

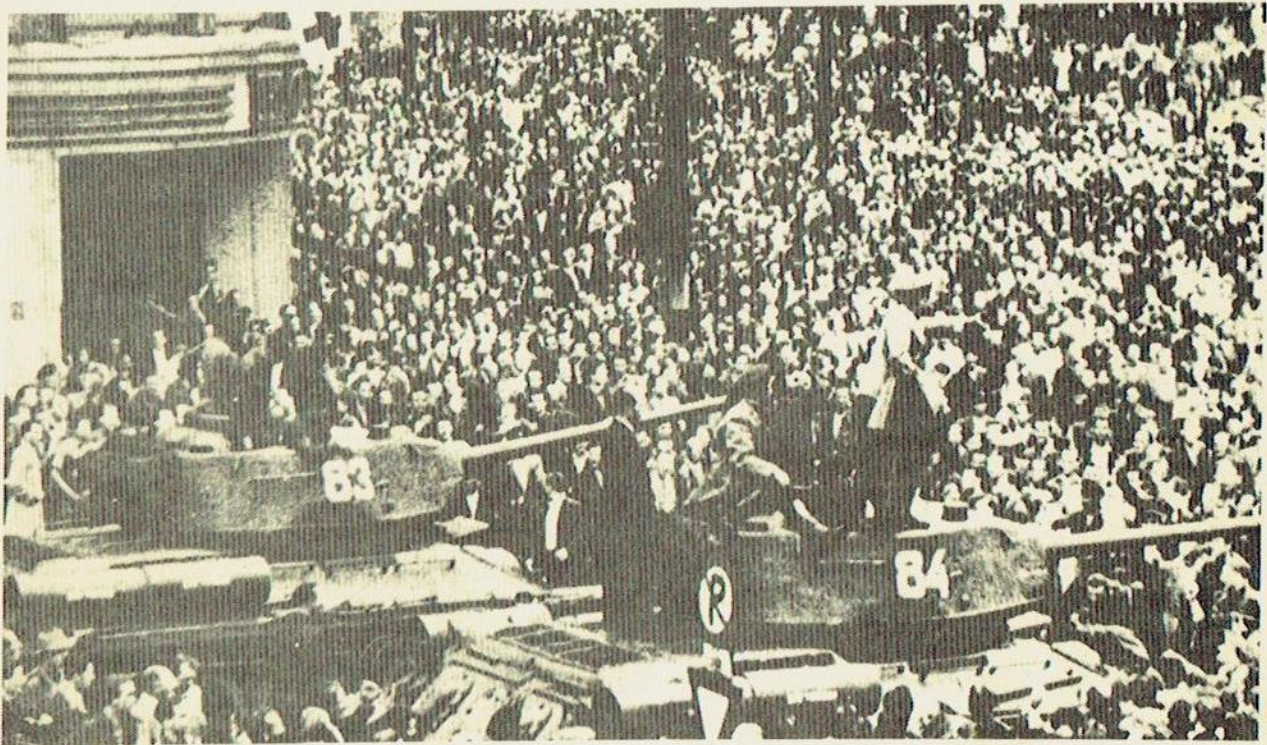
TROTSKYISM TODAY ★

THEORETICAL
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LEAGUE

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40 Years after its foundation:
**RECONSTRUCT THE
FOURTH INTERNATIONAL!**
Revolution, Counter-Revolution and Stalinism in
Bulgaria.

**ASPECTS OF THE HISTORY
OF THE FOURTH
INTERNATIONAL**

Reviews
**BRITISH TROTSKYISTS IN
WORLD WAR II**
Left in the Limelight.

EDITORIAL

40 years after its foundation, fight to reconstruct the Fourth International

Forty years ago, in 1938, in the wake of successive defeats and betrayals inflicted upon the working class internationally at the hands of its reformist and Stalinist leaders the Fourth International was founded under the most adverse conditions by supporters of Leon Trotsky's fight for the continuity of Bolshevik traditions and the Marxist method and programme.

Twenty five years ago, in 1953, after imperialism and Stalinism had taken their toll of Trotskyist leaders, and after the principles embodied in its founding *Transitional Programme* had come under sustained assault from revisionist forces in its leading ranks, the Fourth International split.

The results of that split are still with us today. There is no organisation that can now justifiably lay claim to represent either the political or the organisational continuity of Trotskyism in the post-war period. Instead we find three major groupings—the 'United Secretariat' of the Fourth International; the International Committee of the Fourth International; and the organising Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International, each putting themselves forward as 'Trotskyist' organisations, taking little or no initiative towards a serious discussion of the real problems and political issues that divide them.

We are convinced that it is necessary to place a priority on such discussion, in order to begin to lay a principled political basis for the reconstruction of the Fourth International—not as the arithmetical piecing together of the existing splintered fragments, but as a process of reaffirming both in theory and in practice the fundamental

principles on which the Fourth International was founded.

For this reason *Trotskyism Today* will take as its theme the reconstruction of the Fourth International and will attempt to stimulate the widest discussion on the questions we see as essential in this struggle. We invite organisations and individuals to contribute to this process of discussion and offer the pages of this magazine as a forum in which such theoretical questions otherwise suppressed or ignored can be fully and openly argued out.

The Workers Socialist League is fighting for a practical and theoretical assertion of the following points as the basis for the reconstruction of the Fourth International:

1. Daily confirmation that this is the epoch of imperialist decay is to be found in the profound political and economic crises convulsing the capitalist states, the colonial and ex-colonial regimes, and the degenerate workers' states of Europe and Asia.

In this period the betrayals of both Stalinist and Social Democratic parties internationally—each finding new depths of class collaboration in the face of the growing movement of workers and peasants against imperialism—highlights the vital necessity for the reconstruction of the Fourth International as the organising centre of the world party of the socialist revolution.

2. Founded forty years ago in 1938 on the inseparable principles of proletarian internationalism and the defence of the political independence of the working class from the bourgeoisie and all its agencies within the workers' movement, the task of the Fourth International was and remains

that of preparing the human, material and political resources necessary to resolve the crisis of proletarian leadership in the international struggle for socialism.

