaliste - Internationalist Workers' Party), the weekly organ of which, "La Lutte Ouvriere" had both of its first two issues seized as soon as they appeared, at the beginning of June. For all that, the struggles of

the cliques did not cease, and they ravaged the Trotskyist ranks throughout all this period.

The Formation of the "Revolutionary Left"

The whole strategy of entrism aimed, while strengthening the "Bolshevik-Leninist" nucleus, at enabling a layer of workers to make their experience of the variants of Social-Democracy, from right to left.

Two ways opened for the radicalisation of the masses which expressed itself within the Social-Democracy. The first led the Centrists, followers of Marceau Pivert, to break the link which united them with the bourgeoisie through the Social-Democratic apparatus. It is sufficient to read "Whither France?" on this subject to see that Trotsky did everything in his power to convince Marceau Pivert, who was an honest militant, to take this road.

It is clear that this was a realistic perspective. The G.B.L. won the "Centrists", the leaders of the Socialist Youth of the Seine, the majority of whom declared for the revolutionary party. It was not at all absurd to aim at influencing the Centrists of the adult organisation in the same way as the youth were influenced.

The second way opened the moment that the Centrist leaders refused to break with Social-Democracy. In that case, the Bolshevik-Leninists had to demonstrate, in struggle and through experience, the real nature of Centrism, and to win to their ideas an important layer of workers and youth, that is, to lead them to undertake concretely the task of constructing the revolutionary party.

In this perspective of work, there was one factor which was not under control and another factor which was under control, and the two were closely intertwined. While, on the one hand, it depended on Pivert himself whether he broke with Social-Democracy or not, it depended much more on the activity of the Trotskyists whether the workers who followed Pivert became conscious of the necessity to abandon the false solutions proposed by Centrism.

The absence of firmness on principles, the political decomposition of the Bolshevik-Leninists and their petty bourgeois irresponsibility blocked any positive process. The mass of the workers remained in the Socialist Party, where, under the leadership of Pivert, they formed the "Revolutionary Left" (the G.R.) at the end of September 1935. The creation of the G.R. dealt a very severe blow to Trotsky's plans. It served to provide an alibi for the leaders of the S.F.I.O., and gave credibility to the idea that authentic revolutionaries, or those who passed as such, still remained in the S.F.I.O. It also served to halt in mid course of their possible development, numerous militants who had not yet decided to follow or even to listen sympathetically to the Bolshevik-Leninists. The formation of the G.R. was an obstacle to the construction of the revolutionary party. It was yet another screen between the van-

guard and the masses. In any case, it did not mean that the Trotskyists could not undertake work within the "revolutionary left", work which would be combined with the work of the independent organisation which had become necessary. To gain a foothold into the heart of Centrism was to open every chance of a positive result in numerous militants coming over. These militants had joined the "revolutionary left", not so much because they had confidence in it as because they lacked confidence in the Bolshevik-Leninists and in the positions of the vanguard. But the Trotskyists did nothing in this direction.

The French Revolution Has Begun!

These then were the conditions of disarray in which the Trotskyists faced June 1936. They had no real links with the working class. They were torn apart by clique conflicts. They had absolutely no general view of the problems of the class struggle and of the relations between the revolutionary organisations and the apparatuses and between the masses and the apparatuses.

The beginnings of the period of radicalisation of the masses led to a partial re-inforcement of the traditional organisations. The sharp turn in the relation of forces between the classes in favour of the proletariat was to lead the vanguard of the General Strike essentially towards the French Communist Party (membership at the beginning of 1936, 80,000: at the end of 1936, 300,000). They turned in very much smaller numbers of the S.F.I.O., while the workers en masse joined the C.G.T. the trade union federation which had been re-unified at the Congress of Toulous the preceding year.

All the working-class formations were caught by surprise. No one, no organisation, apart from Trotsky himself, had prepared for June 1936. Trotsky's strategic orientation for the P.O.R. was put together in the expectation of the upsurge of the French proletariat. But we have seen that the Trotskyists had very badly assimilated this perspective. June 1936, therefore, was a tumultuous, spring-like torrent of the spontaneous movement, full of illusions. It utilised the experience which was accumulated in the preceding two years essentially in the field of the United Front of the organisations and of unity in action at the base. This invested with a new content the traditions which came down from the French workers' movement and the enthusiasm which it had always shown in class struggle in the form of autonomous activities. It had assimilated the lessons of the October Revolution of 1917, factory delegations and strike committees, in an instinctive kind of way. This was the tumultuous torrent of the spontaneous movement which imposed the General Strike on the apparatuses that were under the control of the bourgeois order.

The young militants whom the General Strike revealed went in the main to strengthen the French Communist Party, which became the mass party which we know today. This re-inforcement of the French Communist Party was largely inevitable. The young

militants who organised their class in June 1936 went to Stalinism in the belief that they were going to the October Revolution.

The Stalinist apparatus was successful in destroying the vast majority of the generation of June 1936, while at the same time it integrated new forces into the nucleus selected by Stalin. In that way, the broad current which re-inforces the traditional organisations in the first stage of every revolution came under the control of the Kremlin. The first concern of the Kremlin was to organise systematically the political destruction of the young ^{van-}guard of the General Strike, a young ^{van-}guard which had been organised only a few days before. The whole operation coincided and combined with the physical extermination of the Bolshevik Party to which Stalin was proceeding in the monstrous Moscow Trial. This counter-revolutionary work was carried out to "perfection": it led to the defeat of the French Revolution and the disaster of the Spanish Revolution.

It would be useless, false, absurd and ignorant, all at once, to argue after the event that a correct policy could have prevented Stalinism from winning its counter-revolutionary victories over the proletariat. But the Trotskyist organisations had been unable to prepare themselves for revolutionary struggle, despite the unity, more formal than real, which had existed from ^{June to} August 1936 in the ranks of the P.O.I. They could not offer positive perspectives even to a limited layer of the vanguard. That being so, the Stalinist counter-revolution isolated the Trotskyists even more. Isolation was then to intensify all their weaknesses, further embitter the struggles of the cliques and make more destructive the petty bourgeois deviations inherent in their social composition.

The Trotskyist organisations demonstrated themselves to be powerless to express concretely the general problems of the class struggle in this period, and particularly those bound up with direct intervention in the class struggle by revolutionaries.

Throughout this whole period (1936 - 1938) efforts were made to carry on trade union work, essentially by the P.O.I., from which the Frank-Molinier group separated itself in August 1936 to found the P.C.I.

They won some relative successes. However, they conceived of revolutionary activity in the trade unions, except to some extent in the C.G.T. federation of technicians, as only being "opposition". There was hardly any question of using revolutionary work in the unions as a point of support for the independent activity of the class.

No perspective if trade union struggle was elaborated in the P.C.I., but it undertook a certain amount of work among the rank and file calling for independent activity. In fact, the P.O.I. tended to regard work in the trade unions as exclusively work of an independent character, while the P.C.I. counterposed independent activity to activity in the trade unions. These two approaches cover symmetrical mistakes. Real revolutionary work must combine the two mutually complementary forms of intervention.

One of them, work in the unions, aims at preparing for and nourishing the other, independent activity. In turn, independent activity strengthens the work in the trade unions and raises it above trade unionist limitations. The combination of these two forms, carried on in relation to the real stages of the class struggle, aim at strengthening the effectiveness of intervention by the vanguard, that is, at constructing the revolutionary party, within the perspective of the overall revolutionary struggle (for power).

The fact remains that the period 1936 - 1938 partially explains why the Trotskyists were powerless. Only partially, because Marxists have the duty, whatever may be the objective conditions, by consciousness and by activity, to overcome the difficulties which they encounter and to accomplish at any cost the task of constructing the Party.

But it would be radically false and childish to deny that the weight of the terrible general conditions was heavy on the Trotskyists. Stalin's desperate desire to cut the thread of revolutionary continuity (that between the October Revolution and June 1936) by extermination the experienced cadres of the Bolshevik Party, the consummate skill of the Stalinist apparatus and its successes in its task of politically destroying the vanguard of June 1936 could not fail to weight heavily on the Trotskyists, irrespective of their own will, and to accentuate their most negative features to the point of caricature.

This was the period in which the N.K.V.D. directly introduced its provocateurs. This was by no means a negligible factor. There was, for example, Zborowski, known as Etienne, who infiltrated the international organisation and organised the assassination of Rudolf Klement, of Leon Sedov, of Ignaz Reiss, before betraying to the C.I.A. the Sobolevicius provocateurs, who played in the German Left Opposition the same role as Etienne in France, under the pseudonyms of Senin and Roman Well). This state of things likewise contributed to general confusion in a weak and isolated organisation, which lacked a tradition of organisation.

But, the still^{much} more important factor, is that the "real, deep turn" in the objective situation, that of which Trotsky speaks in his Diary in Exile on June 6, 1935, was not yet started. The defeats of the proletarian revolution organised by Stalin were to continue to strengthen the position of the bureaucracy. Imperialism utilised these defeats to preserve its rule and to organise still greater defeats - the Second World War. The development of the class struggle and of the revolution took ^{on} an irregular rhythm. It was to be necessary to wait until the 1950's for the for the joint and combined crisis of imperialism and of the Stalinist bureaucracy to begin to express itself in real facts, and to give to the international proletariat a global revolutionary perspective as to the problems to be solved and the solutions to be applied.

In 1969, following May - June 1968 in France and the political revolution in Czecho-

slovakia, it was no longer necessary to stress this aspect of things. Of the diverse variants which Trotsky conceived for the formation of the world party of the revolution, the variation which has been borne out is the one involving the longest delays. But the battle for the Fourth International and its proclamation could not wait for its content, amidst defeats and retreats, to be fully matured before the form of the world party was solidly established. This is for the good reason that here the form is the most powerful lever for raising the international workers' movement to the height of its historic tasks.

The Formation of the P. S. O. P.

We have explained the situation in which the "revolutionary left" was born and developed. This quickly became a mass tendency in the S.F.I.O. and re-grouped thousands of workers, particularly in the Paris region, but in the provinces also.

Marceau Pivert, who wrote correctly in July 1936: "Everything is possible", none the less participated in the Popular Front Government, put there by Blum and Thorez to protect the bases of bourgeois society from harm. After several months, Pivert resigned, but he refused to draw the lessons of his experience. Like all the leaders of the G.R., he continued to cling to the illusion of reforming the S.F.I.O. The leaders of the G.R. thought that they could use the Socialist Party, completely rotted as it was by reformism, as the instrument of the revolution! (As Pivert said: "Everything is possible, with such a party faithful to its aim, its structure and its principles.").

Daniel Guerin correctly established, in his reminiscences, that Pivert never prepared the split in April 1938 which led to the P.S.O.P. being formed. Guerin himself reveals that he shared the illusions of Pivert, though he does not explain this openly. But what Guerin does not demonstrate is that the P.S.O.P. had already lost the majority of its working class base when it was formed.

It was not by chance that the workers were quitting the S.F.I.O. In March 1937, the Minister of the Interior, the "Socialist" Dormoy (who himself was murdered during the Occupation by the "Cagoule", a terrorist group of fascist character,^{with} which he refused to deal effectively when he was Minister of the Interior), covered up and justified the massacre of six workers at Clichy. The workers in the G.R. and the youth wanted to break with the S.F.I.O. "Young Guard", the organ of the Socialist Youth of the Seine, was seized by the police and the militants of the Alliance of the Seine were excluded. The Alliance itself was dissolved. In April 1937 the G.R. itself was wound up. Pivert bowed and capitulated to Blum: Guerin bowed and capitulated to Pivert.

The process by which the Socialist Party lost little by little its working class base was already well advanced by this time. In 1938 the S.F.I.O. lost two-thirds and even three-quarters of its members in some working class areas outside Paris.

These were the workers who had voted for the G.R. But the leading nucleus of French Trotskyism made the most infantile and damaging mistakes, as much through inexperience as through incomprehension.

In 1935 - 36 the Trotskyists had been placed in weak positions, essentially by the general conditions, but also thanks to their own mistakes, but it was still possible to struggle to restore the situation. The revolutionary crisis, which opened in June 1936, confirmed the necessity for the existence of an independent revolutionary pole of attraction. The vanguard could not accept any limitation on its expression. But the existence of a revolutionary left which gathered in several thousands of revolutionary workers under the control of Centrism called for skilfully and firmly executed work within the G.R. The public expression of the organisation had to be combined with intervention in the ranks of the G.R. Neither the unified P.O.I. nor the products of its break-up, the P.O.I. and the P.C.I., knew how to undertake this work, and adopted ultimatist positions lacking all significance.

Of course, Marxism does not consist of the "a posteriori" reconstruction of history after the events. It would not be good sense to forecast after the event what could have happened. But that does not prevent the consideration of such a political symptom as the following: in ^{March} 1937, at the moment of the massacre at Clichy and at the time when the National Council of the S.F.I.O. approved the policies of Blum and Dormoy, and Pivert and Guerin capitulated, the majority of the militants of G.R. favoured a split. At that time, the Trotskyists did not make their voices heard in any of the members' meetings. It would have been possible, if the Trotskyists had been present as a fraction in the ranks of the G.R. at the time to direct the G.R. workers towards the independent revolutionary party. But no one opened up clearly the perspective of breaking from social-democracy and thereby expressing the deep aspirations of the workers. That was for the simple reason that there were no Trotskyists, members either of the P.O.I. or of the P.C.I., organised in the G.R.!

It was the formation of the P.S.O.P. in June 1938 which precipitated the decomposition of the P.O.I. It was scattered in four or five fractions on the question of entry into the P.S.O.P., and these fought desperately against each other. The P.C.I. also experienced a crisis on this question, but generally it understood better the need to enter the P.S.O.P. The fact is that "the hour of decision approached" and these was no longer an instant to lose.

Trotsky was to write to Pivert on December 22, 1938:

"What can save the situation in France is the creation of a genuine revolutionary vanguard of several thousands of men, understanding the situation clearly, completely freed from the influence of bourgeois and petty bourgeois public opinion and ready to go to the end. Such a vanguard will know how to find the road to the masses. What will neither break nor founder is solely what has been welded

together by clear, precise, intransigent revolutionary ideas."

Trotsky's work was difficult. He had to try to convince, not merely Pivert and the leaders of the P.S.O.P., but no less the French Section of the Fourth International, which had become the P.O.I. since the international conference at which the Fourth International was founded in September 1938. The militants of the P.O.I. were compelled to join as individuals. They were divided on principle itself and joined the P.S.O.P. haphazardly, first a minority following Rous and Craipeau and then the majority of the militants who made up their minds to it with Naville.

In any case, the general conditions in which this last effort to re-group a force as strong as possible before the imperialist cataclysm was let loose, and the political conditions, were the worst possible. The death-knell of the revolutionary wave of 1936 sounded on November 30, 1938. The P.S.O.P. was subjected to this first and decisive test. Marceau Pivert and a whole layer of the leaders participated courageously in the General Strike, but it was not the same for others such as Michel Collinet, who acted as a scab. But Pivert then covered up for Collinet!

Despite some episodic successes, the disintegration of the P.S.O.P. and the tendencies towards the liquidation of the Trotskyists proceeded. For example, the evolution of Jean Roux towards Centrism and Social-Democracy began in this period. The sectarian, opportunist formalism of a man like Pierre Frank could be fully expressed. After the November 30, 1938 defeat, he drew the lesson of the defeat by a headline covering the whole width of the front page of "La Commune": "Build Your Party: Build Your Soviet".

We can see here how the task of constructing the revolutionary party, which falls to the vanguard, is transformed into issuing ultimata to the masses. In fact, this ultimatism in relation to the masses leads to holding them responsible for the defeat, to the extent that they cannot carry out the task which, in the most incorrect possible manner, is handed down to them. We shall have occasion to see that this method of "short-cuts", or of "side-turnings", towards the revolutionary party, combines with the use of "tricks" and unprincipled combinations, were to lead to other failures in the period immediately before the war.

In the period which we are discussing, the outbreak of World War II was to see the collapse of most of the militants who, outside of a few groups, had formed the left opposition in France. Naville collapsed at once, deserting the ranks of the Fourth International, which had appointed him as European Secretary at the Founding Conference. He was to take refuge in complete inactivity throughout the whole of the war. Raymond Molinier got himself appointed to form with Frank and a few others an international leadership abroad. He quickly ceased all activity. Frank took refuge in Great Britain and carried on real activity there, though this was restricted by his situation. Rous went to Social-Democracy.

In fact, when the war broke out, the two organisations were deprived of leadership. It was essentially the young recruits of 1935 - 1939 who were to have to reconstruct the Trotskyist organisation, without real experience or training..

The Programme and the Proclamation of the Fourth International

The Transitional Programme was elaborated as a component in the struggle for the Fourth International in the years 1935 - 1938. It integrated the most recent gains of the vanguard as well as the gains of the three preceding Internationals. The materials are now available for anyone to be familiar with the question of the origin of the Transitional Programme and that of its significance:

"The significance of the programme is the significance of the party... Now what is the party? In what does its cohesion consist? This cohesion is a common understanding of the events, of the tasks, and this common understanding - that is the programme of the party."

Trotsky declared this in a discussion in 1938 (See "The Transitional Programme for the Socialist Revolution", by Leon Trotsky, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1974, page 136). The recent edition of the "Programme", thanks to our care, restores the text as a whole and the militant significance of its complete title:

"The Death-Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International: THE MOBILISATION OF THE MASSES ROUND TRANSITIONAL DEMANDS AS THE PREPARATION FOR THE SEIZURE OF POWER".

Of course, no title, even an exact one, provides a magical protection against deviations from or betrayals of its contents, but it stresses that the Programme is not an object of pious but sterile veneration. It is the theoretical framework of the Party which constructs itself for and through a vanguard which intervenes in the struggle of the masses, in order to smash the bourgeois state machine and to substitute for it the workers' state, the state of workers' councils and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

A^{few} lines in the preface to the edition of 1969 - 1970 locate the question:

"For the Marxists, the word 'PROGRAMME' has a precise sense. It is the definition of the tasks of the proletarian vanguard, based on the analysis of the essential tendencies of our epoch, that of the death-agony of capitalism. The 'Programme' of the Fourth International is the concentrated expression of the accumulated experience of a century of struggles by the working class for its emancipation, examined in the light of the Marxist method."

When, therefore, we declare that the Programme is valid as a whole for the tasks of today and to come, tasks which face us in France and which form the elements of the world situation and the unity of the class struggle, we are not referring to a "classic" of Marxism. We are dealing with the concrete strategy for the seizure of power on the basis of slogans and forms of organisation directed towards this aim

on the initiative of the vanguard. The vanguard is in the process of constructing itself. It expresses the entirety of the movement in each of its stages. It consciously prepares its involvement in the general political process. It prepares to fuse with that general political process for the final decision, which is also the final clarification of the programme, for the working class as a whole ranged as a class against the bourgeoisie: the installation of the political hegemony of the working class over the whole of society.

The period in which we are now living is that in which the work of maturing the subjective conditions is being done, so that, when in the form of the revolutionary party they become the objective factor of supreme importance, they overtake the corruption of the conditions given by imperialism in the last stage of its decadence. Otherwise the corruption will continue and become worse. Capitalist society is powerless before the internal logic of its own system of production, because of its very nature. It is subject to the laws of the market as if they were natural and inevitable, dragging down the whole of humanity into catastrophe.

The preface to our edition of the Transitional Programme explains:

"It is true that, if the Programme were written today, this or that detail in it would no doubt be changed, and this or that passage would be drafted differently. But the period in which we are today is the same period as that for which the Programme was written. It is the same as that in which the perspectives which it outlined are being realised beneath our eyes. It is the period in which the alternative, Socialism or Barbarism, World Proletarian Revolution or Thermo-nuclear extinction of Humanity, assume the most concrete forms."

Furthermore, the Marxists are not armed with the "Programme" like a "litte red book", which gives theoretical or practical recipes showing for each stage of the struggle and each concrete case which revolutionaries confront the precise dosage of the political components thanks to which a ready-made answer can be provided. The "Programme" is neither a catechism nor a memento of a soldier in the class-war: it formulates the strategic principles, from which flow the slogans which correspond to the movement of the working class in its confrontation with the bourgeois State in the epoch of the transition of capitalism to socialism.

The "Transitional Programme" is the only complete programme since the "Communist Manifesto", and the latter was written in the period when capitalism had not yet exhausted its historic possibilities. The Transitional Programme lays down clearly what are the axes of the socialist revolution. It integrates that formidable gain of the workers' movement in content and method, the "Communist Manifesto". It also bases itself on the Marxist positions established by the Second International and the First Four Congresses of the Third International. The Programme, which is the lever and the yeast of the proletarian revolution, consciously raises only in a general way

the forms which the death-agonny of capitalism takes. It gives their fundamental laws, their algebraic expression. It is the task of the organisations in each country to start from there to define the ^{precise} arithmetic content which is consistent with the specific conditons in any particular place at any particular time.

At zhe same time, as Trotsky stressed in the 1938 conversation:

"The end of the 'Programme' is not complete, because we do not speak here about the social revolution, about the seizure of power by insurrection, the transformation of capitalist society into the dictatorship of the proletariat, the dictatorship into socialist society. This brings the reader only to the doorstep. It is the programme for action from today until the beginning of the socialist revolution. And from the practical point of view what is now the most important is how can we guide the different strata of the proletariat in the direction of the social revolution."

What it is important to assimilate is the method of the "Programme". This method starts from the principles of Marxism. It proceeds, from the subjective situation (the crisis of leadership of the proletariat) to the objective crisis of society (the crisis of human civilisation) to end with the tasks (the construction of the Fourth International). The shifting of the emphasis, from the "Communist Manifesto" to the "Transitional Programme", from the objective to the subjective, expresses the unity of the method in the diversity of concrete approaches. The dialectic of history in our epoch has strikingly confirmed the objective perspective of Marxism, the solution of which depends now only on the solution of the subjective problems (crisis of leadership of the proletariat), which have become objective factors (crisis of human civilisation).

The question of the "Transitional Programme" is as important as that of the proclamation of the Fourth International. We are dealing, in two different but inseparable forms, with the expression of the same necessity: the objective conditions are ripe, while the subjective conditions lag behind. Only a conscious, organised, planned effort will permit the two to be joined, or, better, to inter-penetrate. The vanguard has the power to master one of the two moments in the combination of forces which bring the proletariat together as a class: it is that the domination of capital has created "a common situation" and "common interests" for the mass of the workers:

As Marx wrote in "The Poverty of Philosophy":

"This mass is thus already a class as against capital, but not yet for itself. In the struggle... this mass becomes united, and constitutes itself a class for itself. The interests which it defends become class interests. But the struggle of class against class is a political struggle." (Progress Publishers, Moscow ed. 1955, page 150).

The significance of the Party was already contained in these lines, which the "Manifesto" further explained. They show that ever since the origins of Marxism, it did not separate the conscious struggle for the party from the struggle which more or less mechanically raises the proletariat in opposition to the bourgeoisie. The latter cannot be victorious without the former. As a Marxist, Trotsky did not separate the the "Programme" from the organisational framework which alone will enable the Programme to bear fruit. He believed, further, that despite retreats and defeats, it was necessary to proclaim the Fourth International, with the precise aim of enabling the vanguard, for the benefit of the world proletariat, to resist the terrible pressure which was to be exerted upon it in World War II. The conditions for constructing the Fourth International were terrible. In 1937 Trotsky was the sole survivor, the sole representative of the hundreds of Bolshevik cadres who had formed the left opposition and in whom the tremendous experience of Bolshevism was physically contained. Never was there a greater disparity between the political necessity for an organisation and the conditions of its construction.

But it is precisely because the defeats and retreats, already tremendous, were inevitably to be amplified with the new imperialist war, precisely because the unity of the world class struggle had to be integrated in the ^{class} consciousness of the international proletariat in the necessary form of an organisation, which was the concrete form, however weak it might be, which this unity assumed, in the face of the bankruptcy of Social-Democracy and Stalinism - it is precisely for these reasons that the Fourth International had to be proclaimed. It was proclaimed by the Conference in September 1938. At that time Frank did not understand this, nor did Deutscher, ⁽⁶⁾ if we are to mention two who claimed to be for the Fourth International. The Centrists, who turned their back on it, those for example of the P.O.U.M., which included none the less a number of advanced militants, had chosen to construct their own party first, and then to "examine" the question of their international "affiliation"!