But the International was from the beginning faced by huge objective and internal difficulties. The Trotskyist movement today confronts a crisis in which its whole post-war history must be re-examined in order to probe the political reasons behind its prolonged disorientation. Only from such a basis can a principled way forward be found for its reconstruction.

3. Trotskyism, the present day continuity of revolutionary Marxism, stands alone in seeing the need for the working class to take the lead in the struggle for social revolution. For this reason it is only Trotskyists who *reject on principle* political blocs or partnerships with other classes in which the revolutionary strength of the working class is subordinated to the interests of the peasantry, petty bourgeoisie, 'progressive' military juntas, or sections of the bureaucracy parasitic upon the workers' movement itself.

Because of the fundamental importance of this principle we are convinced it is necessary to re-examine those episodes in the post-war history of Trotskyism in which that position was abandoned in practice, and the method on which it rests was thrown into question.

In particular it is necessary to analyse anew and break from the method involved in the orientation of the movement towards Stalinism under the leadership of Michel Pablo—both prior to and after the 1953 split. It is essential to link this to an examination of the orientation of Trotskyist tendencies towards the Castroite leadership in Cuba and to petty bourgeois nationalist forces in Latin America and Algeria in the years following 1959, and to an analysis of present attitudes to the latest changes in post-war Stalinism—so called 'Euro Communism' in the capitalist states, and the nature of the Vietnamese CP.

And such an analysis must also involve a searching examination of the attitude of the various tendencies of the world Trotskyist movement to 'progressive' military juntas such as the post-1974 AFM regime in Portugal, and 'progressive' bonapartist regimes such as that of Gaddafi's in Libya.

Above all we must establish the basis to positively reaffirm both in our current *programme* and in the practice of each section, as well as by drawing the lessons of the past, the basic starting point of revolutionary Marxism: that the proletariat, the propertyless class exploited by the bourgeoisie as the living instrument of capitalist production and the source of value, is the only consistently revolutionary class in society.

4. Yet in capitalist or colonial countries where peasants and small farmers represent a sizeable section of the population—even its majority—it is necessary for the workers to be equipped with a programme around which an alliance can be made with those oppressed small property-holders against the bourgeoisie and the big landowners.

Such a programme, basing itself on the theoretical gains embodied in Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution, must contain a system of *transitional demands* in combination where appropriate with democratic demands, capable of mobilising the broadest layers of mass support in struggle against feudal relations, national oppression, Bonapartist or fascist dictatorship and leading over to the struggle for the overthrow of capitalism.

Such a programme is the indispensable basis for common struggle, and the bridge between the democratic and the socialist revolution, ensuring that the reactionary

separation of these struggles, advocated by the Mensheviks and now adopted by all sections of Stalinists, is opposed and defeated in practice.

5. In the struggle to mobilise the working class itself, the key is likewise a programme of transitional demands which can form a bridge between the daily spontaneous and trade union struggle carried on by the working class, and the necessary *conscious* struggle for the socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The fight in practice for such a programme to form the basis of the actions of the working class is the material way in which Marxists must today undertake the task described by Lenin in *What Is To Be Done?*:

"... to combat spontaneity, to divert the working class movement from this spontaneous, trade unionist striving to come under the wing of the bourgeoisie, and to bring it under the wing of revolutionary Social Democracy ... all worship of the spontaneity of the working class movement, all belittling of the role of the 'conscious element', of the role of Social Democracy, means, quite independently of whether he who belittles that role desires it or not, a strengthening of the influence of bourgeois ideology upon the workers'."

For this reason also, therefore, any abstention from this fight for leadership within the working class movement is a retreat from the task of Marxists today. It is a matter of principle therefore for Trotskyists to undertake systematic and serious work, propagandising and agitating for the demands of the transitional programme, within the labour movement and the mass organisations of the working class as a whole. Without taking the fight into this arena the programme becomes simply words.

6. In the ideological arming of the working class and the intervention of Marxists into the labour movement is enshrined also the need for parties and a reconstructed international constructed on the Bolshevik pattern, based on the political and organisational principle of *democratic centralism*—complete democracy within the movement in arriving at decisions, combined with strict adherence by all members to centralised discipline in carrying out the decisions of the majority.

The fight for this internal regime brings to a high point the fight against the petty bourgeois tendencies to individualism, propagandism, opportunism and careerism which beset the bankrupt ranks and leading echelons of the reformist, Stalinist and centrist movements. At the same time it challenges syndicalist positions brought into the movement by trade union comrades.

And by bringing the practice of the movement into open discussion enabling the theoretically established perspectives and the daily developing practice of the party to be brought into sharp conflict, democratic centralism plays a crucial role in the fight against schematism and dogmatism, together will all forms of idealist retreat from the Marxist method of dialectical materialism.

Similarly on an international level democratic centralism must be upheld as the essential organisational principle of the reconstructed Fourth International. The Workers Socialist League will not be a party to any repetition of the "moratoria" and unspoken "non-aggression pacts" that have characterised the opportunist organisational relationships within the IS, the USFI, the IC and the OCRFI.

We are fundamentally opposed to the concept of an "international" in which the discipline is so loose and the programmatic agreement so weak that public warfare can

take place between its factions in different countries around the world. We insist on the fullest internal discussion and examination of the practice of the sections, combined with a strict adherence by *all* sections to the line of the majority.

7. The Trotskyist Fourth International traces its independent origins and its reason for existence from the pronouncement by Trotsky and the Left Opposition in 1933 that the Comintern, totally dominated by the Stalinist bureaucracy, was *dead* for the purposes of revolution and a thoroughly *counter-revolutionary* force within the international workers' movement. At the same time Stalinism was seen as a fundamentally *unstable*, bonapartist form of rule, balancing between the nationalised property relations established in the October revolution and the international pressures of imperialism. Trotsky established a clear position of unconditional defence of the Soviet Union as a workers' state against imperialism, coupled to the fight to prepare *political revolution* for the conscious overthrow of the bureaucracy and restoration of soviet power.

This analysis still has to be defended both against tendencies that have attempted to see the Stalinist bureaucracy as a *permanent* and *progressive* force in the workers' movement (pre-war centrists, and Pablo in the post-war period) or as a permanent, reactionary force—a new ruling class in the Soviet Union (Schachtmanites and state capitalists today).

In defending the Trotskyist perspective, the most important starting point is the question of the *political independence* of the working class from the Stalinist bureaucracy in the struggle for state power. It is this, along with an analysis of the counter-revolutionary *world* strategy of Stalinism in the post-war period which most clearly refutes the Pabloite notion of a 'left centrist' evolution of Stalinism in the Eastern European buffer zone or in Asia,

and which shows most clearly the reactionary nature of 'Eurocommunist' criticism of the regimes in Eastern Europe. It is this position also that confirms the need for the building of Trotskyist parties for political revolution in Cuba, Vietnam, China and Yugoslavia as well as the USSR and Eastern Europe.

It is necessary for the world Trotskyist movement to reexamine these issues bearing on the post-war role of Stalinism in order to clarify and correct the wrong positions that have been adopted. For this purpose the USFI, IC and OCRFI leadership and sections—for all their false positions—cannot be regarded in advance as having placed themselves outside the world Trotskyist movement.

8. It is impossible to reconstruct the Fourth International without a conscious break from the method of impressionism and empiricism taking up a struggle for the dialectical method as fought for by Trotsky in *In Defence of Marxism*. Such a break means also a break from attempts to substitute petty bourgeois propaganda groupings for serious Marxist cadres developed in the mass organisations of the working class. Only when such a change is made can the fight for the transitional programme on an international scale take on real meaning and life at the centre of the reconstruction of the Fourth International.

9. Should agreement be reached on these general political principles, the way would be opened up for steps to organisationally reconstruct the Fourth International.

The WSL is flexible in regard to the *organisational* aspects of discussions towards this reconstruction. We insist only that these must involve parity arrangements acceptable to all parties, and that *both* the history of the movement as a whole, *and* the present practice of each part of it must be open to examination.

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Revolution, counter-revolution and Stalinism in Bulgaria

by Leon Schmidt.

In September 1944 a popular upsurge dealt the final blow to the quasi-fascist monarchical government which had been ruling Bulgaria almost uninterruptedly since the military coup of 1923. In order to understand the nature and driving forces of the Bulgarian revolution, we must trace the development of the revolutionary forces by picking up the thread from around the turn of the century.

Bulgaria had ceased to be a part of the Turkish Empire in 1878. Independence encouraged development of capitalist tendencies and in the last two decades of the century the first factories appeared. This development gathered pace between 1900-1912, when legislation and state initiative actively encouraged industrialisation, more often than not with the help of an influx of foreign capital. A situation in many ways similar to that of Russia was created (of course, on a much smaller scale), namely: in the midst of an agrarian country (80% in the case of Bulgaria), new industries developed, highly concentrated around a few key areas, with a homogenous proletariat recruited from the peasants, and undivided by craft affiliations. The mining town of Pernik (conveniently close to the capital) was one such area.

This newly created proletariat was like the Russian one, particularly responsive to socialist militant agitation by virtue of its homogenous nature. The Bulgarian Workers' Social Democratic Party (BWSDP), founded in 1891, rapidly became the natural working class party. In 1903 it split between militants ("the Narrows") and reformists ("the Broads"), creating some confusion; but in a few years "the Broads" had crystallised as largely an intellectual forum, losing its working class base, whereas the "Narrow" wing enlarged its industrial base, so that by 1911, it was able to win local elections in industrial regions and to declare communes there (which were duly suppressed by the central government).

By 1914 Bulgaria, having lost the Balkan wars, began drifting into the German orbit, a move engineered by the unpopular Germanophile King Ferdinand (imposed on independent Bulgaria by the Western Powers). A huge

German bank loan to Bulgaria's capitalists, plus a promise to reverse the territorial settlements after the Balkan wars, clinched the deal so that by 1915 Bulgaria entered the war on the side of the Central Powers. This was not a popular decision and by 1916 this grudging acceptance turned into revolts on the front-line under the impact of war hardships and agitation of the "Narrows".

1917-1923.

This period is characterised by a massive swing to the left by both workers and peasants. The news of the October Revolution came on top of runaway inflation, hunger and deprivation of the population, plus the severe losses in manpower (by this time, as a result of incessant wars, Bulgaria had lost 4% of its population dead and 7% severely wounded). The Bolshevik Peace Decree was spread along the front by socialist militants. Heavy defeats came soon after, resulting in mutinies and fraternization at the front. By 1918 harvest failure and a new Allied offensive created a revolutionary situation which was sparked off by women's riots over food shortages. The armies at the Southern front mutinied and began to march on the capital, Sofia, hoisting the red flag on the way and setting up soviets in towns and villages on their way. The rebels were cut to pieces just outside Sofia for the following reasons:

- 1) Demands by the Pernik miners to be armed were not met by the "Narrows" leadership which failed to understand the full revolutionary implications of the movement they were in charge of.

- 2) The "Broad" Social Democrats stood solidly by the government, as did the right wing of the biggest party—the Agrarians.

- 3) Highly trained German detachments armed with modern machine guns were thrown against the badly-equipped and largely unfit mutineers.

Nevertheless, Ferdinand had to abdicate in favour of his son Boris. The Germanophile government was discredited and the elections of 1919, taking place in an atmosphere of politically-orientated industrial and student

strikes revealed only two real parties:

i. The newly founded Communist Party (growing out of the "Narrows") which had 50 deputies in the chamber and had an industrial basis.

ii. The Agrarians—110 deputies and based solidly on the poorer peasants (for comparison, let's take the Conservatives who had 19 deputies).