Today we must grasp thoroughly the meaning of the proclamation of the Fourth International. The proclamation was the only way to enable the working class, through the intermediary of "the vanguard of the vanguard" (Trotsky) to protect the heritage of October and to resolve positively the contradictions, the varied events, the aberrations and, finally, the betrayals which did not fail to occur. The reason was the weakness of the human material which had to take upon itself the gigantic tasks which the "Programme" laid down. Nothing but the objective effect of the proclamation of the Fourth International on the class consciousness of the world proletariat permitted the militants of the vanguard to be provided with the means to grasp the thread of the continuity and of the gains, that is, of the "Programme".

The very existence of the Fourth International was the proof, the only proof, that the historic experience of the proletariat was not dissolving into an ideology and, by definition, foreign to Marxism. Independently of the people who, at a given

time, were the carriers of these ideas and who succumbed to enemy pressure, the Fourth International, ever living, was in a position to offer to the conscious militants the framework of their struggle, for them to give back its meaning to the programme of the world proletarian revolution. This is what was to be done by the International Committee which, twenty-eight years later, in the "Manifesto" of its Third Conference, confirmed the correctness of the line adopted by the majority of the Executive Committee of the "Movement for the Fourth International" (in 1938):

"The establishment of the International Committee expressed the strength of the programme and the vitality of the Fourth International: from inside it came the organisation and the force which would ensure its continuity in the class struggle." ("Trotskyism v. Revisionism", Vol 4, page 47, New Park ed.)

Nothing more remains, to close this chapter, but to try to draw a balance of the period 1929 - 1940.

The Bolshevik-Leninists were inexperienced. They encountered external and internal obstacles which they did not know how to overcome. Petty bourgeois intellectualism exacted its price: clique struggles, personal rivalries, fractional struggles were what resulted from all these difficulties. But the balance is not entirely negative. The Bolshevik-Leninists tackled some of the principal questions which face the vanguard in the course of the construction of the revolutionary party, without being able to solve them, such as revolutionary work in the trade unions, propaganda and struggle for the independent organisations of the class, fraction work, the relation between independent work and entrism and the struggle against Centrism. The Bolshevik-Leninists posed the necessity of carrying the "Programme" into action, but in abstract terms, without being able really to link their action with the concrete conditions of the class struggle, without having assimilated the essence of the relations between masses and apparatuses. They tried to apply the rules of democratic centralism, but did so formally. The Bolshevik-Leninists took on the fight against Social-Democracy and Stalinism, which was then at the zenith of its power.

The position of Trotsky in our movement was unique, but the "Old Man" was supported on a struggle which he was leading, a struggle which presented great weaknesses, but equally had its strong sides, to generalise in principles the living experience of the sections of the Fourth International. The living character of Marxism, of Trotskyism, is there. Theory is fed by activities which are more or less correctly led, rather less than more, to bring out the lessons for the future. There was a living relation between the activity of the Bolshevik-Leninists and that of Trotsky. This found its outcome in the "Transitional Programme". It was impossible for the Bolshevik-Leninists to learn in any other way than by assimilating for themselves the programme which Trotsky outlined. The great majority of the Bolshevik-Leninists were not ready to carry through the "Programme" in activity. But, likewise to a great extent, it was not within the power of anyone to avoid the reefs, the mistakes and the

errors due to inexperience, in this period in which the most experienced of the cadres of Bolshevism (the Russian party cadres) had been destroyed by repression. The Bolshevik-Leninists had to take the roads which they took (they could perhaps have done it better, advanced more quickly, though within restricting limits) to return to the high road of the revolution and of the construction of the revolutionary party, the principles and perspectives of which had been formulated by Trotsky, principles and perspectives which did not become concrete until later.

No tendency other than ours endured such pressure and contributed, despite its terrible weaknesses, what it contributed to the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat. The fact remains that the Bolshevik-Leninists have not yet finished with their weaknesses.

CHAPTER TWO

1940 - 1945: Against the Current

Was it Midnight in the Century?

The war broke out on September 3, 1939. The events weighed heavily on many shoulders and most of the oldest Bolshevick-Leninist cadres of the Internationalist Workers' Party (P.O.I.) and of the Internationalist Communist Party (P.C.I.) collapsed. Some stayed at their post: Craipeau (P.O.I.) and Marc Laurent (P.C.I.)

In fact, it was to the young generation of militants, that of June 1936, that the task fell of reconstructing the two organisations. The Bolshevick-Leninists had to face a particularly difficult situation, because they had not been able to make links with the masses in 1936, they had been disarmed by the disappearance of their elders and then by the assassination of Trotsky in August 1940 and they were divided between several tendencies. They were not prepared for the situation which they faced or in any way ready for it: underground work, scattered forces, broken connections and the deep retreat of the working-class which they experienced. The working-class was, in a certain sense, thrown into consternation by the "blitzkrieg" and the consequences of the defeat. Thousands and thousands of soldiers were made prisoners without striking a blow. Decadent French imperialism revealed itself powerless to resist German imperialism. The shade of June 1936 was ever-present, and the French imperialists' first concern was to maintain order.

As soon as the Chamber of Deputies - that of the Popular Front - entrusted by an overwhelming majority full powers to the old Marshall Petain, severe purges descended on Jews, Freemasons, Socialists, Communists /^{and} supporters of un-denominational schools, who were held to blame for the weakening of "civic spirit" and "patriotism". The trade union federations, the C.G.T. and the C.F.T.C., and all the political parties were dissolved and the worker-militants were persecuted.

Weak links with the working-class and difficulty in deciding along what lines to intervene strengthened sectarian as well as opportunist tendencies among the Bolshevick-Leninists. Discouragement comes through in the internal bulletins:

"Can the Bolshevick-Leninists intervene directly, immediately and with success among the masses in order, by their intervention, to avert the transition to fascism, at the same time pushing aside the reactionary, pro-British, democratic, backward bourgeois and petty-bourgeois wave, the Stalinist wave, the fascist forces backed by tanks, and the aircraft bearing the swastika? Can the Bolshevick-Leninist forces seriously put themselves together to represent a force which suffices from any point of view to advance this "historic" claim today?

Everyone was asking these questions, in a situation in which the proletariat was disintegrated and the leaders of the French Communist Party trying to negotiate the

legalisation of their newspaper, "L'Humanite", with the Wehrmacht, the German Army. The German occupation raised the "national question" and the problem of democratic liberties to a level of the first importance. It cost the young, inexperienced militants years to solve these problems, and then very imperfectly. The fact remains that these questions, all of which arose from the period of imperialism, which Lenin characterised as "reaction all along the line", were posed and discussed among the Bolshevik-Leninists from the sole viewpoint of the interests of the proletarian revolution - and among them alone.

Was it necessary, as the Internationalist Communist Committee (ex - P.C.I.) claimed, to ignore in practice the consequences of the German occupation, on the ground that that national question had been settled since the 19th century and was historically obsolete as "an expression of economic progress"?

To be sure, it is perfectly correct to open the way to the Socialist United States of Europe through "currents of international proletarian fraternisation, the suppression of tariff barriers, peaceful proletarian collaboration, workers' control of plans, their extension and the improvement everywhere of the conditions of life of the masses". But it was still necessary to take account of the concrete situation and the occupation, in order to make the perspective of the United Socialist States of Europe a real one for the masses. The C.C.I. showed itself to be unable to do so when it wrote: "Down with Bourgeois Democracy! Down with Hitler!", as if the masses were not made sharply aware of the difference between the two at every moment.

Nor could the C.C.I. criticise the openly opportunist position of the French Committees of the Fourth International", which became "The Committees of the Fourth International" in 1942 - the ex P.O.I.

In November 1940, "La Verite" wrote:

"We must make the greatest possible efforts to draw the bourgeois fraction into forming with us a party, a national movement of resistance."

It proposed to "every French worker, every Frenchman" the formation of "committees of national liberation" and then "of national vigilance" (in "La Verite" No. 6, November 11, 1940), or presented as a common aim "the war which the French people wage in France and the war which De Gaulle is waging in Britain: that to bring down Hitler". ("La Verite", No. 12, October 1941).

French Imperialism continued to be an imperialism in the historic sense of the term, even though it had been crushed by German Imperialism. The occupation in no way changed its character. The German victory in 1940 did not transform the imperialist bourgeoisie into a bourgeois class in an oppressed or colonial country. The future of French Imperialism was not yet decided; it could be decided only at the end of

World War II. From this point of view, it is evident that the militants of the former P.O.I. abandoned themselves to unprincipled opportunism on the national question. But we shall be submerged in sectarianism if we fail to recognise, as the C.C.I. did, that the working masses are conscious of exploitation in a specific form and in specific conditions. The German occupation meant being looted, it meant the robbery inherent in all imperialist war, on top of being exploited by French capitalism. For the workers, the German occupation meant above all the swastika. The working masses were aware of exploitation in direct relation to their hatred of fascism and could be aware of it only in this way. To ignore these feelings was to turn one's back on reality.

Striking Roots in the Working-Class: The Struggle for Internationalism.

None the less from 1941 onward the C.C.I. tried to strike roots in the working-class. In January 1941 the Marseilles comrades opposed the abstract, vague document of the leadership which served as a programme since August 1940:

"The creation of Committees of Workers' Alliance, which will be able to become a pole for re-groupment of the workers on a class basis and will sharply distinguish itself from the people's committees of the French Communist Party."

The platform of the Marseilles comrades called for:

- re-organising the party with an active policy and giving it the ability to work:
- working for the unification of the Bolshevik-Leninists:
- sinking roots in the masses by means of the Committee of Workers' Alliance (C.A.O.) and developing more points of unity with the class.

These proposals aroused a surly response from the leadership which, moreover, was itself unable to advance the least counter-proposal.

Already a differentiation was appearing between the leaders, who were specialists in producing documents and bringing out the press, and the militants who were closer to the class and more concerned about intervening in it. In April 1941, however, the leadership of the C.C.I. put forward the perspective of "Revolutionary Workers' Groups". On the basis of the factories, the militants were to form "G.O.R." (Revolutionary Workers' Groups). These G.O.R. would be illegal and would operate a policy of propaganda, education and struggle. The "G.O.R." would be formed by the most advanced, reliable elements. ~~What the Bolshevik-Leninists~~ had the task of constructing were to be, for tomorrow, the general staffs of the workers' industrial councils and of the factory committees.

In May 1941 the C.C.I. attempted to work out a programme of democratic demands of the working class, "because the struggle for democratic demands, for freedom of the press, freedom of meeting and of struggle about earnings will result in developing the workers' struggle by carrying it to a higher stage, which is a condition for changing the situation."

Many ambiguities remained, for all that. The "G.O.R." was to enable the Trotskyists to implant themselves in the factories and to recruit and educate militants. That was its positive side. But it was conceived as an embryo of a Soviet, which would have to take the place of the traditional organisations and particularly of the trade unions.

The mistake which Frank made in 1938 was again repeated. The Soviets, which are the form of organisation and re-groupment of the class as a class, as a whole and in its unity as a "power", cannot be brought into existence by order. They are born from and develop out of the revolutionary conditions of the struggle of the masses, as the concrete form of the objective movement of the class, which Marx expressed on the banner of the First International: "The emancipation of the workers will be the task of the workers' themselves."

The "Revolutionary Workers' Groups" ("G.O.R.") could have no real meaning except as forms of organisation relating to the construction of the revolutionary party, that is, to the construction of the subjective instrument which alone can ensure the "victory of the Soviets". Theoretical confusion leads to bureaucratic formalism and results in effecting a real substitution of the Party for the real struggle of the masses. Marxism - the Party - is no longer the conscious expression of the unconscious process and the "G.O.R." substitutes itself for the unconscious process as an abstract category. In their reality, the "G.O.R." of the C.C.I. were not to become either the genuine forms of organisation relating to the construction of the revolutionary party, which is what they ought to have been, and which they were confusedly tending towards becoming, nor were they the embryos of Soviets, which they could not be and never were. Very often, the "G.O.R." was in fact the nucleus of an illegal trade union. But the theoretical confusion which the C.C.I. created did not permit this kind of "G.O.R.", the nucleus of an illegal ^{trade} union, to play that role fully. All the more so because the very great inexperience of the militants led them to consider the traditional organisations, and in particular the trade unions, as "out-dated".

This ambiguity about the role and nature of the "G.O.R." was to encourage among the Trotskyists the tendency to turn away from the unions, despite the re-affirmation of principle on the role of the revolutionaries in these organisations and on the necessity to intervene in them.

The Committees of the Fourth International, which became the P.O.I. in January 1943, also turned towards the working class, though more slowly and with greater difficulty than the C.C.I. The composition of the Party was still scarcely proletarian. Most of the members were young and the leaders were insufficiently developed. There was a real gulf between the leaders, the "Old Bolsheviks" who comported themselves more as teachers than as political guides, and the rest of the organisation.

Unlike the C.C.I., the organisation was so poorly centralised that the leadership could produce a journal directed towards the youth, "The Young Guard", without telling the organisation generally. The comrades of the South-West Region studied this journal and found in it the organic signs inherent in Centrism. They decided to do all they could to get in contact with these young revolutionaries and encourage their development!

Academic and abstract discussions still occupied more time than they should. The minority, the Internationalist Opposition, was extremely sectarian and attacked ad nauseam the errors of the leadership - which were numerous - and it polemicised in its turn.

The German attack on the USSR on June 22, 1941, had speeded up the processes of maturation and political clarification within the working class, which entered into struggle in the second half of 1941. In the month of November, the miners in the Departments of Nord and Pas-de-Calais, after having won soap and increased food rations from the employers, refused to work for the German army and demanded that the coal be delivered to the civil population. From that time onward, German machine-guns were to stand permanently ready at the pit-heads to try to ensure order and calm for the employers.

The resistance of the working class increased considerably when at the beginning of 1942 Hitler imposed the Service of Compulsory Labour (S.T.O.) in order to meet the needs of the German war machine. He had to collect in the occupied countries the man-power which he needed in Germany. The French bourgeoisie resisted in its own way, because it saw signs of the German defeat, and because it wanted to protect its own man-power supplies. The youth, who rejected the S.T.O., took to the maquis. From October - November 1942, demonstrations and strikes against the levies - the pretended exchange of a prisoner of war for each worker who went to Germany - became general. After the whole region had stopped work for between 99 hours and a day, the workers of Nantes left the city when they were deported, raising their clenched fists and singing the Internationale, which they started again whenever they went through a city.

The first defeats of the Germans, and especially Stalingrad, which resounded as a great victory of the working class over Fascism, radicalised the masses. They put up with the frenzied super-exploitation of which they were the victims with rising impatience. Strikes broke out against the lengthening of working hours, lowering of earnings, sackings and the levy... sometimes defeats, sometimes partially victorious.

The great wave of strikes against the levy welded ^{together} the workers throughout the country. In Nantes the strikes were in engineering. In the Lyons region, the railwaymen joined the struggle while the engineers went on strike. For the first

since 1937 a factory in Chambéry was occupied by the workers. The working class drew behind it the petty bourgeoisie and the peasants. As the trains left for Germany, the black-coated workers, the technicians and even the peasants shouted the same slogans as the workers and sang the "International" like them, Nowhere did the defeat of the strike beat down the combattività of the working class.

Under the totalitarian jack-boot of Nazism, the revolutionary upsurge of the proletariat advanced towards the revolutionary conquest of power, in a situation in which the bourgeois state, the so-called French state, became more and more disorganised.

The Trotskyists were carried along by the movement of the class from 1943 onwards and struck roots in the working class. The systematic work of implantation in the factories, which the C.C.I. began in 1941, bore fruit. The P.O.I. began to overcome its organisational and political weaknesses from its 5th Congress in July 1943.

Never before had such unanimous determination been expressed in the ranks of the party - though it was not free from voluntarism - to win the fighting cadres and militants of the workers' vanguard. It was only about then that the concern of some became the concern of all. The debates in general were dominated by the will to make the Transitional Programme live and to implant it in the masses. The beginning of political clarification which was taking place strengthened the cohesion and the homogeneity of the Party. The leadership recognised without reserve that in its desire to make itself echo the actual pre-occupations of the masses and to attach itself to their most immediate struggles, it had too often defended incorrect positions, especially on the national question. The minority, the Internationalist Opposition, for its part, admitted that its criticism had often been sterile, to the extent that it had been purely negative and turned exclusively against the leadership instead of being turned towards winning the masses.

None the less, one Congress cannot abolish at a stroke the past and all its political mistakes. There still existed formalism, verbalism, intellectualism and sectarianism, to which opportunism replies in opposition.

The problem of the United Front was located in the centre of the discussions at the Congress and in the organisation. It concentrated all the difficulties over which both the P.O.I. and the P.C.I. stumbled equally.

None the less, while the repression continued, the implantation of Trotskyism made progress.

From 1943 new regions of the Party were set up. The old regions made links with the factories and the youth camps which Vichy organised. The Trotskyists had their roots in the regions of Bordeaux, Nantes, Toulouse, Mazamet, Clermond-Ferrand, Lyon, Marseille, Valence and Nice, as well as in Brittany, in the Nord and in the Paris region and elsewhere.

Reports from factories appeared more and more frequently in the press. They came

from factories in the Paris Region (Rateau at La Courneuve, from the Lorraine plant, from S.N.C.A.M. at Les Mureaux, from Caudron at Billancourt) etc., from Tergnier in the Aisne, from the coal mines in Pas-de-Calais. Starting in August 1943, "La Verite", the organ of the P.O.I., began to get rid of its abstract, general character and to follow up the illegal intervention of the militants in the factories.

The atmosphere in the factory at S.I.G.M.A. at Lyon was such that the workers, led by the Trotskyists, stopped work on September 23, 1943. The strike developed for demands which had already been presented on May 1, and it ended in a partial victory.

There can be no denial that the Trotskyists were on the road to linking themselves with the workers. But that was not achieved without certain political weaknesses. The young comrades of the P.O.I. in the Bordeaux Region had links with working class, but did not know how to make use of them. Their newspaper, "Octobre", like that of the Paris Region, "Workers' Struggle", could have just as well been produced from Marseille or Lille. There are striking differences between these journals and those of the comrades in Nantes or in Brittany, which were produced under the title, "Workers' Front", and had links with their region. These were an important weapon, not only for the working class but also for the Party. None the less, these comrades were unable to organise "Workers' Front" Groups, and even let the few groups that they did form fall apart. Meanwhile their journal, the propaganda and their intervention evoked an un-deniable echo. Papers dropped at a factory were passed hand to hand by the workers and even reached factories where the comrades had no contacts.

At the same time, both organisations developed important work directed at the German soldiers. At the beginning of the war, the Trotskyists had proudly declared: "Enslavement neither to the conqueror nor to Gaullism". This firm attachment to internationalism, despite some of them who sank into nationalism and support for Britain, when others were capitulating in the name of fallacious theories of state capitalism (like those in all the parties, in the French Communist Party and in the S.F.I.O.), enabled the Trotskyists to preserve the "Transitional Programme" and to ensure that it was handed on.

In May 1940, the Bolshevik-Leninists were alone in addressing all the workers, all the soldiers, across national frontiers:

"Independently of the course of the war, we will fulfill our fundamental task; we explain to the workers the irreconcilable opposition of their interests to the interests of bloodthirsty capitalism; we mobilise the exploited people against imperialism; we work for the unity of all the workers of all the belligerent and neutral countries; we call for the fraternisation of the German workers and soldiers with the soldiers on the opposite side of the front. We mobilise the women and the youth against the war, we maintain a constant, persistent, tireless propaganda for the revolution in the factories, in the villages, in the barracks, at the front and in the fleet." (See: "Documents of the Fourth Inter-

national: 1933 - 1940", ed. Pathfinder Press, New York, 1973, page 350).

This proclamation remained neither an abstract principle or a dead letter. The Trotskyists began to reconstruct the International in Europe at the height of the war, when most of its leaders had lost their feet. The work was organising principally through the efforts of the P.O.I., especially of Marcel Hic, who had been among the first, in the debates on the occupation, to struggle to integrate the Trotskyists in the class struggle. After the deportation of Souzin (leader of the union of building trade workers in the Paris Region), Hic took charge of the trade union commission of the P.O.I. Shortly before he was deported, the European Commission was reconstituted.

The Trotskyists did not stop at that point. Within the limits of their means, they undertook a policy of revolutionary fraternisation with the German soldiers. In 1942, "La Verite" devoted editorials to the first signs of disarray in the German army, mutinies, refusal of orders, especially in a submarine anchored at Brest. They distributed leaflets and papers in German in the barracks, and the German soldiers welcomed them very favourably. It was precisely at Brest that cells of German sailors were put together, but in Paris and in the former Free Zone as well. "Der Arbeiter", later "Arbeiter und Soldat", the organ of the Fourth International.

The organisation in groups of three was led by a leading triad. A Gestapo agent penetrated the organisation and the German work was destroyed in September - October 1943. Thirty German soldiers and sailors were arrested and shot. Some fifty French comrades fell. Marcel Hic, Beaufrere and Roland Filiatre, who was in charge of the German work, were deported. The repression was so severe that the leadership of the P.O.I. took very strict organisational measures, and decided to separate the German work carefully from the French work, to put the German comrades by themselves in groups of three and to maintain the links between them either by non-German comrades or by German militants who were well known for a long time.

The German work was inevitably separated from the French organisation, and was entrusted to Widelin, who was in charge of the German group in Paris, the editor of "Arbeiter und Soldat" and of the ^{review} "Unser Wort". The German Trotskyist Widelin was to be murdered by the Gestapo, after being arrested following an attempt to escape. The disappearance of Marcel Hic led to the appearance in the international leadership of a completely unknown militant - Pablo (Michel Raptis).

The Re-Unification

Finally, discussions were resumed for the unification of the P.O.I., the C.C.I. and a small group which came out of the "abundantist" movement, one of the leaders of which, Henri Claude, was to join the French Communist Party after the war.

In 1944 the "French State" was coming apart on all sides. The German army was less and less capable of protecting the French bourgeoisie. Desertions were rising. The

German soldiers in charge of guarding trains were closing their eyes to thefts of merchandise. Strikes became more frequent, against the levy, against 50, 60, or even 72 hours of work a week, against shortages and police brutality...

Repression became more severe. It was not organised by the Gestapo alone. The most reactionary fraction of the French bourgeoisie got ready its weapons against the working class. Under the cover of the "French State", the Darland militia, the civil and military organisation of the Count de Vogue went into battle, within the maquis, against "the terrorists in the pay of London and Moscow". It was clear to everyone that the collapse, which was not inevitable, would produce a revolutionary situation in France.

This was the situation which demanded that the Bolshevik-Leninists be re-unified. In the face of the radicalisation of the masses and in order to express their revolutionary aspirations, it was necessary to offer them a party, that is to say, a pole of revolutionary re-groupment, which ^{can claim} to lead the masses.

The unification was taken in hand directly by the European Conference in February - March 1944, which appointed a federative Central Committee, made up of two representatives of the C.C.I., two representatives of the P.O.I. and one for "October". The representative of the European Executive Committee, Pablo, was to attend meetings of the Central Committee to arbitrate, a method ^{to} which he became very attached. For years the position of arbitrator enabled Pablo to load his responsibilities on to other people.

In fact the federative Central Committee never met. The European Secretariat decided, in the light of the very difficult conditions of the re-unification in France and of a new wave of arrests of members of the P.O.I., to suspend the Central Committee and the Political Bureau, as well as the regional committee of the Paris region and the commissions. Supported by a consultative commission of three members - one representative of each organisation - it controlled all the members of the three organisations, it decided what their future ^{status} was to be and where they would work, on the basis of the results of its enquiries, which were approved by the commission of the three. After that, it once again gave place to the Central Committee and the other leading organisms of the party.

In fact, whatever may have been the consideration of where comrades should work, the unification remained a process of placing tendencies side by side. The P.C.I. had no political homogeneity. Very often it piled up opportunist and sectarian errors, without these exactly reproducing the former P.O.I. or the former C.C.I.

At the beginning of 1944 the P.C.I. was confronted by new tasks. Neither its traditions nor the experience which it had won during the first years of the war prepared it sufficiently for mass work.

None the less, through political difficulties and despite errors and contradictions,

its militant attitude tended to locate it among the real problems which were being posed in the class struggle of the French proletariat.