Closely tied in with the election was the attempt to create a commune at the town of Dupnitsa, where demonstrators took over the town. This was smashed, but one highly important trend can be seen in a grass-roots alliance between poor peasants and workers (who were of peasant stock anyway): here militants on the run were sheltered and protected by poor peasants of the surrounding countryside.

The new Agrarian government under the famous leader Stambolisky implemented solid pro-poor peasant policies, against both land-owners and the cities (which hit workers too). This resulted in a breakdown of the Communist Party/Agrarian co-operation, leading to physical clashes in the streets. This proved to be suicidal, for by 1921 quasi-fascist para-military groups appeared in Bulgaria, led by reserve officers and backed by General Wrangel, who had established a base in Bulgaria following his defeat in the Russian Civil War. To make things worse, the CP relapsed into ultra-left sectarianism, declaring all bourgeois governments to be the same. By 1923, when Stambolisky began talking about a peasants' republic the CP had drifted off far enough for the quasi-fascist elements in the army to take power into their own hands, backed by King Boris, in the coup of 9 July 1923.

The popular uprisings of 1923.

Following the coup, CP and left Agrarian militants (mostly youth) rose instinctively and in concert all over the country, especially in smaller towns, where the official split had not been felt. Here was a spontaneous revolutionary movement against reaction and the monarchy; instead of assuming the leadership, the CP adopted the line of neutrality, holding aloof while its best front-line militants were shot down in the streets and barricades by the army. As the new government began imprisoning Communist Party members en masse, once having put down the rebellion, the CP leaders, (namely Dimitrov and Kolarov) declared a new uprising in September. This was badly organised and leaked to the government; and the CP and Agrarians were still reeling from the blows in July. Consequently this uprising (led jointly by the CP and Agrarians) failed. It was put down with appalling bestiality and 20,000 perished (at the very least). The triumph of reaction was then consolidated by a drastic fall of wages and repeal of factory laws. Guerrilla warfare continued for sometime, but both the CP and Agrarian ranks had been decimated enough for this to grind to a halt.

The next few years witnessed a partial stabilisation of the traditionally explosive Bulgarian domestic scene, due to economic recovery and destruction of revolutionary cadres. But the development of the revolutionary forces was not broken; it now centred around the CP, which was split (geographically) into two:

1) refugees in the USSR after 1923 of which there were around 3,000.

2) militants at home working underground, (mainly youth).

Development of the Communist Party 1923-33.

The defeats of 1923 led to an ideological split of the

group in the USSR:

i. the leadership (Dimitrov and Kolarov) defended the actions of the Central Committee in 1923. They soon acquired a foothold in the Soviet bureaucracy.

ii. a left opposition—mainly young cadres. This was not in any way Trotskyist (Bulgarian Trotskyism remained limited to a handful of intellectuals), but it attacked the leadership for lack of revolutionary approach and fossilization which did not permit them to emerge from the confines of radical "Narrowism". The opposition had gone through the hard school of street fighting, police torture and underground existence whereas the leaders' activity was largely confined to conferences and party meetings. The left was extremely strong and as it was aided by the Comintern "leftist" phase after 1928, it took the leadership a decade to defeat it.

How the conflict was able to be resolved was shown by 1930 when Kolarov enrolled the GPU to help his struggle against more prominent militants. Eventually the crisis of the Bulgarian Communist Party was resolved in the cellars and camps of the NKVD when the official Comintern's ideology changed its emphasis after 1933. In 1936 two conspiracies were concocted entailing the slaughter of 600 left cadres. One of the conspiracies dealt with Bulgarian "Trotskyists" plans to annex the Ukraine (which had no common border with Bulgaria!); another group was sentenced to death as Hitlerite agents. Of the people sent to the camps, very few survived, (including Pepov, one of the defendants in the Leipzig trial, freed in 1954).

At home, however, the left reigned supreme, recovering by the late 1920's and leading strikes and street agitation (the students union, affiliated to the CP in Bulgaria, had 20,000 members by 1932). Their leaders were summoned to Moscow and some, including the extremely popular youth leader, Vasilev-Boilov, never returned. Now the only left militants outside the reach of the NKVD were inside Bulgarian prisons, where they were the unquestioned leaders.

1934—the second fascist coup.

The monarcho-militarist administration had tried to establish some base of support by holding sham elections. But the CP, under assumed names, won these rigged elections despite police terror (notably in Sofia). As left cadres began agitating for social revolution and workers' control on the basis of the support as revealed here, the second coup took place, outlawing the Communist Party in all its guises and disbanding the trade unions which were replaced by a corporation trade union set up by the state. Mass arrests and executions took place. Bulgaria was wrenched out of her French orbit and again placed in the German one by the new rulers.

By 1936, however, the Communist Party again had recovered and in co-operation with the Agrarians began infiltrating the official trade unions and various other organisations; eventually the Bulgarian Esperantists' Union and the Temperance League became converted into legal fronts for the CP. Another attempt to "legalise" the government by holding rigged elections took place in 1938, failing miserably and resulting in a further clampdown on opposition.

By 1941 the course of Bulgaria in the German orbit led it to join the Axis. Almost single-handed (a Popular Front scheme having never really got off the ground), the CP organised an impressive mobilisation, leading to mass ferment and putting a halt to any attempts to dispatch Bulgarian soldiers to the Eastern Front (something which Hitler repeatedly requested of Boris).

By 1942, despite demoralisation, internal splits and continuous loss of cadres, guerrilla units, composed largely of CP members or sympathisers, took to the mountains. Partisan warfare here never reached Yugoslav proportions, but it harassed both the government and the German forces stationed in the country, while at the same time spreading socialist propaganda, thus transcending the limits of a simple liberation movement to one of social revolution.

By the end of 1942 the police had discovered the underground network of the movement and as they moved in, the whole apparatus caved in. But Stalingrad gave a psychological boost and the CP, rising yet again from the ruins, intensified the partisan warfare, establishing plans for the eventual overthrow of the government once Germany collapsed.