Should they accept the control of the C.N.R., the "National Council of the Resistance"? The answer which they adopted after a bitter discussion was "No!". The C.N.R., under the presidency of Bidault, brought together all the Resistance organisations, from the extreme right bourgeoisie, who had broken with Petain and Weygand, across to the Communist Party, by way of the bankrupt party of the Radical Socialists, the S.F.I.O., the C.G.T. which had just been re-unified, the C.F.T.C. etc. In the still-occupied parts of France, the "French State" of Petain was in complete liquidation and the C.N.R. confronted it as the leading nucleus for the reconstruction of the bourgeois state, a task to which the leaders of the traditional organisations, S.F.I.O. - P.C.F. - C.G.T. - were harnessing themselves, in concert with De Gaulle, in order to break up the ^{rising} revolutionary movement due to the sufferings of World War II. The P.C.I. was correct, though it pushed the point too far, when we declared on the day after the landing on June 6, 1944:

"The extent of the fascist terror during the war only sketches out the terrible situation which awaits the workers if they do not succeed in overthrowing capitalism, which produces fascism and war. BUT THE FATE WHICH IS RESERVED FOR YOU UNDER THE DOMINATION OF AMERICAN AND BRITISH IMPERIALISM WILL NOT BE BETTER."

It is true that bourgeois democracy and fascism are two forms of rule of the capitalist class: the one, bourgeois domination in the conditions of decadent capitalism, bringing about the other, fascism. But these are not equivalent forms of political domination. Under one of these forms, bourgeois democracy, the proletariat retains its class positions, which it has won from capital in the class struggle, its working-class liberties and its organisations. Under the other form, fascism, the working class is broken up into atoms. It has neither rights nor agreements and is handed over, bound hand and foot, to capitalist exploitation.

The proletariat does not accept the responsibility for bourgeois democracy. It struggles against it, in order to replace it with the democracy of workers' councils, with the dictatorship of the proletariat, with the ~~Commune~~ - State. But the proletariat cannot be indifferent to defending itself as a class, and, therefore, to the political forms of the rule of the enemy class. Numerous crisis and conflicts were needed for the young Trotskyists and their elders to learn from their own experience and from the lessons of the class struggle. Many never succeeded in doing so. Some deserted.

It is absolutely certain that "La Verite" was correct when it wrote on June 22, 1944:

"The certitude which must form the bronze foundation of the policy of the Fourth International is that the transformation of the imperialist war into a civil war necessarily implies the formation of workers' committees, which in a period of

dual power will oppose the power of the bourgeoisie and the treacherous policy of the Stalinists."

Facts have proved it.

The employers feared another June 1936. After May 1944 they tried to prevent the class from exploding by all kinds of palliative devices: closing factories, sending work-people into the provinces or the outer suburbs to repair the railways, but in vain.

The Masses Rise Up Again: Soviets and Trade Unions

Between the departure of the German troops on August 17 and the arrival of the Allies on August 24, more than ten factories, including some of the most important in the engineering industry round Paris, were occupied by the workers on the initiative of the militants of the P.C.I. The movement began at Jumo and B.M.W. in Argenteuil. The German managers had fled, leaving the workers unpaid. The workers formed a provisional committee and then convened a factory meeting, which democratically elected a factory committee. This organised the factory canteen, made good the tools that had had parts removed, saw to the upkeep of the factory and proceeded to a pay-out.

The movement spread to dozens of enterprises in the Paris Region. All of them elected or confirmed their committees. The factories were occupied at first by small teams of workers who organised the occupation and the defence of the place. All the workers were called together on pay-day to the canteen, by posters, by cyclists and then by the press. Meetings were then held where the committee was elected. Everywhere the workers set the example of order and organisation in the factory; the offices were maintained, there was no stealing and there were guards on duty day and night. Never did the canteens function so well.

Each occupation had its own special features. At Bleriot (Suresnes), the committee published its constitution. The "social committee", a Vichy creation, was rejected. A purge commission was set up and drove out the enemies of the working class.

At C.M.S.C. the workers sacked the canteen manageress who had been stealing for years. They appointed a committee to manage the canteen and met the demands of the canteen staff. Finally, a workers' militia, well armed, ensured that the place was under guard.

At Jumo (Argenteuil) the pay-out was organised, without the boss, with the help of the accounts staff. The head of personnel was brought before a people's tribunal, which condemned him to be under continual surveillance by a worker militiaman.

At B.M.W., the workers came to an agreement with the technicians and studied a plan to get the factory back into production.

On August 22, 1944, a week after the first factory committees were formed, the workers at Renault elected a provisional committee and addressed a leaflet to all the

workers:

"Renault Provisional Committee

August 22, 1944

COMRADES,
A WORKERS' COMMITTEE has been formed
This COMMITTEE has the following objects:

1. To bring together the workers of the different factories so as to defend their interests, which consist at the present time of:
 - a). ONE MONTH'S ADVANCE IN PAY
 - b). RE-OPENING THE CANTEENS
2. In the future, as soon as the evacuation is complete, re-opening of the factories immediately under the control of the WORKERS' COMMITTEES.
3. Pay to be adjusted to meet the cost of living: SLIDING SCALE OF WAGES
FULL PAYMENT FOR HOURS OF IDLENESS
AT THE NEW PAY RATES
(minimum 40 hours a week)
4. CONTROL OF FEEDING AND THE CANTEENS BY THE WORKERS' COMMITTEE
5. EFFECTIVE CONTROL OF HIRING AND FIRING BY THE DELEGATES
IMMEDIATE RE-EMPLOYMENT OF ALL THOSE SACKED

For this programme to be carried out, we invite all the workers to gather round their FACTORY COMMITTEES, or to form them if they do not yet exist

AN INTER-FACTORY MEETING WILL BE HELD DAILY, AT THREE IN THE AFTERNOON, AT THE AMBROISE - PARE HOSPITAL, 82 rue de Saint-Cloud, at Boulogne - Billancourt.

The provisional committees of these factories:
Renault, S.N.C.A.C., L.M.T., Caudron, Salmson.

At Argenteuil, meetings of delegates from fourteen factories were held and considered common work. At Suresnes the factories made contact. In the north-west suburbs, the inter-factory committees brought together forty enterprises. Factory guards were formed and transformed themselves into factory-based workers' militias. They armed themselves during the battle of Paris. Frequently, the Franc-Tireurs Partisans (F.T.P., the Resistance Movement led by the French Communist Party which existed as a force separate from those of the F.F.I., the pro-Gaullist and pro-British resistance forces) came back to their factories with help and information. Leaders were elected and a firm discipline applied.

Workers' militias were formed at Metro, S.N.C.A.M. and Amiot. These took their natural place and served their real purpose: the workers' themselves were defending their first conquests, not only against the reactionary gangs of the Darland militias or the S.S., but against the bourgeoisie as a whole.

At the same time, the P.C.I. called on the workers to form their tribunals to judge

those who had collaborated with the Nazis, on the housewives to form committees, on the population to group in committees by districts of the city, in brief, for "the union of all the workers, union with the housewives, to take their own destiny in hand" (see "La Verite", September 17, 1944).

It was the comrades of the P.C.I. who found themselves at the head of the movement for getting the committees formed and, in most cases, in stimulating their activity. It was under the influence of the Trotskyists that the first inter-factory committee was formed and that the question was quite correctly posed of the need for a Central Committee of Factories.

In this way the proof was given that Lenin's forecast in the course of World War I remained valid for World War II. The war could be transformed into civil war; it could give birth and life to the victorious proletarian revolution.

The Trotskyists could take the initiative in proposing elected workers' committees only because the necessity developed, among the ruins of the bourgeois State, in its "Vichyist" form, for it to be replaced by the workers' State, the State of the elected committees, the Republic of the Workers' Councils. This necessity which the Trotskyists expressed clearly in their struggle for the committees was also expressed in other forms. In numerous cases the Liberation Committees, which were dominated by the representatives of the workers' organisations, and had been brought into existence by the coalition of the Stalinists and the bourgeoisie as a stage towards returning to bourgeois municipalities, in fact took the power in the localities. A congress was even convened at Avignon as the representative of the power of the masses in opposition to the bourgeois State in its collapse.

With the police and the gendarmerie totally discredited, the patriotic workers' militias under arms, in the factories, and the F.T.P. in the provincial regions, were the only force of proletarian order at the time and tended to substitute themselves for the forces of defence and of order of bourgeois society.

In factories where the movement had not succeeded in breaking through to the formation of workers' committees, there were Commissions for Production which brought together delegates elected by the workers on the initiative of the trade unions. These included technicians and managers and confronted with workers' control the employers who felt looming over them the demand of the masses for expropriation.

The general perspective which the Trotskyists had established since the beginning of World War II had revealed itself to be correct. Nothing but the powerful grip of Stalinism, which was then at the very height of its influence, was to liquidate all the elements of workers' power in order to reconstruct the bourgeois State. Such people as Frachon, Duclos, Thorez and Lecoœur then told the workers: "The time has not yet come to expropriate capital"; "There is only one authority in the factory, the patriotic employer, with whom the workers must unite to produce first and make demands afterwards". The Commissions for Production, which were tending, in the

factories and in the professions, between the professions and in the localities, to lay down a plan under workers' control, were to be dissolved by a decision of the Confederal Bureau of the C.G.T.

The Stalinist ^{leaders} continued to say that the time had not yet come for building the Workers' State on the ruins of the bourgeois State. The workers' committees were to be dissolved and, with them, all the elements of independent power; the Liberation Committees had to disappear wherever they opposed the re-birth of the bourgeois state. The F.T.P. had to be integrated into the army. The workers' militias had to hand in their weapons to the police. Did not Thorez say, on January 21, 1945: "We need ^{single} one State, one single army, one single police"? He meant the bourgeois army, the bourgeois police and the bourgeois State, under the leadership of the government of De Gaulle, whose "loyal" vice-president Thorez became. The Stalinist apparatus alone bears the responsibility for having betrayed once again the revolutionary upsurge of the French proletariat, in order to rush to the rescue of the French bourgeoisie. It was not the first time, nor will it be the last... The fact remains that the experience of the Trotskyist militants was not sufficient for them to increase their numbers as they could and should have done in the revolutionary period which the end of the Second World War had opened.

The Trotskyists had not yet understood that the first phase of the revolutionary upsurge of the masses, even if it is powerful enough to raise the class struggle to the level of the duality of power, also passes through the traditional organisations.

The P.C.I. wrote in October 1944:

"The revolutionary upsurge will not stop at the stage of the reconstruction of the ^{trade} unions, but will go directly on to autonomous organisations; committees, soviets, which will far out-run the attractive power of the bureaucratic apparatuses, which the social-traitors try to reconstruct in order to dam up the movement of the masses."

A real revolutionary upsurge embraces millions and millions of people. Before, they accepted passively the dismal horizon of exploitation. Masses which hitherto have been passive, without experience of the class struggle, awoken to consciousness; they necessarily direct themselves towards the organisations which the working class has constructed in its historic movement. They load on to these organisations their experiences and the will which drives them to change their lives.

It will be necessary for these masses of millions and millions of ^{people} working to learn from their own experience to understand that the apparatuses which dominate the traditional organisations and which, through the medium of these organisations, necessarily exert control on the independent ~~organism~~ ^{people} of power, such as Councils and Soviets, are subordinated to the bourgeoisie. More than this is needed for victory. It is necessary for a revolutionary party to construct itself, in the course of the same movement as the experience is gained. This revolutionary party will be

nourished by the experience and will express in slogans, in demands and in terms of organisation the revolutionary aspirations of the masse.

The inexperienced militants of the P.C.I. had not assimilated this law of History in 1944. The leadership erected to the level of principle this ignorance, of a "leftist" character. Yet this is the law of all revolutions, a law which it is not enough to read in books, but which must be assimilated in our flesh and blood, in order to construct the revolutionary party by conscious intervention in the class struggle.

The P.C.I. wrote, however, in its draft theses preparatory to the unification congress:

"The workers' indifference to the trade unions, far from proving ^{that} they cannot politically handle the situation, is the expression of the high political level which they have attained. The workers no longer have confidence in the fragile bourgeois 'laws' and in changes in them. The trade union leaderships appear to them as treacherous or inadequate and without a future."

That is the result, in the field of "theory", of the schematic view which led to their regarding the "Revolutionary Workers' Group" as the embryo of a Soviet. In the great majority of factories where "Revolutionary Workers' Groups" succeeded in becoming Committees, they could not stand in the way of the tide which carried the masses into the trade union organisations. In most places, when the Trotskyists tried to oppose the committees being converted into trade union organisations, they were simply turned out of any responsibilities at the level of the factory or of the union locally.

Furthermore, the militants who were brought together in the "G.O.R."s at Panhard took the leadership of the trade union section at the Liberation quite naturally. When the Trotskyists kept these comrades at arms length and even condemned them, they pushed these comrades to break with the P.C.I. and to join the French Communist Party.

But already during the war the militant workers in the P.C.I. had also begun the struggle in the factories and the illegal unions which would permit the Trotskyist organisation, in another stage, ^{really} to assimilate Marxism, the "Programme" of the Fourth International and the laws of History, by direct intervention on the class struggle. This was to be at the price of fresh internal struggles and fresh crises. There is no royal road which leads to the victory of the revolution. No objective force will free the revolutionaries from constructing, themselves, by their conscious activity and will, the Party with the aid of the "Programme". Many difficult years would still be needed. This work has not yet been carried through today.

C H A P T E R T H R E E

1 9 4 5 - 1 9 5 0: Crises and Splits

In 1944 the Trotskyists repeated the mistake which the Bolshevik-Leninists made in 1936. They had not yet succeeded in assimilating this very simple lesson which comes out of the whole experience of Marxism and which Trotsky spelt out in a masterly way in "The History of the Russian Revolution". The first stage of the revolutionary process passes through the great traditional organisations. Within this framework, the construction of the revolutionary party requires both complete political independence in relation to the bourgeois apparatuses and a strategy and tactics adapted to the level of consciousness of the masses.

A revolutionary crisis sets into movement masses of millions and millions of people men, women and youth, who the day before were still more or less passively accepting the conditions of their being exploited, the "normal" conditions of exploitation in which the exploited person is reduced to the situation of an individual, a situation with which he or she puts up as it is. A revolutionary crisis calls into question the conditions of exploitation. By doing so, it drives the masses to gather together and organise themselves.

The proletarians have to unite, that is, to organise, in order to resist the united social power of capital and of the bourgeois state. By doing that very thing, they become a class. In millions and millions, in a period of revolutionary crisis, the masses come to organisation in order to form themselves as a class. By millions and millions they tend to come together to confront the bourgeois state in collapse. The only organisms which can enable the proletariat to become the ruling class, that is, to become really the class which takes up the historic mission of bringing the class-less society to birth, are the Soviets, the workers' councils, the committees and the Commune - State.

The period which opened with the fall of Mussolini and the Italian Revolution, from September 1943 to the end of 1945, remarkably verified the revolutionary perspective on which the struggle of the P.C.I. had been founded. Spontaneously, though with spontaneity enriched by all the accumulated experience of the international class-struggle and ripened by the struggle of the vanguard, the masses tried in millions and millions to organise in organisations of the Soviet type, in militias, in the F.T.P. and in factory committees. In certain conditions the Liberation Committees in France demonstrated the truth that the Second World War was tending to be transformed into "civil war". This was the perspective which Lenin had formulated in the course of World War I.

But the masses saw the restricting force of the reformist and Stalinist apparatuses rising up in the very inside of their movement. At this point we must go back over the analysis. The revolutionary crisis sets in movement masses, in millions and

millions who come to organisation, not having been organised before. But the revolutionary struggle of these hitherto un-organised masses does not unfold on virgin ground. The proletariat has a long history. It has been engaged in struggles to resist exploitation for more than a century. By means of these struggles, it has won from the bourgeoisie rights, conquests and agreements. It could carry on these struggles only because it was organised. The workers' organisations, its trade unions and its political parties, are the results of the struggle of classes. In "calm" periods, these organisations draw in only a limited fraction of the workers and the youth. But, when the revolutionary crisis sets in movement masses in millions and millions which are tending towards organising, these masses direct themselves "naturally" towards the traditional organisations, because these organisations represent the material expression of everything that the proletariat has gained and won in its historic class struggle.

Millions and millions of working people and young people necessarily flow towards "historic" organisations which already exist, when they are trying to come together in pre-soviet forms of power and confront the bourgeois State in collapse. They swell the ranks of the workers' parties and the unions. In millions and millions they place their revolutionary hopes in these organisations, all their aspirations to put an end to the old conditions of exploitation. But these traditional organisations, which the working class has established in a desperate and often bloody struggle, to ensure its self-defence against exploitation, are dominated by bourgeois apparatuses, by these "Labour lieutenants of capitalism", whom Lenin denounced in 1920 "Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder".

The dominant apparatuses of the organisations erect obstacles upon obstacles to frustrate the revolutionary aspirations of the masses. Speaking about the policy of "Produce First, Demand Later" (Frachon), and "The Strike has become the class weapon of the trusts" (Lecoeur, then secretary of the French Communist Party), Thorez went on to demand that the weapons so dearly acquired during the occupation should be handed over to the police stations, because, in the eyes of the Stalinists agents of the bourgeoisie, "there is only one police force, only one State and only one government", the bourgeois Government with De Gaulle at its head, whose vice-president Thorez was to become and which was to occupy itself in reconstructing the bourgeois police of the bourgeois state with the aid of the Stalinist and reformist apparatuses.

For the Government of De Gaulle and Thorez to achieve its aims, the pre-sovietic forms of power of the masses had to be liquidated. Once again, the French Communist Party and the S.F.I.O. along with it succeeded in directing the revolutionary torrent towards respect for the bourgeois order, as it did in summer 1936.

The General Strike of August 1953, the generalised strikes of summer 1955, the general strike of the miners in 1963, the general strike of May - June 1968, were all

liquidated by the apparatuses in order to save the bourgeois State. In 1944, however, the Trotskyists had not yet assimilated the laws which govern the development of the mass movement. They had not yet learned from their own experience that the revolutionary crisis which mobilises millions and millions of working people in the establishment of organs of power ^{encounters}, in its first stage, the traditional organisations dominated by the apparatuses. In order to separate itself from them in another stage, it is necessary that the mass shall rise up against the apparatuses, through its own experience, though assisted by the struggle for the construction of the revolutionary party carried on by the organised vanguard.

The Trotskyists believed in 1944 that the revolutionary process which produced the organs of dual power would "spontaneously" direct itself towards the P.C.I., avoiding no less spontaneously the internal obstacle represented by the bourgeois apparatuses which control the organisations. The Trotskyists has not yet assimilated what they had read in Marx, Lenin and Trotsky. There is no spontaneous process in the struggle for the construction of the revolutionary leadership.

The insufficiently experienced Trotskyists had not yet understood that the only materials available to those who struggle to change the old world are the materials of the old world. Let us repeat this: Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky have written it. It is not sufficient to read in order to learn. To learn, it is necessary to know how to fuse theory and practice. The Trotskyists had to learn the complex process which conditions the construction of the revolutionary party as the product on the one hand of the experience which the mass acquires by itself and on the other hand the experience of the vanguard which has assimilated the method of dialectical materialism, the conscious and therefore organised expression of the unconscious process. The Trotskyists as they fought had in the course of years to assimilate the "Programme" of the Fourth International, the expression of Marxism in our epoch, the organic fusion of theory and practice in the organisation.

As in 1936, so in 1944, illusions and dreams expressed this insufficient assimilation of Marxism. Together with the immense ^{restrictive} force of Stalinism which was then its height, this was to multiply the difficulties which assailed the Trotskyists. Time was needed. Patience was needed. It was necessary to wait.

1945 - 1950: Difficult Years, Years of Working-Class Struggle

The P. C. I. in 1945 wanted to base itself on the principles of Bolshevism. Here too the insufficient assimilation of Marxism in the field of the construction of the Party was to sharpen crises and the conflicts of tendencies. We know that the implantation of Marxism has always been weak in the French workers' movement. Guesdism, the only tendency which claimed to be Marxist, ^{reduced} Marxism to a set of formal precepts. Furthermore, the politics of Guesdism at the end of the 19th century were already strongly affected by reformism. We know that the traditions of Bolshevism, which is the Marxism of our epoch, even before they could be firmly im-

implanted in the young Communist Party in the 1920's, quickly made way for Stalinism after a short period when Zinoviev led the Communist International with Stalin and Kamenev. Zinovievism in the Communist International meant formalised "Bolshevism" By orders from the top, without the Communist Parties in each country being able to assimilate the principles of Bolshevism through its own experience, the Communist International resolved to "Bolshevise". Stalin then put his grip on the parties and the International in order to "Russify" them, that is, to subject their apparatuses to the counter-revolutionary interests of the privileged caste in the Kremlin.

"Bolshevisation" consisted of isolated in fixed categories "What Is To Be Done?", the fundamental work in which Lenin applies the method of Marxism to the construction of the revolutionary party, principles which Lenin applied to the construction of a party in the specific conditions of Russia. Bolshevism, with "Bolshevisation", was in a sense cut up into slices, valid for all time and every epoch. The living substance of Marxism was reduced to a catalogue of recipes.

But "formalised" Marxism is contrary to Marxism, which is theory and practice fused in the construction of the international party of the proletariat. It was through this "formalised" Marxism that Guesde, Kautsky and Plekhanov foundered into reformism, the negation of Marxism. It was on "Bolshevisation", the formalist distortion of Bolshevism, that Stalinism, the negation of Bolshevism, was built.

Trotskyism represented the struggle of the Marxist vanguard in the Communist International and the Communist Parties to defend living Bolshevism against the formalisation of Bolshevism. But the significance of this struggle could not generally be understood by the Trotskyists, who found themselves, as we have seen, rejected as it were by their own class. This is why the Trotskyists could not draw general conclusions about deviation at the level of method, while at the same time they were fighting desperately against the theoretical and practical results of Stalinist politics. The method of constructing the party, which underlies all Trotskyist activity, was more or less reduced to believing that "because we are correct", the revolutionary party will spring up in a sense spontaneously from the truth.

But, if we were correct, that was because the analyses of Leon Trotsky were based on the real groundwork of Marxism, and Marxism places at the centre of its method the revolutionary activity of the masses, and, therefore, the construction of the instrument indispensable for the victory of the proletarian revolution, the party and the International. Let us repeat - Marxism is the organic fusion of theory and practice in the struggle for the party. Theory cannot be revolutionary - and, therefore, Marxist - without revolutionary practice. But practice which flows from theory cannot be revolutionary without the conscious struggle to construct the revolutionary party. Men make History in given objective conditions, but in the last analysis it is men themselves who make their own history. If the revolutionaries whose struggle in the given objective conditions do not centralise their combination of

theoretical and practical activity in the construction of the party, nothing and no one will do it in their place. Nothing and no one will relieve the revolutionaries of the task of themselves constructing the revolutionary party. This is the essence of the Bolshevism of Lenin and Trotsky. This is the essence of the "Transitional Programme" which was adopted in 1938 by the Founding Conference of the Fourth International.

The difficult conditions in which the Trotskyists were struggling made difficult to rapid assimilation of the principles of Bolshevism. The insufficient assimilation of the principles of Bolshevism was to lead the Trotskyists to search again and again for short cuts to the construction of the party. The impossibility of finding these short cuts was to lead ^{these} tendencies within the P.C.I. and the International to reject Bolshevism, to capitulate to Stálinism and Social-Democracy and to abandon Marxism.

The P. C. I. as it Came Out of the War: 1945 - 1948

At that time the P. C. I. presented a whole spectrum of currents and tendencies, with a majority supported by the "International Secretariat", which sought to place itself on the ground of Marxist "orthodoxy", and a minority which was starting an evolution that was to take many of its members out of Trotskyism, and which started from the basis of formal correction of the errors of the majority. This minority was almost as important as the majority.

A division began to take place between those who more or less confusedly rejected intervention in the working class, taking refuge in journalistic activity and a policy of making contacts with ^{the} intellectual ideologues who claimed to be "forming public opinion of the left" - and those who consciously aimed at taking the "Programme" into the factories and the trade unions. There were elements of the first kind in all the tendencies. The others, the militant workers, gathered in the trade union commission and tried to express in the working class the political ^{organism} 7 ation of the P.C.I. and to defend there its programme of action: "Work and Bread". They struggled in the factories and the unions for the formation of a Workers' Government of the French Communist Party, the Socialist Party and the C.G.T., for a planned economic re-construction under workers' control, satisfying the elementary need of the masses for bread and work and based on these slogans: "The workers' parties which sit in the Provisional Government must break with the bourgeoisie".

The will of the worker-militants to construct a party while intervening in the class struggle ran into internal obstacles in the organisation. The leaders of none of the tendencies were capable to laying down a clear strategy for the construction of the party. Disorder, diffusion of effort and wastage of energy in the organisation paralysed the intervention of the militants.

The objective which the militant workers placed before themselves was to form a

"class struggle" tendency on a class platform of internationalism, class struggle and proletarian democracy. It is from this period that the alliance dates of the Trotskyists with the revolutionary syndicalists of "Ecole Emancipee", which was to be broken during the General Strike in May - June 1968, when the old, worn-out leaders of École Émancipée capitulated before the apparatusus.

The situation of the youth was correctly enough appreciated. The youth had had to suffer successive mobilisations at the hands of Daladier, Petain (the S.T.O.) and De Gaulle. The traditional organisations offered them no perspective. The state of mind of the youth in 1945 was characterised by confusion but also by a will to fight. The P.C.I. opened the perspective of organising the Internationalist Communist Youth, the vanguard of the youth, belonging to the Fourth International or developing towards it. In reality, they did not yet have a real appreciation of what a revolutionary organisation of youth should be, a school of Communism, but built in relation to the specific problems which present themselves to the youth. The J.C.I. was more or less the "young party", without anyone realising it.

At no time could the P.C.I. say how to organise the militants in the Communist Party the workers who were seeking the road of struggle in the unions and the youth.

At the same time, the P.C.I. devoted an important part of its strength to electoral activity. This was correct. It is perfectly right not to ignore any place where struggle can be carried on. But this electoral battle revealed how strong were the Parliamentary illusions of the leaders of the P.C.I. The P.C.I. wanted to be a leading party. It developed a policy of seeking prestige, which cost it a great deal in the efforts of its members and in money, and this policy ^{aiming too high} was for it ~~political~~ resources and the place which it really occupied in the class struggle. The leaders of the P.C.I. had not understood the difference which exists between the leading party in the class struggle and the party which is building itself by intervention in the class struggle. This policy became a supplementary factor in disorganising and demoralising the party.

None the less, the results in the elections to the Constituent Assembly in November 1945 (10,817 votes for the P.C.I., 8,000 in Paris and 2,700 in the Isere), and the packed meetings, bore witness to the effective possibilities which opened up for the Trotskyists. The leadership then fixed the target of 30,000 vanguard workers to be recruited with the least possible delay, and 3,000 immediately because "that corresponded to what the party can actually reach at present". The leadership said that this target was not arbitrary, because "it represented the one-tenth of the electoral college which we would have won if we had stood candidates throughout the country". These random targets, which could not possibly be achieved and which we decided by way of a voluntarism alien to Marxism and by the desire to see the party already constructed, introduced scepticism, disorganisation and demoralisation into the P.C.I. For the leaders of the P.C.I. the pace and the methods of construction

of the party were not determined by the class struggle (the relations existing at any given moment within the working class, between the class and the apparatus, between the class and the vanguard and between the apparatus and the vanguard), but by illusions, behind which lay the desire to be considered as "a party like the others".

The struggle for the legalisation of "La Verite", which remained prohibited thanks to the pressure of the Stalinists in the Government of which they were members, found the P.C.I. engaging in a real campaign for respect for workers' and democratic liberties. For the first time the party was mobilised for a common objective, despite its inadequacies. All the organisms of the party produced results, some better than others, but all carried out the tasks assigned to them. Petitions were circulated. Despite repression by the Stalinists and the police, the militants sold "La Verite" Sunday after Sunday. By the end of 1945 the activity of the party work the legalisation of "La Verite". In contradiction, the transition to legal activity made the crisis in the organisation burst out into the open.

It broke out in the day-to-day aspects of the work of the organisation: permanent dis-organisation, weakness of the technical apparatus, delays in the appearance of documents, endless postponement of the Congress (from August 1945 to February 1946). In addition, there was an unmistakeable sign: financial collapse. The income from membership dues - when they were paid at all - from sales of publications and contributions was derisory and had no relation to the party's activity.

Yet through these difficulties and all these weaknesses, which were soon to express themselves in political crises, because they expressed failure to assimilate Bolshevism (democratic centralism), the current of working-class Trotskyism began to be forged.

The Trotskyists stood in the front rank, with militant workers of every tendency, in the strike of the clerks in Social Security (July 1945) against the slogan of "Produce First!" of the Stalinists, which embodied the betrayal of the revolutionary aspirations of the working class. The Trotskyists opposed the support of the apparatuses for the Government. They took a full part in the strike of the rotary press operators (January 1946) who were slandered by the late A. Croizat, a Stalinist minister in the de Gaulle Government. The strike committee was to authorise the production of "La Verite", the organ of the P.C.I., which alone among the organs of the press, supported the strike. "L'Humanite", which slandered the strikers, did not appear.

These first movements announced the greater class struggles to come, and enabled the Trotskyist worker militants to recognise the place of intervention in the unions and that of the independent activity of gathering and organising militants. The relations between the party and the unions, between the class and the party and between the class and the traditional organisations began to go beyond the state of bookish

contemplation to that of practical activity. The Trotskyist militant workers proposed, and the Congress unanimously agreed, that the trade unions must be independent of any party, including the revolutionary party, of every state and government, including the workers' state. The independence of the trade unions includes the complete subordination of the Trotskyists to the Trotskyist organisation of which they are members.

But the gains made by the work of the trade union commission did not influence the general activity of the organisation. The activity of the trade union commission was not integrated into that of the organisation or controlled by it. The trade union commission operated in complete "calm", and enjoyed almost total independence. Its work was always approved. Whatever tendency was in the leadership of the party, the leaders of the trade union commission were always unanimously elected. In fact the successive leaderships of the P.C.I. were pre-occupied with the journalistic and surface aspects of policy. They took little interest in the activity of the worker militants. This was just as true of the leaders of the Frank-Prives majority as for those of the Craipeau-Parizot minority, etc. The results of the work of the trade union commission were not gathered up by the organisation and could not be factor in its recovery.

The Theses of Rousset

One of the deepest sources of the crises which were to shake the P.C.I. was the refusal of the leadership of the International, Pablo and Cannon (the latter a leader of the American Socialist Workers' Party, not formally affiliated to the Fourth International) to discuss the political and organisational balance-sheet of the activity of the Fourth International and its sections. Defending false prestige the leadership of the International, which "takes itself to be an institution", prohibited the discussion and mixed up the cards. At the Second Congress of the International (1948), the report on the balance-sheet, translation included, was finished in half an hour, discussion and all.

But there was not a single militant who did not ask himself why the French section was always a skeleton, despite the struggles in which the Trotskyists engaged. False prestige and measures of authority cannot solve real problems. If the Marxists do not take in hand themselves the criticism of their activity, if they do not present it publicly to the working class, then others, with other purposes, will carry this work out.

It was at this time that David Rousset was to begin the journey which was to lead him to a seat in the Chamber of Deputies for the U.D.R. (Gaullist). He began by capitulating to Stalinism, to capitulate then to Social-Democracy and finally to become a direct agent of imperialism. None the less we should not forget that David Rousset was won to Trotskyism by the Bolshevik-Leninists in 1935 and was deported to Nazi concentration camps as a fighter of the Fourth International. This

has to be pointed out. What has happened, even to a Rousset, does not give us permission to judge, in the name of what he has become, what he was and what he did at any given moment. But in October 1945, Leblanc (David Rousset) was accompanied on the road of capitulation to Stalinism by Gilles Martinet, a petty bourgeois pro-Stalinist journalist and by Henri Claude, who had come from the "abondancistes" and who was then a member of the P.C.I. but quickly joined Stalinism. The "economist" Henri Claude was as little a Marxist then as he became later, a compiler without talent or conscience, who owes his notoriety to nothing but his servile submission to the apparatus. Rousset was accompanied in 1945 by Pierre Naville, who was already worn out in 1939 by fifteen years of struggle for Trotskyism and who continued his hesitating dance between academic Marxism (though the author of interesting works) and capitulation to Stalinism. He took with him Bettelheim, who had come to Trotskyism from the French Communist Party, who went back to the French Communist Party and himself censored an excellent book on Soviet Planning which he had written before 1939. Likewise he took Laurent Schwartz, a scholar and an intellectual, who had been a Trotskyist militant since before the war, fought bravely during the occupation, but never assimilated Marxism. Together they were soon to produce the short-lived review, "Revue Internationale", a refuge of anti-Trotskyist revisionism. In October 1945 Leblanc was the first to turn away radically and finally from the "Programme" and from Marxism.

The lessons which he drew from the situation in 1945, which he considered to be a condition of considerable ~~organisational~~ and political weakness of the working class of the world, is summed up in his phrase: "The deep organic weakness of the proletariat". Consequently, the proletariat delegated to the Soviet Union and its leading bureaucracy a determining role in solving the world crisis, because it was unable at that stage to undertake positively by its own forces and its own means ^{revolutionary} the conquest of power. In the event of a Third World War, which Rousset declared to be inevitable, the bureaucracy would, in his opinion, find itself obliged in reality to pose the socialist revolution abroad: "We cannot pass over the corpse of Stalinism to carry through the Socialist Revolution."

Finally, Rousset concluded at the end of his evolution at this time:

"Our programmatic base, which was essentially formed by the First Four Congresses of the Communist International and by the work of Trotsky on Stalinist Centrism corresponds to a political experience on a level of revolutionary struggles in the world, which today have been completely changed."

Rousset proposed: "... in the place of the International, the world party of the revolution, very broad international meetings embracing a wide range of platforms, and naturally very loose in their organisational conceptions". This came from his document, "Proposals for a New Appreciation of the International Situation", of October 1945, a document preparatory to the Second Congress in 1946.

The kernel of the revisionist positions of Leblanc-Rousset, as we shall see, were to become in 1950 - 1951 the foundation for the theses of Pablo, whom Frank and Germain later joined. In 1945 this revisionism aroused lively hostile reactions from the majority and the minority alike. Pablo, Frank and Germain fought it correctly. Rousset was excluded from the P.C.I. and from the International. But the leadership of the International did not open a genuine discussion within the organisation, following a method which was to become more and more habitual.

Fractional Struggles Grow More Bitter

The worker militants of the P.C.I. patiently pursued the political and organisation work in the factories and the trade unions, in order to open up the ways of the class struggle which the Stalinist and reformist apparatuses were obstructing in their efforts to reconstruct tottering bourgeois society. With Rousset excluded, the two principal tendencies engaged in the most active fractional struggle.

We have already said that it is not our intention here to write a history of Trotskyism in France. We must confine ourselves to outlining broadly the divergences. These lead us to notice that, even when they were about real problems, they were approached none the less from a viewpoint which, in spite of phrases to the contrary, did not place in the centre of the political analysis the construction of the party by direct intervention in the class struggle. The underlying reason for this was that, despite their differences, both sides and indeed everyone believed that the P.C.I. was already the leading revolutionary workers' party. The militant workers also had this position. However, the very nature of their struggle led them to proceed in practice to a more rational evaluation of the real relations between the vanguard and the class, between the class, the vanguard and the militant workers controlled by the Stalinist and reformist apparatuses and between the vanguard and the apparatuses.

The so-called "right-ist" tendency was led by militants who were openly developing opportunist political positions inside the P.C.I. Like all the militants who had answered the call of Leon Trotsky, they had fought for years through the extraordinarily difficult conditions which we have described. The results of their struggle had not fulfilled their hopes. In 1945 the "right-ists" were seeking the miracle solution which would enable the P.C.I. to be a "workers' party like the others", a party "recognised" by the others. More and more the P.C.I. and Trotskyism came to appear to them to be a strait-jacket, which isolated them from official public opinion, from the leaders of the large organisations and from journalists and intellectuals. Their analysis proceeded from correct data. Bourgeois democracy had been restored in France with the help of the reformist and Stalinist leaders. The organisms of struggle and of dual power, which had been created in 1944, had been liquidated. But, starting from this un-deniable reality, the "right-ists" based an orientation founded on the belief that there was to be a long period of political stability

of the bourgeois democratic system.

To be sure, the apparatuses were able to abort the first stage of the revolutionary crisis which was born from the war. But the system of class-rule of the French bourgeoisie could not be durably stabilised. French imperialism had come out of war irremediably decayed. Its positions in the world had been undermined. Inside the country, the working masses were beginning to present their bills. "Unofficial strikes" against the apparatuses became more numerous. The apparatuses had more difficulty in holding the activity of the masses in check. These class actions showed that the end of the war had opened a period of intense class struggles. Not much time was needed to administer a stinging refutation to the "right-ists".

Four days before the opening of the Renault strike (April - May 1947), which was to force the French Communist Party's ministers to leave the government in order to protect their control over the masses and the militants, the "right-ists" forecast a long period of social peace thanks to the improvement of the economic situation. It is true that the "right-ists" recognised that there was an economic recovery, but from this correct observation they deduced that the masses were completely unable to pose the question of power through their struggles. At the best, they thought that the revolutionary offensive would ^{advance}, in the distant future, by way of the widening of economic struggles. This led them to join reformism.

In fact, the "right-ists" had their faces turned towards the apparatuses, the journalists and the intellectuals. At the 3rd Congress of the P.C.I. (September 1945), the spokesman of the "right-ists", Laurent Schwartz, conceded a progressive role to the Stalinist parties. The "right-ists" were soon to turn their backs on the revolutionary proletariat and on Trotskyism.

The tendency which announced its fidelity to the Transitional Programme proceeded correctly to another evaluation, after having hesitated, what is more, for a long time to admit that the first wave of the revolution which opened at the end of the war had been liquidated by Stalinism and Social-Democracy. We explained that, when the ^{world} bourgeoisie had improved its political position since the Liberation, nowhere either in Western Europe or in the colonial and semi-colonial countries had it succeeded in going beyond the framework of an unstable equilibrium, which was constantly called into question by every mass struggle of any importance. In France the working class would inevitably re-join the struggle. This was generally a correct appreciation. However, on many points it was full of equivocations and avoidance of many fundamental questions. For example, while our orientation during the war did not take into account any possibility of a return to bourgeois democracy, the fact that the mistake was not criticised led to confusion, not as to the character of the period but as to the different moments within it. In fact, the possibility was denied that the bourgeoisie with the support of the treacherous apparatuses could end up with a period of relative stabilisation. This explains why Germain and all the rest of us after him declared that there had been no economic recovery

A third tendency formed round the theses of Chaulieu. This tendency defined the Stalinist bureaucracy as a class. It saw in the Communist parties of the world the elements of this new social class in formation. The bureaucracy was not analysed in accordance with the fundamental principles of Marxism, that is, the place which the classes occupy in the social relations of production. For them the bureaucracy was not a parasitic caste. It had become a class and therefore had a historic mission to fulfill, a task which Chaulieu and his comrades sentimentally condemned. Marxism was rejected and, with it, all the scientific perspectives of the proletarian revolution. The "ultra-left" Chaulieu, after having abandoned the central task of constructing the Fourth International, was to founder in bourgeois ideology.

Towards the Split

The fact remains that, even in this situation of confusion and difficulties, the P.C.I. pursued an exemplary struggle on the ground of ^{proletarian} internationalism. It was the only party to denounce, on May 8, 1945, the massacres organised by De Gaulle at Setif and Guelma, with the approval of the Communist and Socialist ministers, to drown in the most savage repression the struggle of the Algerian people for their national independence. The P.C.I. was the only party to struggle against the plans to re-conquer Indo-China, to speak out for the unconditional independence of the Indo-Chinese people and to fight for the immediate withdrawal of French troops and the retention of Indo-China in the French Union. With the militants whom it had educated among the Indo-Chinese workers, the P.C.I. constructed a Vietnamese section of the Fourth International, which was to join in the struggle led by Ta-Thu-Thau, who was assassinated in 1945 by Ho Chi-Minh.

An authentic Trotskyist current could emerge because the P.C.I. carried on these struggles, because the Trotskyist militant workers carried on the struggle in their class, by means of discussions which were often confused but raised the real problem which History was posing. Let us repeat once more that, each in his place and all together, despite the mistakes and the renegacies which were on the way, the French section of the Fourth International fought in France to preserve the heritage of Bolshevism.

However, it was the work led by the trade union commission which above all maintained the thread of the continuity. By means of this struggle, over a long period covering years and years, the small band of Trotskyist militant workers really began their apprenticeship as "class struggle" militants.

Everywhere the Trotskyist worker militants advanced to the front of the class struggle. They fought on the basis of slogans and demands which corresponded with the aspirations of the workers. They were present in the first strikes, which took their point of departure in layers peripheral to the working class and won the majority of the class. They were present in the unofficial strike of the postal workers in August

1946, in the struggles of the book printers, in the Rateau factories, in the first movements "for bread" at Nantes. They started the activities at Unic and Renaudin. They took part in the Renault strike, which the militants of the "Class Struggle" group ("Union Communiste") kept going for months in the two departments of the Collas sector. They fought for the strike to be extended to the whole factory, and the Trotskyist militant workers then decided to extend the strike to the Puteaux - Suresnes sector, where the P.C.I. had an implantation at Unic, Saurer, Morane and Renaudin. They fought for a General Strike in the engineering industry throughout Paris. They ran up against the Stalinist apparatus. They ran into the "class struggle" group, which rejected the struggle to generalise the Renault strike throughout engineering, was soon to founder into the left-ist adventure of the Democratic Renault Union. In two years, the left-ist sectarians of "Union Communiste", after having deserted the battle-ground against the bureaucrats within the C.G.T., were to lead to total demoralisation a vanguard of ^{"class struggle"} engineering workers, whom we had together led into battle in the framework of the Central Strike Committee.

The Trotskyist militant workers were to start to learn that the apparatus of the French Communist Party is capable of going far to "the left", without changing its nature, in order to retain its hold on the working class. They were to see the leadership of the French Communist Party, after having had to break the Renault strike by means of slander and violence, resign from the Government in order to regain its "freedom of action" in relation to the government, protecting the power of the bourgeoisie with another tactic and other forms. They were to learn that in politics time is the most precious raw material, and that, if the vanguard lets slip the moment when the workers are ready to project their class movement forward the Stalinist apparatus will be able to adapt itself and to win back control of the activities.

They paid at Unic at the beginning of May 1947 and in the Citroen strike in July 1947 they paid for hesitations due to insufficient experience, and were isolated. It was necessary to learn. The Trotskyists learned by participating directly in the strike in which the bakery workers forced their leaders into action. In the General Strike of the railwaymen, the Trotskyists began to understand what "party loyalty" meant to the "oppositional" Communist militants in the French Communist Party. These militants, who were in disagreement, agreed to follow the directive of the apparatus. They liquidated the railway strike of June 1947, before being liquidated themselves after the wave of strikes in November and December 1947.

Once more the class struggle demonstrated that the laws of History are stronger than the apparatuses. The wave of strikes which started with the Renault strike drew the miners in June. More than 50% of the miners in the Departments of Nord and Pas-de-Calais went on strike against the directives of the Stalinist leadership of the C.G.T. Miners' Federation, which gave the order to return to work.

Their apprenticeship may have been a fruitful one, but its lessons were insufficiently assimilated. Their assimilation was made still more difficult by the crisis of leadership, in which the leaders of both tendencies interested themselves little in the living struggle in which the worker militants of the P.C.I. were engaged. The "right-ists", on the one hand, had waxed infinitely ironic before the Renault strike about the "three committees of struggle" and the "single strike at Unic", which the Trotskyists started and in the course of which was put forward the demand for a rise of 10 francs an hour all round, which was taken up by the strikers in the Collas sector at Renault. The "right-ists", sceptical and demoralised, refused to understand the importance of the struggle for the leadership of the battles which the "committee of struggle" was bringing together - as an independent grouping of militants and workers who wanted to take class action despite the orders of the apparatuses to the contrary - and the struggle within the trade union organisations which would continue for a long time still to remain the principal framework for mobilising the very large masses, at least until the masses construct councils, committees or Soviets, by their own movement. The Trotskyist militant workers began to understand that even in such a (revolutionary) period the unions would continue to occupy a decisive place in the class struggle. But the "rightists" no longer believed in the class struggle or the proletarian revolution.

The others, Frank, Pablo and Germain (whom the Trotskyist militant workers recognised as their leadership) exploited the authority of the Trotskyist workers' struggle, the existence of which they discovered after the popular press had reported it with the addition of many headlines and commentaries. This was the situation in ^{which} the P.C.I. entered the strike wave of November - December 1947.

Unlike the strikes in the spring of that year, which the French Communist Party had tried to suppress by slander and violence, they used the later strikes, and even started them, in order to serve the needs of Kremlin policy. The Cold War was beginning, the conflict between the bureaucracy and US imperialism. This was the time of the "pressure strikes", intended to change the pro-American orientation of French imperialism and to induce it to come to an agreement with the Kremlin. The art of the Stalinist leaders consisted entirely in sending the working class into battle, without the battle leading to the overthrow of the bourgeois state.

Four million workers struck in November - December 1947. The teachers, engineers, miners, employees of Paris Transport, postal workers, railwaymen and local authority employees... But the reformist and Stalinist leaders succeeded in getting the teachers to go back to work before the other sectors started. They were able to prevent the strike in the public service from joining up with the general strikes in engineering, on the railways, in the postal services etc., and thereby from opening the way to the general strike directing itself against the bourgeois state. The militants of the P.C.I. came under the pressure of the apparatuses. They supported the

return to work of the teachers. This was not the first time, nor would it be the last, that the pressure of the apparatuses forced the Trotskyists, like other militants, to retreat.

When the Stalinists had succeeded in this way in setting bounds to the wave of strikes which they had called, they then concentrated all their efforts on Renault, where the experience of April and May was still ^{very} near and where the Trotskyists were implanted. The "Class Struggle" group had solid points of support, but as we have seen it had gone down the blind alley of the Democratic Renault Union. The P.C.I. had won some young workers. As always, the Stalinists understood what the organised force of the Trotskyists represents. But under the pressure of the offensive of the apparatus, the Trotskyists were not strong enough to break through at Renault; The Trotskyist workers of the P.C.I. went into the battle alone, while the Democrat Renault Union observed strict neutrality. The Trotskyist workers were forced to retreat.

The check in May 1947 weighed on Puteaux and Suresnes. The trade union commission therefore decided to bring the efforts of the Trotskyists to bear on Chausson, where there were P.C.I. members. On their initiative, the workers democratically elected a strike committee, which the Trotskyists supported. But it was impossible to convince the comrades in Chausson to launch a call to the factories in Asnieres, Clichy and Gennevilliers for strike committees to be elected in the factories and above all to call for a meeting to be called to elect a central strike committee. They did not understand the relation to establish between the struggle in the traditional organisations for positions in them and the independent activity for the formation of autonomous forms of organisation. The struggle in the trade unions does not exclude but requires that at each step the revolutionaries propose independent forms of organisation of some kind or other. The Trotskyists in Chausson believed that they could protect positions of leadership in their own factory alone. The apparatus, which had isolated the Trotskyists at Renault, turned against them in Chausson and quickly liquidated them.

During the whole of this period, the French bourgeoisie resisted the policy of pressure of the French Communist Party and maintained the orientation of its policy towards America, without however being strong enough to break the working class. The policy of "controlled mobilisation" applied by the French Communist Party, on the other hand ran the risk of going beyond the bounds of the counter-revolutionary framework which the Kremlin gave it and which produced no result. Washington replied with a categorical "No" to all the offers of compromise by Stalin.

The mobilisation had to be extended. It was necessary to pose the question of power by the destruction of the bourgeois state. This was not what Stalin wanted. The French Communist Party gave way. Frachon called on the working people to operate "a general reply" and to enter upon "new battles". On December 10, all the strikers

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real role, which was that of having taken over the effective leadership of the French section since 1943.

The congenital weaknesses of Pierre Frank were likewise a factor in the situation. When the split was consummated, Frank climbed up on a chair and, drunk with joy, shouted at his former comrades: "Into the waste basket of History!". Frank was incapable of appreciating the importance of a crisis which found nearly half of the militants of the P.C.I., fighters for Trotskyism, leave the ground of the Fourth International, most of them for ever, and, many of them, leave the ground of the working class as well. This was because he had lived for more than twenty years in a closed world, outside the real problems of the class struggle.

All the militants, more or less confusedly, directly felt the major importance of this split. But no one clearly grasped the political lines which were to cause the decisive cleavage two years later within the "majority" which was then opposing the "right-ists". The political lines could not be truly grasped, because the divergences between the "right-ists", the "ultra-lefts" who were to leave the P.C.I. and the majority were concealing, on the one hand, problems of principle on which Marxists should struggle and ally with each other. The majority, and especially the Trotskyist worker militants, formed a bloc round the International, against those who were deserting the Fourth International. But once again it was not to be possible for the militants of the P.C.I., or for the sections of the International, to gauge the whole underlying importance within the majority of the problems which had been raised in the crisis.