By 1943-4, young militants drafted into the army began to find support and sometimes led whole army units, complete with equipment, into the mountains. A report of the military counter-espionage service reads: "The advance of communism among the army has been universal, persistent and well-organised . . . communism has penetrated all army sections without exception."

The final stage.

By 1944, despite brutality which shocked foreign observers like the *New York Times* correspondent, the movement assumed mass proportions. This led to drastic class polarisation: on one side stood, closely grouped together, the monarchy, fascist groupings, military chiefs and since the partisans agitated for social revolution, the bourgeoisie; on the other side stood the poor peasants and workers, alienated from the official parties through being exploited in the interests of the German war machine, who came to be grouped around their traditional representatives (albeit now outlawed)—the CP and the left Agrarians.

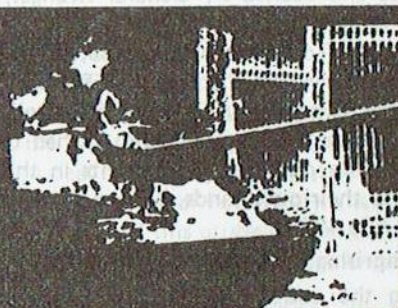
The final straw that broke the camel's back was Russia's declaration of war on 5 September 1944. As the Red Army stopped briefly at the Danube, the highly electrified situation in Bulgaria discharged itself. On September 6, Sofia went on strike; on September 7 Pernik struck; the same day upheavals took place in the port of Varna and in the city of Pleven crowds stormed the prison, releasing the political prisoners. On the night of 8/9 September military units in key cities were infiltrated by agitators and changed sides (notably the tank battalion stationed at Sofia). On September 9/10 the partisan units came down from the mountains; the CP and its various affiliated organisations, together with the left Agrarians, broke cover and took to the streets. Due to the polarisation outlined above, the bourgeois and fascist groupings fled into Greece and Turkey. All the key administrative centres were taken before the Red Army showed up. The overthrow of German domination had grown into a social revolution.

Beginnings of degeneration.

The presence of the Red Army had contradictory effects on the course of the revolution. On the one hand, its very presence (it did little, as there was no need for it to intervene) stifled counter-revolution—eg attempts by the Allies to foster counter-revolutionary movements in the mountains bordering Turkey fizzled out in a matter of months. On the other hand, due to Stalin's agreements with the Allies, it often held back the revolutionary wave so as not to offend or provoke the Allied armies present. This led to the monarchy not being abolished until 1946; nationalisation was put off until 1949. Kolatov instructed

returning emigres to hold back the tide, and Dimitrov (by now something of a folk hero) was only allowed back after a few years.

At the same time, the CP gradually lost all links with its revolutionary heritage. Its development had been chequered with disasters and defeats, and, although surviving by 1944, it was bleached white. Returning emigres having been through the school of Stalinism for anything up to 20 years, took the lead position in the utterly exhausted CP. Faceless bureaucrats who had never smelt gun powder (like the new leader Chervenkov) acted as emissaries for Stalinism. They engineered the 1940's purges which hit the CP when it could least afford it, destroying numerous prominent partisans and revolutionaries. Even Kostov—a loyal Stalinist—was shot as the purges of the purgers began. The CP's revolutionary heritage was physically annihilated through the destruction of the militant cadres. The massive recruitment campaign begun in the late 1940's filled the decimated ranks of the CP with opportunists, careerists and ex-Social Democrats, turning it into a truly Stalinist instrument. By the early 1950's the revolution, a result of decades of bitter struggle, was unrecognisable under the decaying influence of Stalinism.



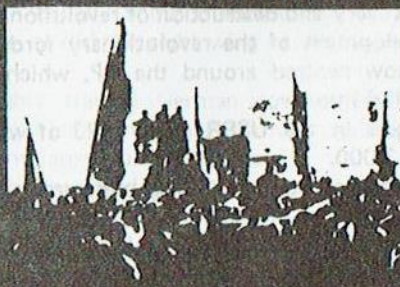
The Transitional Programme

"It is a 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 we can guide the different strata of the proletariat in the direction of the social revolution".

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Aspects of the history of the Fourth International

By John Lister

Last year the first-ever Summer School held by the Workers Socialist League heard a series of lectures on Marxist Philosophy, Internationalism, the History and Method of the Transitional Programme, Stalinism, and the History of the Fourth International. A series of articles in Socialist Press carried the main substance of the lecture on Stalinism, and a series to commence in April will deal with some basic questions of philosophy. The problems of the post-war International, however, are less easily tackled in the confines of serialised articles, and we are therefore reprinting a slightly edited transcript of the lecture on this topic in these pages. We invite readers to send us written responses and comments on this article in order to further develop the discussion on these questions so vital to the Trotskyist movement.

I am going to concentrate on aspects of the post-war history of the Fourth International centring on the two major splits of 1953 and 1963. To examine them, I will have to include in this report some examination of the processes whereby the buffer countries in Eastern Europe in the post-war period were transformed into workers' states. We have to do that in order to answer the kinds of questions that have come up in discussion on Stalinism. Questions have been asked for example about whether Stalinist parties were not in fact capable of carrying out centrist policies, and whether it would be correct to say that Stalinism in certain instances has played a revolutionary role in the extension of nationalised property relations into these countries.

The position I will be arguing is that it is *not* correct to say that Stalinism *at any point* in those processes played a revolutionary role. I will argue that the processes are entirely explainable from the standpoint that Stalinism remains the major *counter-revolutionary* force in the workers' movement on a world scale. I will try to show why the task of Trotskyists internationally and in *every* country—not simply in those countries which most obviously parade capitalism or bureaucratic deformation, but also those which might from time to time even put on a left face—is to build independent revolutionary parties to lead the struggle for the conscious establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This means both the overthrow of bureaucracy and the overthrow of capitalism internationally.

We must begin at the starting point of the fight for the Fourth International. That was the recognition by Trotsky

in 1933 that it was now impossible to transform the Comintern from within and to turn that into a revolutionary force. The betrayals of Germany 1930-33 and the failure of any sections within the Comintern to take up any struggle whatsoever against the treacherous policies in Germany were indicators that the Comintern was now dead as a revolutionary force within the world proletariat.