Pablo, Frank and Privas saw the split as no more than of secondary importance. The "I.S." of the Fourth International was always correct and always had been correct. That, at any rate, was what the "I.S." thought of itself. But in fact Pablo, Frank and Privas understood no better than all the other militants the significance of the mistakes of 1943 - 1945 for the construction of the revolutionary party. The all-powerful and ever-present "I.S." refused to reflect seriously on the relations between the vanguard and the class, the vanguard and the apparatuses and the apparatuses and the class. The "I.S." refused to do so because, at the least, it believed the leadership of the International to be already the leadership of the world workers' movement. It refused because, like most of the militants, it had accepted without discussion that "the P.C.I. is the revolutionary party" and the the nature of the links between the P.C.I. and the working class are already and henceforth links of leadership. The problem of the construction of the party was approached in a spirit of formalism alien to real life. It was reduced to discovering in "What Is To Be Done?" ready-made recipes to be communicated later to the militants by specialists in the art sitting in the leadership. Especially Privas pounded into one and all literary "truths" with the hammer-blows of quotations. The war, 1944, 1947, the split, ten years of the greatest class conflicts, none of this shook his pretentious, baseless self-confidence. "The leadership of the International is always correct!".

This petty bourgeois attitude of the "I.S.", with its baseless assumption of superiority and its fake claim to prestige, had nothing in common with Marxism. It had nothing in common with the living Marxism which does not fear to submit to criticism facts, people and events, because it knows that the proletarian revolution is the work of human beings. The false "Marxism" of the "I.S.", emptied of its living content, had already become a formalised, academic Marxism, which was soon to be the carrier of lamentable capitulations. In these capitulations there would be gathered together round the "I.S." all the deviations which had been at the heart of the crisis of 1947, raised to an infinitely higher level.

History does not recognise false prophets. It ^{has taken} revenge in its own way on the followers of Pablo. Pablo fought Rousset in 1945, and was led to accept the fake theses of Rousset. Pablo fought the "right-ists" in 1947. The theses with which in 1950, he tried to liquidate the Fourth International took up again the method of the "right-ists". At the Congress, at which the balance sheet of the split should have been established, Privas haughtily served out to the delegates his usual mixture of commonplaces. It was then that he presented an amendment on the construction of the party, which said, essentially:

"The Trotskyists do not dispute that the "Programme" of the Fourth International is the only programme upon which the revolutionary party can be built, upon which the world party of the socialist revolution can be built in France. But it is not proved that this party, which the working class needs in order to conquer, will be constructed within the formal framework which the P.C.I. represents today."

This amendment represents the first step on the road to collective thinking which was, moreover, not to have a complete expression until much later. We have not yet reached that point. This amendment expressed in 1948 a necessity which could not impose itself, the necessity for the Trotskyists to begin to turn away from what claim to be ready-made truths, the necessity to begin to study seriously the real conditions for the construction of the revolutionary party in France, by relying on the living method of Bolshevism in contrast to the formal repetition of phrases out of "What Is To Be Done?".

What did this amendment signify? The Marxist principles of the "Programme" of the Fourth International adopted in 1938, had been verified. There could be no doubt about that. Why? Because the "Transitional Programme" places at the centre of thought and activity the conscious struggle of the vanguard to resolve "the historical crisis of mankind, (which) is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership", by the struggle to construct revolutionary parties of the Fourth International. Every Trotskyist, since 1938 and before, collectively and individually, recognised that this fundamental thesis in their "Programme" was correct. But they did not draw its real significance from it.

Let us resume. The crisis of human civilisation is the result of the impasse of the capitalist system. The relations of production, based on private property, have become absolute obstacles to the forward march of civilisation. Capitalism has reached the stage of imperialism and must be swept away in order to enable mankind to progress. In other words, all the objective conditions, the product and result of the activity of men in the given historical conditions, have come together for the victory of socialism. All the objective conditions have come together because, at the very heart of the outworn social system of the bourgeoisie the only progressive class - the historic mission of which is to bring to birth the new society - the proletariat, must fight to protect itself against its own degradation, and, by the same token, to protect civilisation which is being dragged into barbarism by the survival of the decadent capitalist regime. Consciousness is determined, in the last analysis, by the material conditions of existence. The material "interests" of the proletariat co-incide with the historic material interests of mankind.

Marxism takes as the point of departure of its analysis which is directed to struggle the interests of the proletariat as the driving force of historical evolution. The proletariat, in the process of the material production of its own existence, can only reproduce its enemy, capital. The interests of the proletariat can be realised only against capitalist exploitation. In the same way and the opposite sense, the "interests" of capital can be realised only through and in exploitation. The battle-ground of the antagonistic interests of capital and labour is the class struggle. On this territory of the class struggle, capital presents itself as a social force, concentrated around and within its class State. The proletariat presents itself as producer, isolated, atomised, able only to produce its enemy, capital, in order to reproduce itself; ^{The}proletariat is necessarily led to overcome its isolation, in order to resist exploitation, to unite as a class on the territory of the class struggle. The gathering together of the class as a class leads to organisation, to unity, which is realised ^{through} and in ^{class} organisation. The struggle for class organisation is the result and the condition, in a summarised form, of the historic struggle of the working class for its emancipation. But the proletariat is a class in bourgeois society, and bourgeois society can survive only on division of the working class, division to which the capitalist system necessarily gives rise. The proletariat is, to be sure, the most homogeneous class, thanks to the place which it occupies in the social relations of production, but the proletariat is none the less divided against itself by capital, divided into crafts, professions and grades and, therefore, in the interests of crafts, professions and grades.

The historic interest of the proletariat consequently concentrates specific material interests. These can be realised only when the historic interests of the proletariat are served.

The class organisation of

the proletariat must embrace the class in its peculiarities and at the same time in its generality, if it is to fulfill its historic function. The "peculiarities" represent the concrete historic form and content through which the "generality" is expressed, the historic interest of the proletariat is expressed.

The amendment proposed at the P.C.I. Congress in 1948 represented, from this point of view, the first, certainly imperfect, attempt to combat the "formalisation" of Bolshevism as we had inherited it. The P.C.I. wanted to be a Bolshevik party, built on the model of the Russian party. It was no more than a desperate attempt to cast a policy in conformity with the interests of the proletariat in this formal mould. But the Russian party and its degenerated national agencies, the national Communist parties, cannot be regenerated.

The French party of the Fourth International will not be able to be built except on the principles of Bolshevism, which are valid in every country. But the principle of Bolshevism must be translated into "French", that is, be applied to the historic peculiarities which concretely have produced the French proletariat - a section of the international proletariat - as a class. The "Bolshevisation" carried out by Zinoviev, followed by the "Russification" of the Communist Parties which Stalin undertook, had no content other than that of sacrificing the general interests of the world proletariat, as they were realised in the "specific" interests of each proletariat in each country, in the interests of the bureaucratic caste in the Kremlin.

Zinoviev became conscious of what was happening in 1926. He was liquidated. Stalin utilised the "formalisation" of Bolshevism to liquidate Bolshevism. But Stalinism, which used to favour the formal precepts of Bolshevism and still does so to a less extent, appeared to the vanguard of the militants of the French Communist Party to be the Bolshevism which secured the victory of the Russian Revolution. The vanguard of the militants who joined the Fourth International were convinced of the counter-revolutionary character of Stalinism. They were none the less convinced of the necessity to construct a new Communist party, on the basis of the principles of Bolshevism. But they had not yet succeeded in discovering from history and theory the living substance of Bolshevism. They mechanically repeated phrases from "What Is To Be Done?", without taking this into account. The Trotskyist vanguard abandoned itself to formal Bolshevism, contrary to the Bolshevism of Lenin. This formal Bolshevism had secured the victory of the bureaucracy over the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky. The "right-ists" had tried to escape from this contradiction by seeking to construct "a party like the others". Pablo, Frank and Privas likewise were to try in 1950 to escape this contradiction without reflecting on the real conditions for constructing the party in the light of the principles of Bolshevism. We cannot escape from this contradiction except by overcoming it, by struggling against formal Bolshevism on the basis of the principles

of living Bolshevism. Pablo, Frank and Germain were to capitulate to Stalinism.

The Split of 1948

The second strike wave precipitated a double movement within the P.C.I. In the course of the struggles, the militants who intervened in the working class were organised round the trade union commission, which was capable of drawing the lesson of its experience and of working out a clear political orientation and clear aims of intervention. The sharpness of the class struggle precipitated the decomposition, on the other hand, of the opportunist and ultra-left tendencies.

The "ultra-lefts" expressed theoretically their capitulation to reformism and Stalinism in a search for the causes of the lack of success of Trotskyism. They asked:

"what role is played in the success of Stalinism by the fact that it expresses the interests of the higher social layers of the working class. It would be necessary to take into consideration external causes, which have distanced the masses from our ideas, as well as causes inside our movement, to explain the undeniable lack of success of Trotskyism."

They were, of course, convinced opponents of the United Front, which they could accept only at the base, between Stalinist and Trotskyist workers.

This hostility to the United Front is the common lot of every ultra-left tendency. One of them, the Chaulieu tendency, by wanting the committees of struggle to become permanent organisations, premature committees of action, defended the unity of the revolutionaries outside the working class and therefore against it.

And, as always, those who wished to quit the battle-ground of the construction of the party of the Fourth International were to seek the short cut which would free them from having to sustain the tenacious and difficult struggle for principles. The "right-ists" were looking for "a large party", ready made. They thought that they had discovered this short cut in the unification with the Socialist Youth who had just broken with the S.F.I.O. and with the "committees for revolutionary regroupment" (which hardly existed outside the "spirit" of them in the heads of their promoters).

The "right-ists" succeeded only in destroying the experience, which was in many respects positive, which the militants of the Socialist Youth and the Socialist Party had won in the struggle against the Social-Democratic apparatus. At this stage, the "right-ists" proposed to form a "much larger party". Then, on January 31, 1948 they went much further. They proposed to the Political Bureau:

"to prepare a plan to invest our forces in the Socialist Youth, Action Socialiste Revolutionnaire, "La Bataille Socialiste", the journal "Franc-Tireur", which prints 250,000 copies, the "Revue Internationale", the personalist centres of "Esprit", etc."

They wrote that it was necessary to open discussion:

"... with those who wish to attempt a vast new gathering together of all the living forces of the people, while retaining the closest and most fraternal contact with the revolutionary elements in the workers' movement, to lead to a real force and to convene a national conference of all the working-class currents which repudiate both Stalinism and the Third Force, in order to construct a new workers' movement, even if the P.C.I. is rejected as an organisation."

In their crazy search for "a much larger party", the "right-ists" were to meet the petty bourgeois intellectuals who were to form the short-lived R.D.R. (Rassemblement Democratique Revolutionnaire), a pro-Atlantic and pro-American organisation. They joined it in order to save the "key values", as they put it, and to give to Trotskyism "its last chance to renew itself and to prosper".

The "right-ists" had nothing to contribute to the real problem raised by the need to think about the balance-sheet of the activity of the P.C.I. but the proposal to go over to the positions of the petty bourgeoisie. They threw Trotskyism overboard. The "Programme" was abandoned and the "right-ists" quickly went off in different directions. Some gave up political activity, while others joined the S.F.I.O. or formed the cadres of the "New Left" and the P.S.U.

The leadership gave the militants the choice between the R.D.R. and the P.C.I., but, as always, all possibility was blocked by Pablo of drawing the balance. The discussion had hardly begun when it was ended. The fact remains that the exclusion of the "right-ists" was perfectly justified for the protection of Marxism.

The Yugoslav Question

Matters stood in the following way after the split of 1948 and before the Pabloite crisis. Since the end of the war the "International Secretariat" had been installed in Paris and was the real leadership of the French section. No decision was taken by the Political Bureau or the Central Committee of the P.C.I. without its support. The French leadership was completely subordinate to it and played its part in its intrigues, which frequently ^{took the place} /of a political line. In these conditions no revolutionary leadership could be selected. The "International Secretariat" and its supporters in the P.C.I. lived without any links with the working class and was completely indifferent to the intervention of the Trotskyists in the class struggle.

The worker members of the Political Bureau and of the Central Committee escaped from this suffocating atmosphere by their intervention in the class struggle, but they did not try to resist it. They trusted the "International Secretariat" and the proletarian nucleus exerted only a weak influence on the political life of the P.C.I. because of the state of party life and the conception of the party which were general in the P.C.I.

This proletarian nucleus did not grow stronger. The causes were the mistakes that were made and these were aggravated by the wish of the "International Secretariat" to prevent any genuine discussion. Even in the sectors where the Trotskyist militants had won links with the working class, the general policy of the P.C.I. prevented them from recruiting. It had become possible for them to penetrate the class struggle by relying on the spontaneous movement of the masses and to engage in battles on the plane of trade unionism. Regrouping the workers in a party, the general activity of which did not express either in its press or in its organisation the intervention of revolutionary militants, was not possible. The militants of the French Communist Party who joined the P.C.I. quickly left it...

1948 marked an important stage in the break-up of the P.C.I. A correct appreciation of the problems posed by the construction of the revolutionary party, moreover, was possible at that period. The P.C.I. had to show itself as it really was, an organisation of the vanguard (and not the formed revolutionary party), the programme of which summarises the whole of the problems posed by the construction of the revolutionary party, which must concentrate its forces on forming revolutionary leaders through activity and on constructing fortresses in the working class, winning positions in it and enlarging its implantation. The P.C.I. was not yet a party.

Frank became General Secretary of the P.C.I. at its 5th Congress in 1948. Unperturbed, he continued to send "Open Letters" to the General Secretary of the French Communist Party ^(Maurice Thorez) proposing the United Front. The militant workers went on with their work centred on direct intervention in the class struggle, in complete indifference. And Pablo continued to manage the world party of the Socialist Revolution!

In these conditions, in which the problems of politics and organisation to be solved were regarded as being settled even before they were posed, no real theoretical, political or organisational cohesion could result. But politics abhors a vacuum. What could and ought to have been settled, what the defence of empty prestige prevented from being settled, was to explode in a fundamental crisis, which was to shake the Fourth International and all of its sections. ^{It was} behind the facade of formal agreement on the "Programme", and in the shadow of an "over-centralised" "International Secretariat", which wanted to be a "world leadership" but which did not lead much in real activity or in the way of living intervention in the class struggle, that the questions which had to be analysed for progress to be made were to be analysed.

In September 1948, the "Cominform", under the pressure of Stalin, denounced the Yugoslav Communist Party. Overnight, following Stalin, the leaders of the Communist Parties, Fajon, Duclos, Thorez, Togliatti, Ulbricht and the rest were to lay down that Yugoslavia was "a fascist state", and Tito an imitator of Hitler. The break between the "Cominform" and Yugoslavia was an event of very serious importance. It was the first act of the rise in the political revolution which was to

develop after the death of Stalin, from the East Berlin rising in June 1953 to the "Prague Spring" in 1968, by way of the events in Poland in 1956 and the Hungarian Revolution of Workers' Councils in October 1956.

It was, therefore, perfectly correct to mount a campaign in defence of the Yugoslav Revolution. The Central Committee of the P.C.I. (January 22 - 23, 1948) approved the resolution of the International Executive Committee on Yugoslavia.

Frank wrote:

"Up to the present, the Bolshevik-Leninists have defined the Communist Parties in terms of their links with Moscow and their subordination to the interests of the Soviet bureaucracy. Hence their counter-revolutionary role, their open or camouflaged policy of class collaboration, but hence also the mistrust and hostility of the bourgeoisie towards them. This is the link which fundamentally differentiates them from traditional reformism or various forms of centrism. A Stalinist party which breaks with Moscow ceases to be a Stalinist party, even if it retains the internal regime, the way of thinking and the slogans of Stalinism."

Frank was partly right. There is a matter of proportion. The hostility of the bourgeoisie is not a characteristic sign of a Stalinist party. According to the circumstances the bourgeoisie can show itself to be hostile to Social-Democratic parties. And it can welcome the Communist Parties as saviours. But the fact of defining the Yugoslav Communist Party as a non-Stalinist party after it broke with the Kremlin does not yet permit it to be characterised as a revolutionary party. The fact that the Yugoslav Communist Party broke with Stalin because it refused to subordinate the interests of worker and peasant Yugoslavia to those of the Kremlin bureaucracy is extremely important. But the framework of the break does not of itself pose that of the world revolution as the solution for the problems raised by the forward progress of socialism in all countries, including Yugoslavia. Tito and the Yugoslav Communist Party made a great advance between 1948 and 1950 in criticism of Stalin. But none the less they were to refuse to leave the ground of "Socialism in a Single Country". The foundation of a revolutionary party is precisely the criticism of the Stalinist theory of Socialism in One Country, which was elaborated after Lenin died and is in breach with the entire teaching of Marxism and of the First Four Congresses of the Communist International. Thus the Communist Party of Yugoslavia was no longer a Stalinist party after it had broken its links with Stalin, but it was not a revolutionary party. It had become a centrist party, the evolution of which had hardly begun in 1948. The formalist conception of Frank was to have its consequences. Frank was led to write in September 1949 that the Yugoslav Communist Party "is in the process of reconstructing Trotskyism in a fragmentary way, without taking an overall view, but on questions of greater and greater importance". All the essence of Pablo-ite "objectivism" is expressed

in this formulation. If a Communist Party, founded and structured in the framework of Stalinism, can (as a resolution adopted in Spring 1950 by the International Executive Committee was to say) "re-discover the organic link between the progress of the Yugoslav Revolution and the world revolution", then it is no longer necessary in each country to construct parties of the Fourth International. The Stalinist Communist parties can be regenerated from within and can discover under the impact of objective situations the function of instruments of the proletarian revolution. If, therefore, we continue to proclaim the necessity for the Fourth International and for the construction of national sections, these will be no more than "pressure groups". They will have no future, and, if that is their function, they will rightly deserve the hatred and contempt of the workers. Frank, Pablo and Germain developed to its end what was still only sketched here. In 1950 they were to seek and to find the objective agency of the revolution in the Stalinist bureaucracy. Having discovered "natural Trotskyism" in Tito and then in the Stalinist bureaucracy, Frank was later to find a natural Marxism in Guevarism, after having hailed Guinea under Sekou-Toure as a workers' State. The method of Marxism, the conscious and organised activity of the proletariat, was debased. Marxism, the organised theory and practice of the proletariat, is no longer the conscious expression of the unconscious process. This false Marxism, de-natured Trotskyism, became the reflection of the blind forces in bourgeois society of which the bureaucracy and the Communist parties are the expression. The "Transitional Programme" had established in 1938 that:

"One cannot deny categorically in advance the theoretical possibility that, under the influence of completely exceptional circumstances, petty bourgeois including the Stalinists may go further than they themselves wish along the road to a break with the bourgeoisie" - with the Stalinist bureaucracy, "passed over definitively to the side of the bourgeois order", let us add.

History has filled this theoretical forecast with an extraordinarily rich content. None the less, the fact remains that nothing, no one, not Tito, nor Ben Bella, nor Castro nor Mao Tse-Tung will relieve the workers from the task of themselves constructing the parties of the Fourth International, which alone can ensure a positive way out from the crisis of the revolutionary leadership of the proletariat and a solution to the historic crisis of human civilisation.

Thus it happened that, after having sown illusions about the Yugoslav Communist Party, while at the same time it carried on a necessary and completely justified struggle against Stalin in defence of the Yugoslav Revolution, the "I.S." was rapidly to stand its position on its head and to burn cheerfully what it had still adored the day before.

Stalin tried to suppress the Yugoslav resistance by means of the economic blockade. Tito tried to escape from the blockade by establishing commercial relations with the

There was nothing to be condemned as un-principled in that. But Tito and the Yugoslav Communist Party were to be led to pay for these relations. In 1950, in the Korean War, US imperialism sought to crush with fire and sword the legitimate aspirations of the Korean people to be united, aspirations which could be realised only by revolution. There can be no doubt that Stalin created the conditions for the war with the evident purpose of "bleeding" the Chinese Revolution. US imperialism plunged into the war in order to block the road to the revolutionary upsurge in Asia, following the victory of the Chinese Revolution. The war of North Korea, with the support of the whole people of Korea, North and South, was a just war. In order to escape from the internal difficulties caused by Stalin's blockade, Tito was to vote with US imperialism for a resolution condemning North Korea and China, in return for American credits. The position of Tito obviously had to be condemned. But that was no longer what concerned the "I.S.". Yugoslavia, which yesterday they had hailed as a model of the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat, became in Pablo's eyes almost a bourgeois state. Disillusion as strong as the illusion which had preceded it were to reveal the nucleus of Pablo-ism which had formed within the Fourth International, as a force foreign to the Fourth International and its "Programme". The day before, the Yugoslav Communist Party had been praised as almost a Trotskyist party. Belgrade was to become the seat of the Fourth International. Throughout 1950 the militants sent to Yugoslavia were to have only one directive, to arrange an interview between Tito and Pablo. Then in September 1950 it was "the Stalinist bureaucracy placed in the conditions of the Cold War" which, according to Pablo, was "obliged to bring about socialism in its own way". The day before and the day after, the same method alien to Bolshevism, to search for a short cut to escape the hard realities of the construction of the parties of the Fourth International. "Formalised Trotskyism" and petty bourgeois impressionism were to give way to revisionism.

CHAPTER FOUR

1950 - 1958: The Recovery

We have seen how the "International Secretariat" formed an extremely weak international leadership, which had no roots in the working class and was cut off from the national sections, and raised itself above the movement, claiming to settle all problems. To the degree that it isolated itself from the movement and got out of its control, it naturally became more susceptible to hostile forces.

A Review of the Situation

It could not play the role which it claimed, and devoted itself to seeking outside the movement some social force, some group, party or apparatus to which to entrust the task of accomplishing the historic tasks of the inadequate Marxist vanguard, in place of and instead of the Fourth International.

As has already been explained, the "International Secretariat" thought at first that it had found this substitute at Belgrade, where, it announced, there was the possibility of seeing a new international revolutionary Marxist centre appear.

After July 1950, when the war began in Korea, the war which the "International Secretariat" believed to be the immediate prelude to the Third World War, it began in the ^{same} spirit to seek a substitute for the ^{revolutionary} International - because it believed that there would not be time to construct the International - in the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Thereafter, in a straight line from its earlier positions and in accordance with the logic which governed them, the "International Secretariat", having become the centre which, in the name of Trotskyism, liquidated Trotskyism, began to erect its method into a system. It saw the international safety-raft, which would exempt the Marxists from constructing the world party of the revolution successively in all the bureaucratic apparatuses - reformist or Stalinist - then in the "storm zone", in the new "epicentre" of the world revolution, through the new African states and especially the Algerian state, and in the last resort the Cuban state. In other words, this amounted to subjecting the class struggle, not only in the countries in question, but also and especially in the advanced capitalist countries and the deformed conquests of October to the national bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie as well as to the Kremlin bureaucracy.

Stephane Just wrote in "La Defense du Trotskyisme":

"Pablo-ism is not a precisely expressed policy. On the contrary, Pablo-ite politics in their different expressions, were to reveal numerous variations. Pablo-ism leads to capitulation before the leading bureaucracies, in which it recognises "objective reality as it is".

In November 1950 Pablo developed the ideas which were to form the substance of the

theses of the 9th Plenum: "Theses on International Perspectives and the orientation of the Movement of the Fourth International", within the framework of the preparation for the 9th Plenum of the International Executive Committee which was the prelude to the 3rd World Congress.

It was in these theses that the nature of Stalinism began to be falsified. Germain wrote in this connection in December 1950 - January 1951 the "Ten Theses" which were counter-posed to those of Pablo, not by their author, who shortly after having written them, judged them to be "too Trotskyist", but by the majority of the P.C.I. at its 7th Congress in mid-July 1951.

The French organisation went into the battle on that date. Very incomplete and theoretically weak as its resistance to Pablo-ism may have been at the time, the fact remains that this struggle from that time onwards has acquired historic value and that it formed the turning point, starting from which the fortunes of the world party of the socialist revolutions were saved.

The documents which the majority published consisted essentially of the "Ten Theses", adopted by the 7th Congress, and a series of articles entitled, "Where Is Pablo Going?", by Bleibtreu-Favre, (the last of which was written by Gerard Bloch) written in June 1951 but published only at the beginning of 1953.