It was clear from the very beginning that the Fourth International had to differentiate itself sharply from Stalinism. It had to take the line of establishing the absolute political independence of the working class from the Stalinist bureaucracy in every country. That was the reason, the necessity of the formation of a new International. Otherwise the struggle could have remained within the Comintern.

So when the Fourth International was formed, the Transitional Programme spelled out not simply those demands on which we tend to concentrate in our daily agitation and propaganda work within the working class—demands designed to relate the Trotskyist movement to the mass movement and to form a bridge to the working class. The Programme also contained fundamentally and centrally a series of principles which differentiated Trotskyism from Stalinism and drew the lines of political independence of the working class. This political independence was of course not simply independence from Stalinism, but was also developed in the sections dealing with the colonial revolution and the under-developed countries and Fascism, as well as declaring opposition to all the various forms of popular frontism in which the working class could fall under the influence of petty bourgeois liberal leaderships.

The Transitional Programme embodies these principles, and takes them forward in a new organised form in the fight for the Fourth International.

But almost immediately after the formation of the International in 1939 there began an extremely bitter factional struggle within one of its biggest sections, the SWP in the USA. This was one of the sections with the longest and most distinguished history within the Fourth International. But within that emerged a basically petit bourgeois opposition, led by Burnham and Schachtman.

They argued from the *appearances* of events, from *appearances* of developments and actions carried out by the Kremlin bureaucracy, that in fact the Soviet Union was no longer a degenerated workers' state but was now a state capitalist country. In other words they declared that there was now no longer a distinction between the property forms and the established regime of the Soviet Union and the capitalist states internationally. This of course threw immediately into question the necessity to defend those gains against imperialism in the case of war.

Of course war was an immediately impending aspect in the situation in 1939. It was necessary for Trotsky to take much of the responsibility for directing the SWP in the struggle against these tendencies and towards the Marxist method of dialectical materialism. Trotsky showed how the movement had to focus on the *understanding* of the Soviet Union, and that this could not be achieved simply by attaching a label to it as it seems to be today, saying that that answers the question. It is necessary to understand the emergence of the Soviet Union as it is today as a *process* of development, a historical development in which a whole number of forces have played a role. Seen in this light, Trotsky insisted, the most decisive material force which still remains predominant in the Soviet Union is the overthrow of capitalist social relations which took place in the social revolution in 1917. It was this overturn that still determined the fundamental essence of the Soviet Union, and that overturn had not been reversed by events.

Whereas of course the Stalinist dictatorship within Russia exercised police powers and methods as reactionary in many cases as those of Hitler, and attempted in many ways to carry out brutal and totalitarian methods within the Soviet Union, the fact remained that that bureaucracy rested on property relations fundamentally *different* and fundamentally *opposed* to those of Hitler.

It was absolutely necessary to take these material facts as a starting point in analysing the Soviet Union, and not the moral response or the indignation of people who responded in horror to surface appearances of the bureaucracy without going on to analyse the roots of that bureaucracy.

This understanding of the development of the Soviet Union in 1939 as a historical *process* had to be the key also to the Fourth International's attempts to understand post-war developments. The tragedy was that so few elements within the International grasped the importance of this method. Few were able in fact to apply the method of Marxism in the fight to understand the post-war period. Of course this was hampered vastly by the impact of the Second World War on the International.

As we have sketched in the international documents we have produced, the leading cadres and the most advanced sections in many cases in many countries of the world were slaughtered, persecuted, imprisoned. They were pressed by fascism on the one hand and the bureaucracy on the other, while their own bourgeoisies also attacked the small forces of Trotskyism. The movement suffered tremen-

dously. From its very *strength*, from the very fact that the Fourth International *alone* carried the torch of proletarian internationalism through the second world war, precisely for that reason they suffered the brunt of the attacks of the anti-communists and the forces fundamentally opposed to revolutionary socialism during the war. That, of course, sharpened immeasurably the problems that were faced in the post-war period, because the small, weakened forces, with many of their most principled and dedicated fighters having been sacrificed in the struggles for principle during the war period, had to confront a post-war situation which was completely unexpected. The situation did not fit in with any of the schemas that had been drawn up in the pre-war period. It had to be tackled from that standpoint by a new, often unseasoned leadership, unaccustomed to leading a world movement.

What were the particular problems? Well, firstly, Stalinism had not been destroyed in the course of the war by capitalism, nor had it been overthrown in the course of the war by its working class. Both factors had been very real dangers during the war period, both had come to the surface and had to be contended with by the Stalinist bureaucracy, but neither had in fact taken place. The spontaneous resistance of workers within the Soviet Union to wage cuts and speed-up that had taken place during the war period had lacked conscious leadership and had not been able to remove that parasitic bureaucracy. But at the same time all the military might of imperialism had failed to defeat the workers' state, despite the criminally inadequate and wrong policies through which Stalin attempted bureaucratically to defend relations within the Soviet Union.

So Stalinism remained intact. The restorationist currents within the bureaucracy that had also emerged during the war had not found support within the Soviet Union. That question was one for Trotskyists to solve and it had not, as expected, been resolved during the second world war.

The second problem was that capitalism, which every Trotskyist wanted to believe in the post-war period was about to enter a further period of acute crisis and collapse, was in fact on the verge of entering a sustained period of feverish expansion based not on healthy expansion of the productive forces, but upon exploiting the wreckage, the destruction and the defeats inflicted upon the working class over the previous thirty years—defeats inflicted with the aid of the treacherous leaderships of the working class.

So there was a new situation, which did not immediately show its main features on the surface of events and could not immediately be grasped by the leadership of the Fourth International.

Thirdly, the weakened and isolated nature of the Trotskyist forces cut them off from an ability to intervene within the workers' movement of their own country, left them forced to speculate and to feel their way without the ability to test out and to develop their theories in the practice of the class struggle.