This struggle developed within the P.C.I. for a year and a half, from December 1950, the date of the 9th Plenum, to July 1952, the date of the 8th Congress of the P.C.I. The efforts of the French Trotskyist organisation to defend its existence could not prevent a tragic fall in its membership, but must be seen in proportion: it was a struggle of the highest importance, which enabled the "Programme" of the Fourth International to remain living on the French and the international scale, without being able to avoid losses, demoralisation and disorganisation.

The present work is limited to bringing out the salient facts and the essential ideas; it does not fundamentally examine the theoretical problems which this struggle raised.

In any case, it must be pointed out that it was not the bureaucratic deformations of the international work in themselves, nor the spirit of leadership, reminiscent of the barracks, of the "International Secretariat" in itself, nor the attraction of the perspective that they would hit upon little bridges which would miraculously enable them to avoid the changes of direction required by a stubborn fight, which would have been enough to make their political line fundamentally anti-Trotskyist. All these were elements which acted as a brake on and diverted the construction of the world party of the revolution. But all these elements were subordinate to their principles, which until 1950 remained those of Marxism.

But, as "La Defense du Trotskyisme" points out:

"The apparatus conception of the 'International Secretariat' had the effect of

raising the consequences of its theoretical and political mistakes. When imperialism had achieved a relative stabilisation in Europe, when the transformation of the economic and social structure of Eastern Europe had become an obvious fact, when the Chinese Revolution had been victorious, when the Cold War had reached its height, the "Brain Trust" of the world revolution, which had shown itself unable to analyse correctly the whole of these processes, transformed itself into its opposite, despite all its superfluous declarations about the revolutionary flood.

Up to that time, the bureaucratic, apparatus conceptions of the "International Secretariat", false though they were, were none the less devoted to the construction of the Fourth International. Their failure, which was due partly to objective circumstances, but equally to this false, apparatus conception, led them to adopt a policy of capitulation to the dominant apparatuses. The "International Secretariat" had struggled to be the organising centre of the Fourth International" despite erroneous methods and serious political mistakes. It became the centre for disorganising the Fourth International."

The Trotskyist organisation in France was alone in having discerned where the debate was leading from the beginning. It had to react quickly to the direct attack of the "International Secretariat". It had, in addition, had the opportunity of seeing the political morals of the "International Secretariat" develop, as it were on the spot. This position conferred on it an "advantage" and responsibilities, which the majority of the P.C.I. were the first to shoulder, in ^{complete} international isolation at the beginning. The Socialist Workers' Party, to which the French Section appealed to intervene, gave its support to Pablo, in favour of "entrism sui generis", as Cannon's reply to Renard of April 1952 shows); it was less anxious than ever to accept its international responsibilities.

The pretentious use of a Latin phrase concealed the reality of a policy of capitulation. In fact, when Trotsky proposed in 1934 that the Trotskyists should enter the S.F.I.O., he joined to his proposal one absolute necessity. This is to understand that the reformist bureaucracy remains an agency of imperialism in the ranks of the workers. When Pablo, Frank and Germain wanted to enforce entrism "sui generis", they demanded that the Trotskyists admit that the Stalinist bureaucracy of the Communist Parties be no longer regarded as "having definitely passed over to the side of the bourgeois order" (Trotsky). Having entrusted to Stalinism the mission of constructing socialism in the course of "centuries of transition", in the words of Pablo, the "International Secretariat" called on the Trotskyists to capitulate to the bureaucracy.

We must pause for a few pages to study the "why?" and the "how?" of the struggle which the French Section undertook. Let us restrict ourselves to noting, for the moment, that the struggle could not have been successful without the nucleus of

working-class cadres which the Trotskyist organisation in France, the P.C.I., had begun to form since 1944. It was this resistance which saved the existence and the future of the organisation, even though it could not prevent the organisation from being in an exhausted state a few years later.

Quantity Changes into Quality: From An Apparatus Conception to Liquidation

Let us recall that the Korean War broke out in June 1950. For the "International Secretariat", this was the signal for their collapse on the planes of theory and of practice, for the beginning of a long voyage through the "war-revolution" and the "revolution-war", in the ^{bureaucratic} maelstrom of "centuries of transition". On this occasion all the acquisitions of Marxism were thrown overboard. The daring expedition was to end up in the wretched shallows of the "ideas of May", from which also the theoretical mixtures of the P.S.U. were derived, as it were kinds of "bread" and "wine" salvaged from old theology. There were the mysterious "small" powers.

Let us place the situation as "La Defence du Trotskyisme" places it:

"The class character of the Korean War was evident. The intervention of US imperialism meant that the latter was trying to deal a brutal blow to the developments of the revolution in Asia. It took place within the general perspective of a preparation by imperialism for war against the U.S.S.R. and especially against China."

At the outset, Pablo organised his thinking, in an article entitled "The Korean War and the policy of the revolutionary proletariat", on the basis of the "material and technical forces". He left completely in darkness the role of the social forces, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, on the world scale. At the outset, the evaluation in terms of military equilibrium and technique, in terms of blocs, replaced Marxist analysis of the relations of forces between the classes as concretely determined in the principal European countries.

The multi-form role of the Stalinist apparatus, which reconstructed the bourgeois States in France and Italy, which was jointly responsible for the blood-letting and then the counter-revolutionary partition inflicted on the German proletariat, the policeman and the plunderer of the working-class conquests of the proletariat of Eastern Europe, who traded away the Yugoslav and the Greek revolutions as if they were old clothes, who provoked the Berlin blockade, this multi-form role ended in strengthening imperialism and providing it with the possibility to prepare war and to intervene in Korea.

Pablo could see nothing there but the "progress of the forces opposed to imperialism", which rendered imminent "the possibility of a final, desperate reaction in the form of war on the part of imperialism", as he wrote in his article "Where Are We Going?". And he was not talking about any old war! He called the coming war an "international civil war". Sleight of hand substituted the opposing blocs for

the classes. As he wrote, "these two elements (the opposed blocs) constitute objective social reality as it is". From that point, war and revolution became synonymous:

"The two notions of the revolution and the war, far from being counter-posed or distinguished as two considerably different stages in evolution, come together and interlace to the extent that at certain places and times they become confuged. In their place, it is the notion of the 'Revolution-War', of the 'War-Revolution', which emerges, and on which the perspectives and the orientation of the revolutionary Marxists of our period must be based".

We there stop quoting pearls from this article, which contains many others. These are the ideas which soaked the documents on which the 3rd World Congress voted in August 1951. The majority of the French section refused to bow before the dictates of the "International Secretariat", and were bureaucratically excluded from the ranks of the Fourth International, following the 8th Congress of the P.C.I. in July 1952, for the benefit of the Frank-Privas minority.

Nonetheless the majority of the P.C.I. continued to fight ^{on the line of} the regeneration of the International up until June 1953. The attitude of the "International Secretariat" to the workers' insurrection in East Berlin, confirmed by the leaflet published in September 1953 by the Frank clique, which gave away information about the majority, quickly made a totally different strategy necessary: that of the RECONSTRUCTION of the Fourth International.

The Struggle Against Pablo-ism in the French Section

We have already shown how the opposition to Pablo-ism was organised from Autumn 1950 onwards in the ranks of the P.C.I. This did not happen because the P.C.I. was more "clairvoyant", but because, with the "International Secretariat" based in Paris, the French militants were in a position to follow ^{consequences of the} the liquidationist policies of Pablo very concretely.

It was the entry into the political struggle, for the first time in the history of the party, of the WORKERS' COMMISSION which turned the balance of the majority of the French section in the opposition to Pablo-ism.

At the beginning, the theses "Where Are We Going?", which are a coherent presentation of revisionism, were opposed by German and Frank, both members of the "International Secretariat", Favre-Bleibtreu, Privas and Garnier, both members of the political bureau of the P.C.I. On the Central Committee, Gerard Bloch at once took a position against Pablo. A fraction was organised, but German, Frank and Privas quickly capitulated in lamentable circumstances. Pablo demanded that they resign from the "International Secretariat". They preferred to keep what Frank called the "marshall's baton" of being in the "International Secretariat".

The leaders of the Workers' Commission declared themselves against the Pablo-ite theses, but at first they did not want to take part in organising ^{the} anti-Pablo-ite fraction. There were several reasons for this. The leaders of the Workers' Commission had no confidence in the principal "theoreticians" of anti-Pablo-ism, such as Germain and especially Bleibtreu, who was a consummate petty bourgeois, despite having been the first and the most thorough to understand the capitulatory significance of Pablo-ism. Furthermore, the members of the Workers' Commission expressed the greatest contempt for the pretentious impotence of Frank and especially of Privas. On the level of organisation, the Workers' Commission had infinitely more confidence in Pablo.

But there were deeper motives for the hesitations of the Workers' Commission, partly valid and partly erroneous. The fact is that, in 1950, the worker leaders did not understand the principled importance of the political struggle. Against all probabilities, they hoped that the discussion would reconcile the crisis without harm to the unity of the party, and intended to stay in the International.

At the beginning they adopted a conciliatory attitude. The logic of the principle divergences did not permit the militant workers to stay in the position to which they had taken so much trouble to withdraw. When Germain, Frank and Privas capitulated, the struggle of the ^{tendencies} was embittered. The "International Secretariat concentrated all its fire on Bleibtreu, whose petty bourgeois weaknesses as a militant and an organiser were known to all.

The Workers' Commission had to choose: either to line up behind the "International Secretariat" on the pretext that Bleibtreu "was not a party man", or to align itself politically with Bleibtreu. On the one side lay capitulation and on the other lay fidelity to the "Programme", despite the petty bourgeois behaviour of the principal theoretical leader of anti-Pablo-ism. The liquidatory consequences which the "International Secretariat" demanded that the militants draw from its theses did not rest. The great majority of the militant workers who had raised the banner of the Fourth International in the factories and the unions refused to join Pablo in capitulation to Stalinism.

Immediately after the Workers' Commission took up its position, the relations in the party changed as well as in the fractional struggle. Nonetheless the Workers' Commission continued to leave to Bleibtreu the leadership of the struggle against the Pablo-ite positions, in the same way as it had accepted that Pablo and Frank, in 1948, would lead the struggle against the "right-ists", Demaziere, Parisot, Magnin and Beaufreere.

In any case, the more intense the fractional struggle became, the more the leadership could count on the militant workers, who have to accept the full responsibilities attached to their position after the split in July 1952.

The Split in 1952

It is necessary to understand why the majority tendency in the P.C.I. fought to ~~the bitter end~~ to remain in the Internationale. It went to the extreme limit of concessions: it accepted a political bureau in which the representative of the "International Secretariat", Germain, had "an over-riding vote". The majority were convinced that the Trotskyists on the international scale would react against being duped by Pablo. In this perspective the refusal of any political capitulation, internally or on the international plane, had to be based on extreme flexibility at the level of the leading committees. But, as we have been able to note, James P. Cannon replied to a letter from the majority with a refusal to take a political position and advising capitulation.

Furthermore, Pablo had been able to organise a campaign to discredit the French section dating well before 1950. It was the fashion in the International to smile and shake one's head knowingly over the chronic difficulties of the French section... without, of course, those who laughed taking care, naturally, to observe that since 1943 the real leadership of the French section had been the "International Secretariat". The militants of the P.C.I. appeared to these people to be "syndicalists and "the eternal French, who never stop talking and always have a lot to say!"

Instead of studying the significance of principle in the divergences, nearly all the leaders of the International condemned the P.C.I., with Pablo exploiting against it its real weaknesses, (weaknesses for which he was principally responsible along with Frank, Privas and others). At this time the P.C.I. majority got support only from certain South American sections, especially that in Argentina (Valdez), partly that in Bolivia, with Lora, and that in Switzerland, which was in disagreement with the "International Secretariat" for reasons quite different from those of the French majority.

This is the way in which the approach was made to the split in the P.C.I., a party of 150 militants at the most. The progress of disintegration, which began at the end of the war, speeded up considerably in the course of the bitter fractional struggle, in which the French majority had to struggle against the entire International Executive Committee in addition to the "International Secretariat". The proportion between the Trotskyist majority and the Pablo-ite minority was about 4 to 1. About thirty members pronounced themselves for the Pablo-ite theses and a little over a hundred ranged themselves round the majority.

Most of the old cadres from before 1939 joined the "International Secretariat". They were worn out, exhausted by the hard experience of the Trotskyist struggle. They had lost all interest in the concrete problems of the revolutionary struggle, they were disheartened and embittered by the defeats they had undergone and, before all else, they were incapable of drawing out the lessons of the errors which had

been committed, that is, of understanding the laws of the development of the struggle of the masses and especially of integrating oneself personally in this struggle. These old cadres were unable, especially in 1945, to operate the necessary mutation and change themselves from literary propagandists for Trotskyism, to which the pressure of Stalinism had reduced them, into militant workers who undertake directly the role of revolutionary leaders in the class struggle.

The state of mind of these old cadres was in a way summed up strikingly in a remark by Frank, made in private, just after he had capitulated to Pablo. He told the individual to whom he was speaking:

"Well! I have my marshall's baton. I cannot accept being driven out of the International Secretariat."

The reader may well say that this pamphlet makes Frank its favourite target! We have no particular taste for anecdotes or poking long-cold embers. But we are dealing with a typical case. Frank, for all his weaknesses, supported Trotskyism since before 1927. He could never bring it to life, but, in a situation in which in a sense, the Stalinists forced the Trotskyists to be, as it were, exiles in their own class, the tireless literary propaganda which Frank carried on under the banner of Trotskyism year after year educated generations of Trotskyists despite all.

Independently of his inability to pass from being a Trotskyist academic to being a Trotskyist militant, a very serious inability, Frank was moreover unable to understand that there are no stripes, no recognition of past services in the revolutionary struggle, however great they may be. Marxism is the living expression of a living process. It obliges the militant and the leader to adapt himself ceaselessly to the renewal of the class struggle which, while it obeys objective laws, is always re-creating its concrete expressions in new situations. It forces the leader ceaselessly to take the "old man" to pieces, to abandon ^{methods} and behaviour which, adapted to one phase in the life of the organisation, become obstacles in another phase.

Fidelity to principles is the indispensable pre-requisite, but militant, living experience of a struggle which involves hundreds of millions of exploited people - though, of course, these historic experiences are also expressed in the most limited actions, which involve only a few dozen or hundred people - is the only basis to permit a leadership to be selected and leaders to be formed who are able to make rapid turns, to go from one form to another in accordance with the needs of the class struggle and with what has to be done for the revolutionary party to go forward.

The decomposition of the majority of the old cadres ^(from before 1939) had grave consequences equally on our organisation after the break with Pablo-ism had been completed. These old cadres wanted to be guaranteed the empty prestige of "years of service" spent in

the ranks of the Fourth International, when their experience, real as it was, if they had assimilated it, could have been a precious help for the young generations. Yet it was just these young generations whom they wished to prevent from exercising their absolute right to put through the sieve of criticism the past through which they had lived, a past which indeed contained lessons of exceptional richness. It was necessary, for the young to be able to educate themselves, that they should assimilate these lessons, in order to nourish their interventions in the class struggle from them, so true is it that continuity between the generations is one of the essential factors in the construction of a revolutionary organisation.

After the collapse of most of the old cadres, only a few of them remained faithful to Trotskyism and wanted to preserve the continuity. They were very weak numerically, but the profound demoralisation to which the split led aggravated the consequences of the desertion of the majority of the old cadres. This demoralisation has to be understood. The essential component for the construction of the revolutionary workers' party, the component of the International, now had no more than a theoretical existence. One of the moments of the dialectical unity, that constructing the party is constructing the Fourth International, and constructing the Fourth International is constructing the party, was in practice missing. There could be no contradiction in accomplishing this double strategic task, which evidently requires appropriate and specific forms, but which remains unique. But the organisation was excluded from the Fourth International almost alone, and was condemned by all the sections. It was necessary to look forward to a period in which the French Trotskyists were going to be isolated, and when this isolation would carry the danger of providing a basis for deviations. It was therefore necessary to cling to the "Programme" and to the Fourth International, in the absence of any real organisation. The militants whom the majority of the P.C.I. brought together felt this situation keenly after the split.

While the Trotskyists had the majority, and which the worker-militants came out against Pablo-ism, the fact remains that the "International Secretariat" succeeded all the same in winning a minority of the worker-militants, essentially in Finisterre, where the Trotskyist workers, who had played a magnificent part as leaders of the strike of April 1950 in the Arsenal at Brest, came out for Pablo.

Today (1969), after entrism "sui generis", there is no longer any Trotskyist militant in Brest to dispute with the apparatuses the leadership of the struggle of the masses. Yet in this period the city offered remarkable conditions for development. The line which Pablo imprinted on the Fourth International in "Where Are We Going?" and concretised by the "Theses and Resolutions of the Third World Congress", led to "entrism sui generis", which expressed the complete integration of Trotskyism "in the real movement of the masses in each country". Given the "left-ist course of the Communist Parties, the result was that:

"To the extent that a long-period compromise with imperialism is likely to be out of the question and that the war preparations of the bourgeoisie are being stepped up, THIS COURSE WILL FUNDAMENTALLY PERSIST" (our emphasis). This passage comes from the editorial of "Quatrieme Internationale", the theoretical journal of the "International Secretariat", August - October 1951.

The Pablo-ite tactic "of penetration and activity as total and profound as possible in the real movement of the masses in each country" (see "Quatrieme Internationale" January - February 1954) was "deployed" from 1951 to 1954 along lines which the "world secretariat" gaily laid down under three carefully numbered headings:

- a) Independent;
- b) Entrism into the movement and formations under reformist influence;
- c) Entrism 'sui generis' into the movement and formations under Stalinist influence."

Let us note, in passing, the delicious characterisation of the French Communist Party as "a formation under Stalinist influence".

The apparatus of the French Communist Party is seen no longer as the agency of the Moscow bureaucracy, or, rather, if that is what it still was, the Stalinist bureaucracy being entrusted by Pablo with constructing socialism through "centuries of transition", the apparatus of the French Communist Party consequently became the instrument of the proletarian revolution in France.

In that case, what was the use of struggling to construct a revolutionary party and the Fourth International? If we had to accept the revisionist, fundamentally anti-Marxist theses, we would have to carry out a "self-criticism" and to plead with the Stalinist bureaucrats to be let into the French Communist Party, having accepted their position that Trotskyism is a current foreign to the workers' movement.

The practical consequences were logically and crudely spelt out:

"In each case, the tactic is only essentially such (emphasised ⁱⁿ original), independent, entrist or entrist 'sui generis', that is, only the principal orientation towards a principal field of work, according to the peculiarities of the workers' movement in each country.

The choice of a principal field of work forms an essential part of the conception of our tactic, for it is not a question of placing every field of work on the same plane and undertaking eclectic activities, but of choosing deliberately an essential sector and concentrating there the maximum of our forces."

The result of this suicidal tactic on those who adopted it did not have to be long awaited. The most "logical" Pablo-ites, following Michel Mestre, transformed themselves in 1956 into a kind of deplorable ultra-Stalinist agency grafted on to the French Communist Party. They had a journal, "The Communist", which recently on the

death of its founder announced that it was transformed into the organ of a "Committee of Action against World War"!

Besides that, there were a few militants who were taken back into the French Communist Party, at the price of the most repugnant recantations, in such a way that they became its most zealous ^eservants, because they were trapped in their own disavowals. Others cowering in corners of the apparatus watched for militants "who were asking themselves questions", like a spider watching a fly in cold weather, and having by chance caught him, changed him into an "oppositional who does not come out openly". Stalinism was riding high at this time and cared little about a few political abortions who claimed in disguised language to be for a fake Fourth International. These people lost the militants they "won" quicker than they had won them, and the militants then went to swell the ^{feeble} ranks of ultra-left Parisian groups or went off to the various kinds of philosophical "debates" of the intelligentsia!

But we are not writing here the history of the Pablo-ite formation, nor that of the militants who passed through their hands to end up in sociological mystification, the fore-runner of the "Ideas of May", a university debate on the lines of Kravetz, "institutional" researches by the F.G.E.R.I., "group dynamics" etc. The Pablo-ite formation was a real wind-sleeve. It responded to the contradictory urgings of the ideological ups and downs on the fringe of the workers' movement. It went to great trouble to study all the changes in them, from the miracle programme of the F.L.N., the so-called "Tripoli Programme", to Castro, the "natural Marxist", by way of the African states, which they regarded as real "class-states", engaged in an un-interrupted progressive process. Nor let us forget how they broke up the world unity of the class struggle into three zones, one of which, the privileged one, is that of the "colonial revolution", which forms the "epicentre" of the revolutionary upheavals.

The Beginning of the Struggle for the Re-Construction of the Fourth International

None the less, the struggle of the French organisation, which at the beginning had been totally isolated, was to bear fruit on the international plane. The leadership of the S.W.P. decided to emerge from its "insularity" and to take the debate into all the sections. On November 16, 1953, the "Militant", the organ of the S.W.P., published the ^{Open} "Letter to Trotskyists Throughout the World". This letter had the ^{certain} merit that it speeded up the maturation of the crisis. However, it was dictated much more by needs of an internal character in the S.W.P. (the struggle against the Cochran - Clark fraction, which Pablo supported) than by a correct evaluation of the political forces of which Pablo-ism was the product. Be that as it may, this was an important moment in the struggle against Pablo-ism, despite the limitations of this text, which shifted the real problems raised by the crisis on to a more formal than political ground. Whatever may have been the defects of

the lever which the National Committee of the S.W.P. provided, it permitted a process to begin which, through attempts and mistakes, and despite its empiricism and the precarious base from which the S.W.P. majority started, led to the formation of the International Committee in December 1953.

In any case, lack of political clarification at the outset^{and} absence of real international discussion were to weigh heavily on the activity of the International Committee. The task rested on the shoulders of two of the four organisations which signed for and founded the International Committee, the British section and the French section, after the two others, the New Zealand section (close to the S.W.P. which the Voorhuis Act of 1941 prevented from making any international affiliation) and the Swiss section, had broken politically with the International Committee.

But we are not trying here to write a history of world Trotskyism. We give these facts only to enable the reader to establish a few landmarks and because we cannot anyway imagine a survey of the French Trotskyist organisation, however summary it may be, without the international dimension being sketched in all the time.

When the National Committee of the S.W.P. called for a public break with Pablo-ism, it took its stand on facts relative to its own activity and to the political destiny of Trotskyism essentially in USA. But none the less it had built into the document two facts of the first importance, and these led the French organisation to decide to abandon the position which it had hitherto correctly held: that of the regeneration of the Fourth International.

The fact was that May and June 1953 were marked by the first struggles of the working class in the countries of the East against the bureaucracy: there were strikes and demonstrations in the Skoda works in Czechoslovakia and the uprising of the proletariat of East Berlin in June 1953. The Pablo-ite "International Secretariat" on that occasion published a declaration in which it called for "the real democratisation of the Communist Parties", that is, for the self-reform of the instruments of oppression of the Kremlin bureaucracy. The declaration took care not to demand that the occupation troops be withdrawn, at the very moment when the East Berlin workers were being subjected to bureaucratic repression.

At the same moment, the General Strike of August 1953 was ripening in France. This is not the place to go back over the details of this movement, which mobilised the bulk of the French proletariat for a month in magnificent struggles. What can be said is that during this period the French Trotskyist organisation proved that it alone was standing on the ground of Marxism and on that of the "Transitional Programme". On August 11, 1953, it opened the perspective of bringing into existence a NATIONAL ACTION COMMITTEE OF THE WORKERS' PARTIES AND TRADE UNIONS, to "drive forward, to develop the un-limited General Strike in the Public Services and of the workers in the public services, which will drive out the Laniel government" and for "a government representative of the workers, in the service of the workers".

Two events were to reveal pitilessly how the Pablo-ites betrayed the "Programme". Pablo-ism, as we have recalled, capitulated to the Stalinist apparatus in relation to the East Berlin events in June 1953. It followed the same course in relation to August 1953, finding nothing more serious with which to reproach the Stalinist apparatus of the French Communist Party than that it "had had no policy"! In the midst of the strike, the Pablo-ites published "Political Note No.1" and "Political Note No.2". These were based on the following central idea: "The generally correct policy of the C.G.T.". They cleared the Stalinist trade union apparatus of not having opened the perspective of putting into power a government in the service of the workers. This is, in fact, what we learn from one of these "Notes":

"These tasks are essentially those of the political parties, which, in the workers' movement, do not have the same role as the unions!".

This is when they distributed "an infamous leaflet" at Renault - this is the term which the S.W.P. used in the "Open Letter of the S.W.P." This leaflet denounced by name two comrades of the French organisation. It supported the policy of the Stalinist apparatus of reprimanding them for a minor ^{infraction} of trade union rules. We have summarised these facts only to assist the understanding of this phase in the history of the French Trotskyist movement and to the extent that from then on since that date, the capitulatory, revisionist role of Pablo-ism has not ceased to be operated in practice and to be exhibited clearly.

From that time it became indispensable to form the International Committee. It was necessary to choose one's camp on the international scale. The thread of the continuity of Marxism and of its "Programme", the "Transitional Programme", of which a handful of French militants took hold, was joined together again, thanks to the International Committee and to whatever may have been the hazards of its later struggle. The framework for the reconstruction of the Fourth International was thus won in pitched battle.

1952 - 1958: The Islet of Resistance: The "Group", its Strengths and its Weaknesses.

The French Trotskyist organisation, subject to the pressure of the numerous ideologies in bourgeois society, had the worst difficulties to overcome in the course of this period.

Demoralisation developed following the split. The hundred-odd militants which the French organisation had after the split fell to some fifty in September 1958! Most of the militants who had been recruited in the 1945 - 1950 period had left the organisation and abandoned the struggle. The "cleavage" between the generations worsened. The distance, from the point of view of experience, became worse between the old nucleus of militants who were continuing the struggle of Trotskyism

became wider in terms of experience.

The consequences were essentially the formation of what was called the "Lambert Group", that is, that the old nucleus little by little centralised all the political and organisational life of the P.C.I. This old nucleus, which had accumulated long experience, was confronted by a situation in which the widest possibilities in the class struggle combined with ^{continuing} a weakening of the possible means of militant intervention, concentrated in its hands all the political and organisational responsibilities. It could not be otherwise.

But what was demonstrated was that the French Trotskyists were effectively a "group" in the full accepted sense of the term and not an organisation. In fact, if numbers are one of the criteria, it is only ^a relative criterion. An organisation can claim the title of "organisation" even if it is weak numerically, on condition that it lives according to the principles of democratic centralism. This implies a structure or, to put it better, "forms of organisation" from the local branch to the Central Committee, passing through all the organisms which the "Central Committee regards as necessary for the application of the policy which it lays down", organisms "directly placed under its control". Only such a structure can guarantee the progress of the organisation and its ^{and effective} co-ordinated intervention in the class struggle.

After the split, the Trotskyist fraction no longer functioned as an organisation. It was reduced by the force of things, to a "group", in which the old nucleus substituted itself for all the organisms and drew behind it the militants in carrying out tasks on a definite political line almost on its own responsibility without the militants having more than a very little control over them.

It could not be otherwise. It was only at this price that the essential could be protected, the permanence of militant Trotskyism in France.

The old nucleus found itself obliged to **keep** the organisation ^{"at} arm's length" in order to lead it into battle essentially in the factories and the unions. All this was an evil which could not be avoided. For the internal regime to conform to the principles of Bolshevism, the militants have to be convinced of its necessity. But doubt exerted its ravages and was scattered through the ranks of the Trotskyist force. From that point, the formal aspect of things moved to the secondary level, far behind conformity of the political content of decisions with the principles of Marxism. This did not mean that we should take pleasure in or congratulate ourselves on this situation, or make a virtue of necessity. If the Trotskyist fraction at the time had not understood this, the content would in its turn quickly have been completely ruined. In fact, their merit was that they understood this.

The group was only the expression of the weaknesses of French Trotskyism in this period. But, at the moment when these lines are written (1969), can the group

be characterised as a stage in the construction of the revolutionary party? We can answer in the affirmative without hesitation, even though there are many steps to be taken before the negative aspects of a heritage, which ensured continuity not without encouraging a number of negative features, have been completely overcome. But the day is near when they will be no more than memories. The period between 1952 and 1958 need hold our attention only briefly. The fact is that the mass of contradictory factors, which have been analysed in preceding pages and which have given its appearance to the French organisation, existed side by side, without our being able to say that a firm line in the construction of the revolutionary organisation was really drawn.

The Trotskyists continued to intervene directly in the class struggle. There is no doubt that this militant will, founded on a more and more complete assimilation of past experience, preserved in France the nucleus of a Trotskyist organisation. In the generalised strike of August 1953, in September and October 1955 at Nantes, at Bordeaux in October and November 1957, in the movements in the Public Service, in the banks in July 1957, in the Paris Transport system, in the Parisian engineering industry and among the teachers, the Trotskyists were present. They intervened, they analysed, they opened perspectives and they issued slogans.

While the Pablo-ites disappeared completely from the class struggle, the Trotskyist fraction maintained its revolutionary activity without ceasing. In the unions they pursued their struggle tirelessly, strengthening their links and forming new ones.

The strategic and tactical lines which they had worked out in the preceding period and their analyses of the internal processes of the class struggle were as a whole verified by experience. From 1952 to 1958 the Trotskyist fraction learned to deepen the tactic of the United Front, which led it to collaborate with tendencies in the working class from which it had distanced itself on the programmatic plane, but with whom it can engage in class actions for limited aims, in keeping with the interests of the working class. The policy of Trotskyism, despite obstacles of every kind, continue to be regarded fundamentally in terms of its relations with the working class and the unions, which always remained the most important.

But in this period French Trotskyism also fought among other layers, for example in the intellectual milieu, where the Trotskyists took part and developed their policy in The Action Committee of Intellectuals Against the War in Algeria, without accepting any concessions or yielding to the slightest pressure. Within the limitations of the forces of their movement, the French Trotskyists understood the necessity of ensuring that the Marxist struggle goes on wherever the revolutionary struggle calls for it. To maintain the class line was not always an easy task. The counter-weight of the mass of militants in a stronger organisation, deeper rooted in the working class, led sometimes to mistakes. Less than ever could they

give up the most rigorous irreconcilability in activity. They had to break without hesitation from such intellectuals as Edgar Morin and Jean Duvigaud when they capitulated to imperialism, and with others such as Roland Barthes and the Sartrians when they yielded to the pressure of Stalinism. They had to break with Marty, with whom they had correctly made contact when the Stalinists were persecuting him; this contact did not ignore either his past or his inability to draw out its lessons thoroughly, but the break was necessary as soon as it was clear that the former secretary of the French Communist Party refused to open the political struggle.

That is where the gains and the solid foundations of Trotskyism in France were formed. These enabled the tendency, which kept going and developed in the Trotskyist Organisation proclaimed in May 1969, not to founder altogether and to prepare the future.

Equally in this period, the Trotskyists learned to appreciate the significance of discussions (after the exclusion of Favre-Bleibtreu and his political friends). With the passing of time, this aspect of things can appear ridiculous, but in reality it is nothing of the kind. We are dealing with a lesson which is always living. Across two decades of clique attitudes and of being satisfied with tiny fractions in struggle, this lesson took us ^{back to} the Bolshevik traditions of the Trotskyist movement as Trotsky himself had practiced them in the movement.

This understanding of the role of discussion expressed itself in the fact that a new obligation was developing as a result of the tasks which we set ourselves and of the place which the organisation occupied: divergences no longer had necessarily to lead to crises and every effort had to be made to resolve them in activity, in respect for the "Programme" and for principles. The Trotskyists then understood that every divergence does not necessarily have to lead to a split, nor even to the formation of tendencies, as long as the right to form tendencies and even fractions is guaranteed. Everyone must be completely free to struggle for his views, ^{but} there is not necessarily heresy on one side and truth on the other. The search for the way to fight better on the basis of the "Programme" takes place through provisional divergences, to which the common struggle offers ^{artificial} few opportunities to crystallise. The petty bourgeois, fractional past of the French Trotskyist movement, under the leadership of people like Naville and Frank and then later under the shepherd's crook of Pablo, with its unprincipled combinations, was definitively past. "Personality" quarrels, which fed divergences and embittered them in a fashion completely opposed to Marxism, came to an end in this period.

Furthermore, the French Trotskyists in this period combined a precise diagnosis with real intervention, on the ground of the world class struggle and on that of its national expression. Even if this intervention was concentrated on a few

points, it was concentrated in the decisive sectors. In June 1953 the Trotskyists fully appreciated the historic importance of the East Berlin insurrection. The Polish and especially the Hungarian Revolutions did not catch them by surprise. The articles about them in "La Verite", the positions of the group and the work which the militants accomplished on these occasions bear eloquent witness that the Trotskyists alone saw clearly, armed as they were with the programme of the political revolution against the ^{Stalinist} bureaucracy and to present the historic lessons of these very important events, at once factors in and products of the linked crisis of imperialism and of Stalinism. The expression which we have just used, "the work which the militants accomplished" is not put in just for style: the Trotskyists did intervene directly:

- In the Committee of Action of the Intellectuals, their resolution condemning the Russian repression was adopted, against the wish of the Stalinist intellectuals, Victor Leduc, Henri Lefebvre and a few others who were then faithful supporters of the Stalinist apparatus:
- At St. Nazaire we spoke in the ship-yards at the moment when the bureaucratic repression was at its height. In front of the workers, we defended against the Stalinists the Hungarian revolution of the Councils, and Trotskyism.
- In the trade unions, and especially those in education, the Trotskyists got their resolutions adopted, affirming the solidarity of the working class in France in struggle against its bureaucracy with the Polish and Hungarian proletariat who were in collision with the ^{Stalinist} bureaucracy.

There can be no doubt that, when we consider the numerical weakness of those who undertook this activity, the balance was ^{completely} positive from the viewpoints we have mentioned.

But it would be a mistake to stop there and to pass in silence over the negative features which also severely marked this period. It goes without saying that the militant Trotskyist fraction in France has not waited for this pamphlet to draw its balance, to seek out the causes of weaknesses and to expose mistakes in order to go forward. To be sure, the Marxists have the right to make mistakes but they have the duty to take account of them and to account for them to the workers. This is what we shall now bring to light.

Not all the lessons of the break with Pablo-ism were drawn at once. The Trotskyist fraction did not re-arm itself from head to foot after the terrible crisis through which it had ^{just} passed. International isolation, the difficulty of constructing an international centre which followed, the more formal than real political discussion which developed under its influence in order to guard against the worst pressure resulted in considerable time being needed for the political lessor of the struggle against Pablo-ism to be assimilated.

In particular, it was necessary to grasp what Pablo-ism represented in relation to the place and methods of construction of the revolutionary party. Pablo-ism was the expression of a current in process of capitulating before the apparatuses, of abandoning Marxism which accepts that "the laws of history are stronger than the bureaucratic apparatuses", substitutes for the revolutionary activity of the masses nothing but the work of the apparatuses, which, for liquidatory revisionism, become the decisive forces of the movement of history.

The final consequence of this is the abandonment of the struggle to construct a revolutionary party, "the conscious expression of the unconscious historic process". But as we have seen, the principled deviation of Pablo-ism had been preceded by the most complete absence of a political line to construct the revolutionary party.

This was the period in which the Trotskyist movement had to go beyond propagandist tasks, in which there is a contradiction between the abstract presentation of principles, on the one hand, and the essence of the programme on the other. It was the problem of solving the crisis of humanity by the construction of the revolutionary leadership which forced Pablo to abandon principle.

But this contradiction did not reside only in the "International Secretariat". It was present also in the tendency which was faithful to the "Programme". When the split was completed, the majority was obliged, having regard essentially to international tasks, to preserve, both the name of Internationalist Communist Party (P.C.I.) and the weekly "La Verite", that is, to remain within the forms and structure and methods of an organisation which had seen Pablo-ite capitulation born and developing on the highest level, that of the "International Secretariat". This contradiction could not be escaped. Any voluntarist act in the direction of a radical change in forms of expression, would have doomed the Trotskyist fraction to disappearance. Before the situation which we have described could be denounced, the organisation had to be in a position to master the forms of change, through the body of its militants, in relation to what faced it at an international level and on the basis of a thorough reconnaissance of the political territory. At the time all this was far from having been achieved.

This fact by itself perpetuated to some extent in the Trotskyist ranks the methods and conception of the party which the majority had shared with Pablo before he had worked out his revisionist theses. They had not seen the construction of the party as the result of the conscious activity of the revolutionaries who form links of leadership in the class struggle with the proletariat. The revolutionary party was conceived, as we have shown, as a left "opposition" to the apparatuses, situated outside the traditional organisations, before 1950, and situated inside them after 1950, in order to "regenerate" the apparatuses by means of entrism "sui generis".

The policy of "opposition" before 1950 resulted in the crystallisation, without anyone being aware of it, of a policy of applying pressure to the traditional organisations, which excludes the independent activity of the revolutionaries and by the same token makes impossible the construction of the revolutionary party. The working class axis of the majority had no doubt largely freed themselves from these positions by their direct participation in the class struggle in France. But even after the split, they did not consciously apply the lessons of their activity and could not draw from it all its general theoretical implications.

These inadequacies were to be revealed in the intervention of the Trotskyist fraction in the Algerian revolution.

From one side, the Trotskyist fraction had always thought that the real "help" of the proletariat in a metropolitan country to the oppressed people was above all to develop the class struggle in the oppressor country. On March 12, 1956, the Trotskyists were the only tendency in the workers' movement to call on the proletariat to demonstrate against the "special powers": earlier the M.N.A. on the initiative of the Trotskyists, had been led to intervene publicly in the strikes at Nantes in August and September 1955. In this way the link was correctly established between the class struggle in France and the anti-imperialist struggle in Algeria.

But from another side, the problem of the revolutionary leadership in the Algerian Revolution was posed in a completely mistaken way, and this was the root of the mistakes. The M.N.A. was not thought by the Trotskyists to be a party of Bolshevik type. But it was thought to be a party which had a programme bringing together in part the elements of a revolutionary programme. The Trotskyists at that time believed that it would have to go through a series of changes and internal crises and, under the pressure of Marxist intervention, would transform itself into a party of the Bolshevik type. This was a complete error in method,

The fact is that the M.N.A., like the P.P.A. before it and the M.T.L.D. after it, were not constructed on the "Programme" of the Fourth International and on the method of Marxism. The M.N.A. came out of a populist party of the extreme left. It could not become the crucible of the revolutionary party. However radical some of the positions of the M.N.A. were, and however correct were the comparisons which the Trotskyists made between the policies of the F.L.N. and those of the M.N.A., between 1954 and 1958, it was completely wrong to abandon the struggle for the selection of a Marxist vanguard within the M.N.A., for a Trotskyist fraction.

But the theoretical roots of the mistake were to be sought deeper. They lay in a failure to assimilate the permanent revolution. The fact is that the perspectives of the Algerian Revolution were correctly established in an article published at the beginning of 1955. But the conclusion of the article was completely wrong.

It characterised the existing social forces, in relation to the extraordinary weakness of the Algerian bourgeoisie ("musulman"), and talked about a "people-

class", which the article identified with the proletariat.

Weak as the Algerian bourgeoisie was, it was still a social force, the power of which was considerably strengthened by the support of world imperialism and the Stalinist bureaucracy. A "people-class" does not exist, never has existed. There are classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Like the F.L.N., the M.N.A. represented petty bourgeois formations, the bourgeois content of which, because they were incapable of taking on the tasks of the permanent revolution, were revealed with the absence of a workers' party.

The fact remains that our organisation supported the struggle of the Algerian people. In 1955 it undertook the defence of the Algerian militants of all tendencies (M.N.A. and F.L.N.). It played an active part in the committee for the liberation of one of the leaders who started the insurrection, Ben Boulaid. It refused its political support to the F.L.N., which, with Ben Bella, was to mount the most brutal attacks on the Algerian trade union centre, the U.G.T.A.

Thus, the French Trotskyist movement took up a position in its struggle to defend the Algerian Revolution which from the standpoint of method was identical with that of Pablo. However, one difference has to be pointed out, and it is not a small one. The Trotskyist organisation managed to carry through a complete correction on this question. The capitulation of the M.N.A. in 1958 revealed mercilessly the petty bourgeois nature of its leadership, and the Trotskyists did not hesitate for a single instant to break finally with it.

The re-evaluation which the Trotskyists were led to make was made more easily because before 1958 their position in relation to the M.N.A. had been in contradiction to their policy in the class struggle in France, that is, the struggle on the basis of the programme for the selection of the revolutionary vanguard in order to destroy the petty bourgeois apparatuses.

To become aware of this distortion, to analyse its causes and to give to it its political importance and significance, were all militant acts which were to lead the Trotskyists to make a turn. At the same time - and this was intimately linked to the turn - a new relation of class forces had been reached in France with the coming of De Gaulle to power.

This was the moment when the most important lessons about Pablo-ism and the history of the Trotskyist movement since 1929 could be drawn, as to the real significance and the place of the construction of the Marxist workers' party, as the highest expression of consciousness, that is, of the "Programme", which formulates it and of the class struggle which produces and feeds it.

To sum up, it is sufficient to say that between 1952 and 1958 there were in fact two political lines co-existing side by side in the ranks of the Trotskyists, and the militants were very far from being fully aware of this.

- One of them was correct. It was the line which the Trotskyists had begun to work out in the last years of the war and after the war, and which found its living expression in the defeat of Pablo-ism and in the intervention in the class struggle in France which took place.
- The other perpetuated the defects inherited from a "petty bourgeois" past, the incapacity to work out a firm policy in relation to organisation, especially in the question of finance, slackness, absence of method partial self-abandonment to the spontaneous process, of which the case of the Algerian Revolution is typical. On this last point, everything happened as if the spontaneous movement had been endowed with the power to bring into existence mechanically the revolutionary party, as it were to sweat it out under the pressure of objective conditions. Such is the balance-sheet of the period, sketched in broad brush-strokes. Taking it all in all, the Trotskyists, who at that time seemed to "observers" and professional sceptics to be a handful of fanatics embarked on a frail boat that listed pretty heavily, can present ~~between~~ 1952 and 1958, despite their mistakes and weaknesses, a political performance overall that is sufficiently coherent to have made possible the recovery which was to reveal itself in the following period. The reader will judge of this on the evidence.

CHAPTER FIVE

1958 - 1965: From the Group to the Organisation

On October 2, 1958, after having campaigned for the "No!" vote in the referendum on September 28, "La Verite" broke off its weekly appearance, which difficulties of every kind were making more and more uncertain. Its appearance in the form of a review began with issue No. 513. This corresponded to the real state of the Trotskyist forces in the period and revealed in its own way the defeat without a struggle which the working class had suffered at the hands of the bourgeoisie.

The Patient Gathering of the Forces of the Vanguard, from June 1958 to the Fourteenth Congress of the O.C.I.

The analysis which the Trotskyist current gave at this time of Bonapartist Gaullism retains all its validity:

"It is the direct product of May 13, 1958. But the coming to power of De Gaulle does not at all mean the establishment of a military dictatorship. What we have, thanks to the revolt of the Europeans in Algeria, thanks to the indiscipline of the soldiery, is a strong power of a police character, the aims of which co-incide with those of decisive layers of the bourgeoisie. The sleight of hand on May 13, 1958 lay in using a reactionary revolt, without perspectives, for the benefit of the most concentrated fractions of French capitalism. The "Gaullist networks" were the instrument of this "recovery", but their task was made easier, because the pressure of nearly the whole of the bourgeoisie in metropolitan France, after a few days of hesitation (for Bonapartism is an adventure and one does not know how it will end) as well as the ^{definitive} pressure of the workers' parties, acted in this direction."

Gaullist Bonapartism set itself these tasks: to bring to an end the war in Algeria, to strengthen the State and to dismantle the workers' movement. These aims were clearly revealed from this time onwards. From this point of view we can say that, whatever may have been the hazards of the intervention of the Trotskyist current as an organised fraction, its expression in "La Verite" provided the working class with the Marxist "arms of criticism". It understood that, in all the critical periods through which this regime had to pass - and it lived in a state of chronic crisis, even though the facade tried to let nothing appear - the different decisive fractions of the bourgeoisie, however impatient they might be or restive at one or other measure taken by Gaullism, lined up like one man behind their saviour.

What, let us note, enabled the handful of Trotskyists in the first years of Gaull-

-ism, not only to HOLD ON, but to plant the first landmarks for their way ahead, was their determination to put down roots in the different sections of the working class and of the youth. This determination was derived from their whole past experience. It is clear that, without this determination and the first results which it produced, their analyses themselves would soon inevitably have deviated and developed into abstract academic formulae. In the hollow of the wave which the retreat of the workers' movement rolled over them, the Trotskyists never adopted the viewpoint of some distant observer who has read Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky.

They turned their backs on the support which the traditional apparatuses provided for De Gaulle in different forms at the time of the barricades in Algiers and of the generals' putsch, by way of what the workers derisively called "the Generals' strike". They advanced the necessity for an independent class policy for the proletariat. In the unions they fought for a "No" vote in the first referendum, for the anti-clerical demonstration at Vincennes to signify a break with the government, for the workers' united front to be realised on October 27 1960 in response to the appeal of the students' union UNEF for a unified, central demonstration, as a practical link between unconditional support for the Algerian Revolution and the struggle of the workers and the youth against "their own" bourgeoisie.

During this period, on another level, the Trotskyists decided to equip themselves with the means to produce a publication, as the pole and the lever for the re-groupment of a wider vanguard than themselves. The appearance of the weekly mimeographed bulletin, "Informations Ouvrieres" opened up patient work to draw sympathisers together. This enabled the Trotskyists to form their first network of militants, "friends" and readers by means of which the influence of a class policy was extended.

They took a similar initiative in penetrating and organising among the youth, the most mobile layer of society. In spring 1961 they founded the "Liaison Committee of Revolutionary Students" together with some other militants. At the beginning its activity was very modest, but it was to grow very quickly as the working class patiently won back the ground which the bourgeoisie had taken, with the miners' strike of March and April 1963 acting as a powerful stimulant.

We should put on record here some of the declarations of the Trotskyists at the time when Gaullist Bonapartism was not hesitating to rely on the traditional apparatuses in the name of "national unity", imposing on the "ultras" of the OAS a solution for the Algerian question in conformity with the general interests of the bourgeoisie and big capital. In May 1961, after the putsch of Challe, Salan, Jouhaud and Zeller at Algiers on April 22nd and 23rd and the one-hour strike which the leaderships organised on the 24th to "reply" to it, no. 521 of "La Verite" wrote:

"Sectarianism is alien to revolutionary Marxism. The most severe criticism, which the lamentable behaviour of the workers' leaders" deserves

must not lead to forgetting the place which the workers' organisations themselves occupy in capitalist society. The greatest danger threatening the workers today is the threat of the integration of the trade union organisations in the bourgeois state. The most serious accusation of the revolutionaries against the reformist and Stalinist leaders is that their continual practice of class collaboration, like their refusal to mobilise the workers independently against the consequences of the Algiers putsch, make easier that atomisation of the workers' movement which the State is seeking.

Let us repeat, however bureaucratised by their leaderships the traditional^{workers'} organisations must be, they remain the only possible framework today for the elementary task of assembling the workers again as a class. This is why the most urgent task ^{militant} for workers loyal to their class is to demand of their leaders that in every sphere they break their coalition with De Gaulle for "the defence of the institutions". Starting there, they should advance slogans which will enable the working class to prepare its counter-offensive particularly by overcoming the obstacles to its unity in action, which are due to the separate presentation of the demands of different groups and grades of workers.

But the struggle for the independence of the workers' movement from the state is inseparable from a consistent policy based on the recognition of the class struggle. It co-incides with the struggle to re-group the vanguard round a revolutionary programme, the expression of the experience which has been accumulated in over a century of workers' struggles."

This is a suitable point at which to mention that the Trotskyist fraction thought the time appropriate to concentrate the available forces more closely on a central objective, that of the defence of Marxism, to deal with the events which had arisen in May 1958 and had resulted in a new relation of class forces, with the proletariat on the defensive. During the first years of Gaullism, this task showed itself distinctly to be necessary to reply to the theoretical disarming and destruction which sociologists and Stalinists found themselves joining to produce. According to them, the working class was to blame for the defeat! In short, the bourgeois reaction and its petty bourgeois ideologists were proclaiming their victory all along the line.

The Working Class Rises Again: Trotskyism is Strengthened

This was the reality and the state of the forces of the Trotskyist organisation which led it to determine to undertake the struggle to advance from being a group to being an organisation. The problem of the party, the problem of the revolutionary leadership of the proletariat, the problem of its own construction, all imperatively demanded a break from learning formulae by rote and from unreal schemes of organisation taken abstractly from other situations, and that the group harness itself to

the real, positive task of selecting a vanguard, in conformity with the principles of Bolshevism but without excluding the question of the transitional forms of the process of this regroupment.