When we come on to examine the shortcomings and problems of the International in that period, we must not in any way underestimate the difficulties they confronted. It would be entirely unscientific simply to say here were these, these, and these wrong theories and wrong positions and therefore all we were dealing with in the post-war period was a bunch of revisionists. That leaves out completely the fact that in order to develop correct positions, in order to develop politically, a *struggle* had to take place. In that post war period a struggle had to be waged simply

to exist as the Fourth International. Things seem much simpler to us today when we look back and see things with the benefit of hindsight.

That does not mean of course that we must pull back from analysing the errors that were made. These errors have affected the whole of the development of the post-war Trotskyist movement. If we look, for instance, at Cannon's *Theses on the American Revolution*, written in 1946, we can say that Cannon both overestimated the stage of acute capitalist crisis, failing completely to see any possibility of the reconstruction of capitalism in the post-war period and, more important still, minimised the crisis of leadership within the working class internationally looking to a whole series of growing revolutionary waves which would eventually bring Trotskyists to the leadership and enable the overthrow of capitalism in a comparatively short space of time.

Within those *Theses*, this position contained two opposites. On the one hand was the strength of Trotskyism, its complete faith and confidence in the ability and the determination of the working class to struggle against imperialism. But on the other hand, there was a dangerously wrong estimate of the way in which those struggles would take place and a failure to stress adequately the necessity for *leadership* within those struggles.

That failure was to characterise many of the problems that subsequently emerged within the International. Probably more important, from 1946/47 onwards, the Fourth International was forced to take a stand on the complex and very uneven evolution of the Buffer Zone countries in the post-war period. This was complicated by the fact that before a coherent theory was worked out on the Buffer Zone question, Tito split with Stalin. This brought a new complication. Yet before the Stalin/Tito split was properly and satisfactorily worked through, there came the decisions of the Third World Congress of the Fourth International in 1951. From then on there was a continuous failure to solve one problem before the next one arose. In 1953 while confusion reigned, there came the emergence of political revolution in East Germany. And the failure of the leadership to seriously attempt to go back to the beginning and to reassess the way in which discussion and positions had emerged on these questions, created an accumulating theoretical problem for the Fourth International, which we are only now beginning consciously to grasp. I think we should emphasise this point. We are only now *beginning* consciously to grasp the problem of theoretical development within the International over the last thirty years, particularly in relation to the problem of Stalinism.

With all these difficulties was combined the problem of new forces that had some history in the Trotskyist movement, coming forward into leadership positions in the post-war period, and wanting simply to fit what was taking place in the very new post-war situation, into the established writings of Trotsky, Lenin and Marx. They wanted to find rigid schemas that they could bring forward from the pre-war period and just fit them round the new events. This would mean they would not have to apply the *method* and the *content* of the theories that were put forward in the earlier period, but that analysis of fresh events could be brought ready-made into the movement. This kind of approach resulted also in a distortion of theory and wrong positions emerging within the movement.

I want to go on to account for these problems of development by examining first what was happening in Eastern

Europe as a whole between 1944 and 1950. I will then move on to examine what happened during a similar period in Yugoslavia and in China, before returning to examine the responses within the Fourth International to these events, and the way that these developed towards the crisis and the split in 1953.

When talking about the extension of nationalised property relations into Eastern Europe and the process that brought that about, the most decisive question is not whether this or that country became a bureaucratised workers' state. The most decisive question in the role of Stalinism internationally is that the Buffer Zone formed a part of an international deal between Stalinism and imperialism. While Stalin had the use and the control over the Buffer Zone countries in the immediate post-war period, this formed part of a scheme in which he cynically traded the selling-out and conscious betrayal of revolutionary struggles particularly in France, in Italy and in Greece, for "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism in the post-war period.

The moves by Stalinism that took place in the Buffer countries can thus only be seen as completely subsidiary to that overall goal and overall drive by Stalinism for the stabilisation of post-war capitalism, and the consolidation of the balance of power with a capitalist class which was racked by deep crisis and in an extreme state of nervousness and exhaustion after the war. This was exactly the time that, given an ounce of leadership and assistance from the Soviet Union, in Italy in particular, and in France and Greece, capitalism could have been overthrown by force of arms by the working class and genuine social revolutions could have taken place. That possibility was consciously sabotaged by the Soviet Union. As Tim Wohlforth says in *The Theory of Structural Assimilation*:

"The whole shape of the post-world-war world was determined not so much by the transformations in the buffer, but rather by restabilisation and the growth of capitalism over two thirds of the world's surface, something that could not have been achieved without the Kremlin's active cooperation."

The second point to stress is the way that the Kremlin approached the question of the Buffer Zone. Why a Buffer Zone? Firstly because the Soviet Union had very nearly been defeated at various points in the war. The basis of the bureaucracy had very nearly been taken away by the military intervention of imperialism. Quite clearly, Stalin as a representative of the bureaucracy was not about to stand back and allow that kind of situation to recur if it could be prevented, but neither was he prepared to utilise what we would see as the main asset of the first workers' state in the world, the international mobilisation of the working classes in their own countries against the bourgeoisie in order to defend the Soviet Union.

Stalin had categorically refused that course of action throughout the whole of the war, even in defence of the Soviet Union. In the post-war period he remained determined not to do so, so there was a situation where in order bureaucratically and militarily to defend the Soviet Union by the most conservative means, Stalin set out to create a 'buffer' of states round the borders of the Soviet Union to guard against the immediate threat of a military attack by imperialism. That was the situation at first. This objective was assisted by the fact that, in the process of the defeat

of German imperialism, the Russian Red Army had marched into many of these countries in any case. The Red Army, that had actually driven out the Nazis, was present in force in those countries. The imperialists, however, mainly concerned with stabilising relations in the major capitalist countries, did not feel in too good a position to attempt to regain those 'buffer' states and were prepared grudgingly to concede them in a deal with Stalin in the post-war settlement.