Marxists do not possess a "Great Book of Total Knowledge", in which all the strategies and tactics for this or that task are stored away. They had to think and to struggle, in relation to the class struggle and their understanding of its mechanisms, for the solution of this central question to appear and to be more and more clearly integrated in the consciousness of the vanguard.

The changes in the relation of forces between the classes were speeded up by the miners' strike in March and April 1963. We cannot write at length about this event, which was of the greatest importance. The working class of France was little by little to put together its fighting capacity again and to force De Gaulle to defer his plan to integrate the trade union organisations into the state without resistance from the working class. It was this respite, which the miners won in pitched battle for the benefit of the entire proletariat that in the final analysis, through the strikes at Rhodiaceta, Berliet and Sud-Aviation and through the confrontations of the classes at Le Mans and at Caen, were to bear fruit in the General Strike of May and June 1968.

The Trotskyist Congress drew the balance of this magnificent struggle shortly afterwards. Its resolution contained the following:

"The class struggle faces our organisation with new tasks... What is new is summed up thus: there is class conflict in the perspective, and no longer this slow disintegration of consciousness which we have witnessed from 1958 to the miners' strike.

A struggle may be lost or won. In any case the vanguard must prepare for the struggle".

The orientation towards the youth was already at the centre of Trotskyist policy, because the youth would act as an attractive force on the whole working class. It was a joint orientation of the turn to the youth and a turn towards the militant layers of the proletariat, the arming of the worker cadres which the crisis of Stalinism would force to turn towards the vanguard as soon as the latter had given the proof that it could open up concrete ways forward for the class movement and could operate effectively in the class struggle.

Starting in February 1964, the duplicated bulletin "Informations Ouvrieres" became a printed monthly publication, and described itself as "The Free Platform of the Class Struggle". From then onwards it was to struggle to become the organising centre of the vanguard which, without being convinced at a first stage of the validity of the "Transitional Programme", the "Programme of the Fourth International", none the less agreed to take part in the joint struggle to realise the Workers' United

Front. They widened its readership and planned and systematised its distribution. The workers' United Front was to be brought about by discussion, by intervention, by the unification of efforts, in co-operation with the Trotskyists, who were solidifying a first outline of a political force fighting in a consistent way for the proletarian revolution and for the conquest of power.

The task from then on was to bind this force together. The fruits of the miners' strike were not given once and for all. From June 1963 onwards we witnessed limited lightning strikes and "days of action" called by the apparatuses, and the Government taking advantage of these to bring in the anti-strike legislation of July 1963. In the absence of the level of organisation which only consciousness can provide, there was the risk that the workers' combattivity would subside. After the Bonapartist Government had been compelled to postpone until the end of the Algerian war the open, concerted attack on the working class and its organisations, after the miners' strike had enabled further breathing-space to be won, it was important that this gain should not be frittered away and left for the apparatuses to browse in.

Now the Trotskyists could see their activity as a determinant in the class struggle. Subjective effort was transformed into an objective force in the ^{real} disposition of the classes. The idea ^{was} confirmed here that the working-class vanguard unfolds and strengthens itself as an organic, organised and organising product of the class struggle. The vanguard had to seize initiatives which helped this process to mature.

The old working-class fortress in the Nantes region was to live through a strike of tramway workers which lasted no less than thirty-nine days. The departmental leaders of the C.G.T. and the C.F.T.C. operated a desperate policy of division and of capitulation. The "class struggle" militants of the U.D. - F.O. and the Trotskyist militants who struggled in the C.G.T. imposed the United Front, which forced the State and the bourgeoisie to retreat.

In March 1964, an appeal from the workers of Nantes was distributed through the working class and signed by hundreds of workers. On March 18, in the strike of the public services and the nationalised industries, there were 70,000 demonstrators on the streets of Nantes, singing the "International". The "Appeal from Nantes" expressed concretely the form which the strategy of the United Front should take in the period which was opening for the proletariat to engage in victorious struggles, under the slogan: "All Together: All at the Same Time".

The "Appeal" ended as follows:

For the United Action of the Class!
For the Preparation of a General Struggle!

In order to fight, we must bring about unity in action. But on an effective tactic.

We repeat, unity for action means condemning and ceasing the sectional "days of action", which divide, break up and atomise the fighting front of the workers.

Different workers' centres exist. This means that none of them can impose its point of view unilaterally on the others, if unity in action is to be realised. This means that at every level of the trade union centres, in the confederal offices, in the federations, in the departmental unions, in the local unions, in the unions and the union sections, the members must meet to reach agreement, with a view to preparing the struggle together.

The Workers Themselves Must Decide!

The problem to be solved ought to be simple, yet it is not:

The trade union organisations should lead the general struggle, but at the level of the trade union centres, there is no confederal bureau which favours engaging in such activity.

The trade union organisations must direct the struggle against the capitalist regime, but ALL belong to different structures, such as the Plan etc., in which the employers and their State are preparing to deal unpleasant blows against the working class.

Workers, trade unionists of every tendency, it is our job to dictate, to control and to oversee what our leaders do!

Let Us Organise! Let Us Discuss together! Let us Impose Our Decisions!

The Organisations Must Serve the Workers!

For the Unity of the Class Front!
Against Poverty and Unemployment!

For the Control of the Workers Over Their organisations!

Workers of France, 70,000 workers and peasants demonstrated at Nantes!

At Paris, Lyon, Clermont, Lille and Marseille, hundreds of thousands should follow their example.

These were the slogans which, we may say without bragging, the working class as a whole was soon to take hold in terms of activity. The Trotskyist fraction won the means to advance and to consolidate its political foundations, thanks to this ripening, which its intervention encouraged, especially when a "Workers' Assembly" was brought together round the "Nantes Appeal" in June 1964.

At the end of 1964, at their 13th Congress, the Trotskyist militants were able to set before themselves the approach to the organisation, to freeing themselves from the political effects of the "group". They grasped their own history since their movement began and could drive forward the unique gain which they represented to the conquest of the vanguard layer of the workers. The first elements of clarification had been found.

In close political relations with the developments described above, the group of collaborators in and readers of "Revoltes" opened a discussion on the ways and means of constructing a Revolutionary Organisation of Youth. Shortly before this,

these comrades had been bureaucratically excluded from the leadership of the United Federation of Youth Hostels, a movement for youth and leisure activities, which had formed part, along with holidays with pay, of the conquests of the General Strike of June 1936, and which was being rapidly integrated into the state, as a prelude to its pure and simple liquidation. "Revoltes" appeared at first as a duplicated bulletin, concretised the results of this discussion and launched the groups which were formed on its initiative to win the youth.

We have not planned to include in this pamphlet the efforts which were carried out in this period to give body to the necessary international struggle for the reconstruction of the Fourth International. The materials would be too abundant and a work on a different scale would be needed. The serious discussion on the basis of documents, which essentially were due to the British and the French Trotskyists, was what enabled the Third Conference of the International Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International to be prepared and to succeed in the following period in April 1966.

We can now only point to the outstanding features of the activity of the Trotskyists in the period which was opening. It is indeed clear that this outburst of activity and unfolding of the strength of the Trotskyists, still imperfect and very unequal as it was, can be understood only in relation to the principal events in the class struggle, which began to take shape in the course of the year 1966 and to run like a gunpowder train through the whole working class in 1967, in the course of which the harbingers of the coming immense mobilisation of the class as showed itself in May and June 1968 could be perfectly discerned, though, of course, no one could foresee their precise rhythms.

This period was marked - to the surprise of those who imagine that the rise of the working class follows a perfect linear progression, when it consists really of advances and retreats - by the disappearance of the working class as a class from the political battle-field of the presidential elections, when the workers' organisations effaced themselves behind the bourgeois candidate Mitterrand. It was at the beginning of this period that the Trotskyists founded the Internationalist Communist Organisation (O.C.I.), at their 14th Congress in December 1965. This was a political act of the highest importance. Far from being motivated by a formal concern to get a "title", it corresponded to the reality of the forces of French Trotskyism, to the recognition of an important stage on the road to the construction of the party in conjunction with the tasks of reconstruction of the Fourth International.

CHAPTER SIX

1966 - 1968: The Construction of the Revolutionary Party:

The Construction of the Fourth International

Stephane Just wrote, in the March - April issue of "Correspondance Internationale":

"There are important differences between the intervention of the group in the class struggle, its structure, its life and its method of working, and an organisation of the Bolshevik type. The group has a common political line, but it does not have a centralised intervention in relation to the common aims to be attained. Its interventions and sectors of work are those which can be immediately carried out and realised, with the dose of 'independence' which that implies. The political life and the structure of the group are not democratically centralised.

However inevitable and indispensable this stage may have been for the construction of the revolutionary organisation, as soon as the necessary forces existed and political maturity permitted, it was necessary to take a new course, that of moving from ^{the} group to the organisation."

The O.C.I. Declares Itself Politically

Making the revolutionary organisation homogeneous and centralising it politically came back to ensuring particularly that it was at best in control of its aims and that it expressed the unifying perspective of its struggle in each of the phases through which the movement of the working class passed. At the same time, it meant providing the means to breach the resistance of the apparatuses and their desire to frustrate the realisation of the workers' United Front as fiercely as the need for it was felt every^{day} a little more clearly by thousands and thousands of workers.

These were the conditions in which the 14th Congress of the O.C.I. in December 1965 decided to operate a transformation in the life and structure of the organisation. Centralised campaigns, in which the organisation was to engage as a body, were agreed at the same time, and each decision was encouraged by the other.

From May 17, 1966 onwards, the organisation has intervened systematically along a single axis and in a co-ordinated way. The trade union organisations called for a 24-hour strike on that day. The O.C.I. and its members recommended the formation, at every level, of local, departmental and national inter-union committees to prepare the "All Together".

During this period a political struggle went on in the ranks of the O.C.I. itself to raise its internal regime to the level of centralised political intervention. The mentality and practice of the group were from that time obstacles to the

to the planned application of tasks. The group had been able to be a refuge for elements who, under the convenient cover of Trotskyism, developed activities alien to that of the construction of the revolutionary party, such as utilising the sexual problems of the youth to try to form a "sexual-sectarian" clique, a transmission belt for the decomposed ideology of the old world.

The democratic centralism necessary for centralised political intervention could not fail to be intolerable to this small nucleus, which raised the solution of its little personal problems above and against the satisfaction of the revolutionary aspirations of the proletariat. In conducting the fight politically against them, the problem was to get the organisation to assimilate the principles of democratic centralism, including those militants who had been misled without renouncing the Trotskyist struggle. Overcoming this stage ~~tempered~~ the cadres of the O.C.I. and armed the whole organisation for the struggles to come.

The O.C.I. utilised the legislative elections of March 1967 to develop more widely the proposals for the United Front, and to spread the elements of the "Action Programme" which an issue of "La Verite" had published for the occasion. The O.C.I. relied on a candidature in a particularly working-class ^{constituency} in the Paris region, a fortress of Stalinism, and carried on a nation-wide campaign on the programme of defence of the working class, which was being called into question, and opened the perspective of a class United Front by counter-posing it to the policy of class collaboration labelled "union of the left".

It was not a question of an "electoralist" campaign, in the sense in which the bourgeois parties and the bourgeois leaderships of the workers' parties mean it. This does not mean, either, that the Trotskyists intended to turn their backs on the "information", however imperfect and mutilated, which these elections could roughly provide about the state of relations at a given moment and within a precise framework, between the vanguard in the process of construction and a sector of the working class. We have already met those "observers" in whose eyes this campaign, a test of the truth about the election results, if you wish, could appear very deceptive. In reality, the militants had begun to grasp the complex, ~~contradictory~~ reality of their process of implantation within the working class and the youth.

Without any relaxation of continuity, the O.C.I. went on with its political activity and a little later launched the slogan of "National Discussion on Unity in Action". It was certainly no the job of the O.C.I. to organise this discussion. It is clear that carrying this task out, bringing the workers' United Front into existence in preparation for struggle, was a task for the working class, which should impose it on the leaderships of the organisations. The O.C.I. was not and did not claim yet to be the revolutionary leadership of the proletariat. The O.C.I. fought and fights to construct the revolutionary party by making leadership links with the class, on the basis of a direct intervention in the class struggle.

At the same time a slogan of this kind remains purely literary if the organisation which launches it does not provide the means to push it forward by increasing its own impact as a vanguard.

That is why the O.C.I., with the participation of "Revoltes" organised the assembly on June 24 and 25, 1967, which brought together over 1,500 ^{militant} workers and youth and set itself the aim of forming "Committees for a Workers' Alliance" on the orientation decided.

Here we had a political act of the first importance. The process of gathering together the vanguard in the conditions and under the forms which we have described, this process then took on a living form and was concretised in a form of organisation to which the developments in the class struggle were to give a more and more precise political content.

A campaign followed in October and December 1967 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Russian Revolution, which was to be undertaken nationally. Public meetings were held in Paris and in the provinces. They demonstrated for the first time for a long time that the organisation existed on a national scale. The Stalinists saw correctly what was happening. They set gangs to work nearly everywhere and spread slanders about the Trotskyist militants on this occasion. "L'Humanite", its Sunday supplement, "La Voix du Lyonnais", "La Marseillaise" in particular, did their utmost to bar the way to a junction between the vanguard and the militants of the French Communist Party. This is why the Trotskyists could write that violence, organised in this way in the workers' ranks by the Stalinist apparatus, was directed in the first instance against the militants of the French Communist Party, with the apparatus ensuring "physical" control over every rag of opposition.

The campaigns of the O.C.I. integrated the struggle for the formation of the revolutionary youth organisation. The militants raised the activity of the group and of the journal "Revoltes". They organised sending 400 youth to Liege, the city where Germain-Mandel, whom we have already mentioned, shed light on himself. After having "failed" to march on Brussels at the time of the Belgian General Strike a few years earlier, he was to try this time to prevent the delegations from "Revoltes", the "Young Socialists" and other organisation to display banners declaring the solidarity of the international revolutionary youth with the struggle of the Hungarian workers in the Hungarian Revolution of workers' councils in October 1956. The operation turned further to the discomfiture of the said Germain-Mandel.

The "Revoltes" and C.L.E.R. groups also played an active part in the campaigns of the O.C.I. in connection with the legislative elections and in popularising the "National Discussion" for the class united front. At this date, the policy of the O.C.I. was expressed in terms particularly applying to the youth: "Against the degradation of the youth: A Central Demonstration in Paris". On June 27, 1967, over

1,000 young people met in Paris, to organise the political activity of the youth against the bourgeoisie, its government and its state, one moment of which would be the central demonstration. At the call of "Revoltes", the young people took part in the International Assembly held in Britain and engaged themselves to be active in the construction of the revolutionary youth organisation. They likewise took part in the campaign to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the October Revolution.

In this period which we are describing, an important step was taken on the road to the reconstruction of the Fourth International. The 3rd Conference of the International Committee was held in London in April 1966. It can be regarded, both in respect of the political documents which were adopted there, and in respect of the political clarification which was effected there with regard to such groups as the American "Spartacists" or the French U.C.I. ("Voix Ouvriere"), as a completely decisive moment in Trotskyist work. Among other things, it enabled the underlying objectives and the real framework of struggle, the expression of the world unity of the class struggle through the diversity of the different countries, to be restored to the Trotskyists.

The Beginning of the General Strike

This collection of tasks accomplished or in process of accomplishment enabled the qualitative leap forward which the O.C.I. had made to be understood. The 15th Congress brought together their lessons on 31st December, 1967 and 1st January 1968, in order to define the lines of intervention in the coming period. The problem also was to grasp the significance of the profound movements of the working class in the course of the year which had just passed: Dassault, Rhodiaceta, Berliet and the monthly-paid workers at Saint-Nazaire.

It was obvious that the working class was winning back the whole of its territory in which to mobilise class against class through the different movements which we have quoted. The fact that the O.C.I. had been able to interpret the struggles while they were going on and to organise, within the limit of its forces, to link them to the policy of the United Front and to the necessity to realise the United Front in order to raise the problems at the level of the State, as these powerful movements required in a certain sense naturally, when they went into battle.

On January 5, 1968, the "Co-ordinating Committee of the Workers and Office Staffs of Paris Transport, Social Security, students and teachers in training", launched an appeal which opened the way to political confrontation between the united working class, the youth and the bourgeoisie and its State:

"On May 17, 1967, the workers and the youth showed that they are ready to fight. But the leaders have refused to organise the fight, the only fight which the workers of France and the Parisian workers want to carry on: to organise on the building sites, in the offices, the factories and the crafts, to end

in the General Strike.

The General Strike against the ordinances has not taken place!

The General Strike to guarantee jobs and defend purchasing power has not taken place!

The General Strike for workers' liberties has not taken place!

The leaders have answered the united force of employers and Government with a tactic of dispersed movements which break the will of the workers to struggle. This must stop!

Why have the trade union centres not launched an appeal for demonstrations where the people who are destroying the conquests of the working class can be found:

- in front of the employers' offices
- in front of the offices of the Prefects
- in front of the Ministries
- where the Government sits?

It is for the workers themselves to decide...

The destiny and the future of millions and millions of workers is at stake.

The future of the youth is at stake."

Following the issue of this appeal, the Co-ordinating Committee organised a meeting of ^{1,000} workers which adopted an "Address to the Workers and the Youth", directed at the confederal bureaux of the C.G.T., the C.G.T.- F.O., the bureaux of U.N.E.F. and F.E.N., to the leaders of U.D. and the federations and unions of all tendencies:

"Yes, comrades, we are perfectly aware that the generalised offensive of capital is made up of specific attacks.

It follows that the unions concerned must organise struggles in the various sectors.

For a General Demand, there must be a General Movement.

For Specific, Limited Demands, there should be Specific, Limited Movements.

But one thing is Certain. When the Government mobilises the C.R.S. ~~from~~ all over France against our comrades at Rhodiaceta (Lyon) or at Caen, only one reply is effective: the same day, throughout France, the workers' trade union centres must call on all workers and youth to demonstrate.

In the provinces, outside the Prefectures

In Paris outside the seat of the Government."

When we draw up a retrospective picture of the varied activities of the Trotskyists in this period, we are surprised to see how frequently the slogans and forms of action for which they called corresponded to the ^{needs of the} situation. In fact, ^{from} the call for "500,000 workers and youth in front of the Palais-Bourbon", launched on May 17, 1967, to "500,000 workers to liberate the Sorbonne", on May 13, 1968, there is a clear formulation of what corresponded to the will of the working class to

What is the Balance of Gain and Loss?

This pamphlet does not intend to study the events which followed April 1968 in relation to the development of the O.C.I. The reader will have been able to see how the Trotskyists of the O.C.I. had correctly diagnosed the situation and had constituted themselves as a force to encourage the birth with which it was pregnant. They did not owe this to some gift of super-human lucidity, but solely to the method of Marxism which they had assimilated in practical and theoretical struggle. They owed it to the force of Trotskyism, this thoroughly dirty word, moreover, when one thinks that it is THE Marxism, THE Communism, the method of constructing the Communist Party which has never existed in France. The road from 1923 to our own times has been a long one. It is marked by imperfect attempts and aborted enterprises, but the Trotskyists have the right to turn to their critics of every kind and put to them the question:

"Show us your balance: compare it with ours: We shall see whether the Trotskyists, despite their mistakes, are not alone in having, as a current, ensured continuity in all circumstances".

From this point onwards, the Trotskyists could claim more. They could claim to be one of the ^{determining} factors in the General Strike of May - June 1968. The General Strike which began in the early hours of the morning of May 14, 1968, in Sud-Aviation at Nantes, on the initiative of the Trotskyists was the forerunner of the General Strike of May - June 1968, which opened a new historic period in the international class struggle, the period of the imminence of the revolution.

Many difficulties ^{will} continue to arise on the road of the proletarian revolution and will arise as obstacles to the struggle of the Trotskyists to construct the instrument of the workers' victory, the revolutionary party. The slow development of the class consciousness of millions and millions of working people was on the point of leaping forward. But it always ran into the obstacle of the apparatuses; even though these apparatuses were shaken by powerful crises (Czechoslovakia), they still retained the leadership of the proletariat. This development of class consciousness likewise ran into "Left-ist" illusions, the product (principally in certain layers of the youth) of the treachery of the apparatuses.

The long and difficult history of the Trotskyist movement (like the long and difficult historic struggle of the proletariat to liberate humanity from the chains of exploitation and oppression), some of the lessons of which we have just drawn out, is there to bear witness that nothing has been finally won, and that everything will be won by the organisation, its firmness on principles, its will to act coolly and calmly and to reject the pressure of the apparatuses and the pressure of illusions alike. Sceptics and bourgeois and petty bourgeois ideologues can always talk and act. The "Programme" of the Fourth International, adopted in 1938, has been verified as a whole by the greatest and most tragic events of the last twenty-two

years, and corresponds to the tasks of constructing the revolutionary workers' party in France and to those of the reconstruction of the Fourth International.

FOOTNOTES

(1) Page 4. "Thermidorean degeneration of the USSR" is used here to characterise precisely the reactionary nature of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the USSR. The name "Thermidor" was originally used in the reformed calendar adopted by the French Revolution for the hot month of the year. The 9th of Thermidor 1794 (July 27th) was the date when there began a series of shifts to the right in the government and Robespierre was overthrown. These shifts to the right led in the end to the emergence of Napoleon Bonaparte as the head of state and Emperor, with all political power concentrated in his person. But the social overturn in France from 1789 to 1793 had been bourgeois in character. As Trotsky wrote: "In essence it reduced itself to the replacement of fixed feudal property by 'free' bourgeois property". "Thermidor", then, refers to the moves of those who have managed to secure positions of privilege and power in the process of the revolution to divide the gains of the new social regime to their own advantage and to protect their spoils against the masses, on the one hand, and against counter-revolution on the other.

Thus in the USSR the term "Thermidorean" came to be used from 1926 onwards to describe the tendencies to liquidate the democracy of the Soviets and the Communist Party for the benefit of the privileged minority, the bureaucrats, the traders and rich peasants, and to manipulate the Communist Parties abroad as "frontier guards", in conformity with the theory of "Socialism in One Country".

(2) Page 4. Andres Nin and Juan Andrade in 1934 - 35 opposed Trotsky's proposal that the Trotskyist forces in Spain should join the Socialist Party, which at that time was undergoing a crisis and in which there were important developments of the Left. They joined, however, in the formation of the Centrist POUM on a basis which enabled this organisation to become an obstacle to the victory of the revolution in Spain in 1936 - 1938 and to the formation of the Fourth International.

(3) Page 5. August 4, 1914 was the date of the outbreak of World War I and of the collapse of the Second International. Most of its leaders pledged their support in the war to "their own" bourgeoisie and therefore placed themselves on opposite sides! Trotsky compared the political collapse of the Communist International in 1933, following the inability of the German Communist Party to resist the Nazis and then the success of the international apparatus of Stalinism in suppressing discussion in the Communist Parties of the world and criticism of the leadership of the Kremlin, with the collapse of the Second International; each revealed the bankruptcy of the International and the need to create a new International on the basis of the principles which the old one has abandoned.

(4) Page 7. The "Third Period" is a name which has come into popular use to describe the openly ultra-left policies of the Third, Communist International under Stalin's leadership in the years 1928 - 1934, when the Kremlin was able to enforce these policies upon the Communist Parties. Its essential features combined revolutionary demagoguery with tactics divisive of the working class, which isolate and paralyse the militant vanguard by placing it in opposition to the class-movement.

(5) Page 11. Fred Zeller was the leader of a movement of youth which dominated the federation of the Socialist Youth in Paris and its surrounding region in 1934 - 35. He was won by the Trotskyists who entered the Socialist Party (SFIO) and the Socialist Youth in 1934 and was expelled with them and a number of his supporters by the Socialist Party leadership. He then joined the Bolshevick-Leninist Group and was until 1937 a leader of the French section of the Fourth International, the POI, founded in 1936.

(6) Page 24. Isaac Deutscher was a leader of the Polish Trotskyist organisation in the 1930's. He opposed Trotsky's proposal that the Fourth International be founded in 1938. Moving to Britain he spent the war years living as a contributor on Soviet affairs to the "Economist". In the early 1950's he developed the theory that the Soviet bureaucracy would "evolve" towards self-reform.

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