Stalin also saw these states as a bargaining counter, to be held over in case of further diplomacy and exchanges taking place. By holding these states, Stalin could argue that if imperialism conceded this or that, the states might be ceded back; if no concessions were made, he could threaten that they be absorbed into the Soviet Union.

In addition, we should not forget the fears that Stalin had of revolution on the borders of the Soviet Union. In every area where the Red Army had gone into the buffer countries, they had been greeted by spontaneous revolutionary upsurges of the working class. Factory occupations, demonstrations and strikes were staged by workers throughout these countries, though the workers' movement in many of them had been laid waste for years by fascism and by oppression during the war period. The workers greeted the Red Army, seeing it as a force for revolution. Stalin was not at all confident that if he pulled the Red Army forces out of the Eastern European countries that the native capitalist class—which had been decimated during the war period in those in particular, either as active pro-Nazis, or as active collaborators, while others chiefly consisted of foreign capitalists not on the scene—could restore "order" in those countries.

Stalin saw the danger if the Red Army simply withdrew, that there could be actual *revolutions* on the very borders of the Soviet Union itself, at a time when Stalin was still contending with struggles of his own working class rebelling against further exploitation as a result of the war period.

So this calculation was also a very real factor. There was a need for the Kremlin to halt the movement of the working class before anything further could be done with these buffer countries.

The final factor which was also of importance again related to the internal situation within the Soviet Union, which had suffered massive industrial devastation during the war period. In order to find a rapid way to reestablish the industrial processes Stalin looked around for the most convenient bureaucratic solution.

The most obvious answer was to loot factories, plant and equipment wholesale from the Buffer Zone countries. From this respect also, these countries were of value to the bureaucracy. Whole sections of industry were shipped out by the Red Army for use within the Soviet Union itself.

Now all of these objectives could be satisfied just as well, or better, if these countries were formally speaking *not* workers' states. Certainly if you are going to plunder plant and equipment out of a country in the name of Socialism it is much better if the plundered nation is not regarded as a workers' state. And certainly if you are going to use a country as a bargaining counter with imperialism it is much better if you have not gone the whole hog and actually removed the capitalist class altogether before you offer to trade it back again. In this way many of these questions left a short-term option for Stalin to attempt to retain control over these countries *without* the complete transformation of them into bureaucratised workers' states.

So we find that while this post-war working-class upsurge was at its height; while the factories were being occupied; while the strikes and demonstrations were at their peak, Stalin set out with a policy of establishing a *coalition* government with the *bourgeoisie* in each of these countries. In many cases this meant he had to retrieve the bourgeoisie from imperialist countries where they had fled. As the Nazis had run, so had the native bourgeoisie, scared that they would suffer the same fate as the Nazis' leftover, discredited agents, getting short shrift from the working class.

So in many cases it was necessary for the Stalinists to go and *find* the bourgeoisie to form a 'popular front' coalition with. There is a definite comparison between these efforts and the move towards coalition governments to head off the mass movement in Italy and in France in the immediate post-war period. While Stalinists actually *entered* bourgeois governments in these countries, in the Eastern Bloc countries they *set up* bourgeois governments, to form a coalition. In many cases there are accounts of the way they even had to reconstruct the bourgeois parties themselves. You had the spectacle of soldiers driving round in Red Army vehicles setting up bourgeois and peasant parties in these countries in order to establish the basis of a coalition government.

These coalitions, once established, were the means to syphon away the power from the hands of the popular committees, local committees, occupation committees and peasants' committees that sprang up with the defeat of the Nazis. The objective was to remove local power from these popular organisations, and gather it into the hands of a state power over and above that of the working class. Where necessary, these governments *nationalised* factories in order to get the occupying workers to leave them, and put the control back into the hands of appointed state managers. This was one of the original causes of the nationalisations that took place in the Buffer Zone. In other cases, nationalisation took place for different reasons. In many cases it was made necessary because the factories had been owned by known pro-Nazi employers, who had skipped out of the country as rapidly as possible when they saw the Nazis were going. This left no other way of running the factories except through nationalisation, there was not even any bourgeoisie to take them over. In many cases foreign-owned plants were taken over where again the bourgeoisie failed to take them up and resume production.

After the working class upsurge had begun to die away, after these coalition governments had in most cases established themselves, came the emergence of the Cold War and serious attempts by the imperialists to isolate the Soviet Union and as far as possible weaken it.

Stalin became nervous of the bourgeois element within these coalition governments so close to the borders of the Soviet Union. In particular he began to question whether he could seriously control these areas and use them for their purpose as a military buffer against imperialism, if within the governments of those areas were actual bourgeois elements who could at any point form a rallying point for pro-capitalist elements to fight against the Soviet Union. This was a major turning point in the decision to go towards the all-out transformation of these countries.

It is interesting to see that included among the Buffer Zone countries in the early period were Austria and Finland. While the majority of the Buffer Zone countries were in fact transformed into workers' states, Austria and Finland stopped short at that point. They did not go

through the final process of transformation and of course remain today within the orbit of capitalism though heavily influenced by their border relations with Russia and the deformed workers' states.

This process of transformation was not a preconceived plan. It was in each country within the Buffer Zone an uneven and empirical *process*, designed to *exclude* the independent mobilisation of the masses. It began in almost all cases with increased nationalisations of industry and of the land. It then developed in pace with Cold War pressure, moving on to the elimination and suppression of the bourgeois and peasant parties within the coalition governments within the buffer states.

This was linked to moves to destroy the social power of the petit bourgeoisie, in particular steps taken against retail and wholesale trade, on which the petit bourgeoisie largely functioned in those countries. In the countryside there was a push towards forced collectivisation. Affairs were directed in this way in each of these countries regardless of their national peculiarities. The object was to set up economic colonies functioning on the model of the Soviet Union.

This meant each country was expected to develop as an industrial-based economy on the model of the Soviet Union. There was no attempt at a scientific division of labour on a planned footing. Instead relations stayed on a country-to-country basis between Buffer states and the USSR. Then came the emergence at various points within this development of five-year plans. Also key in the process were the purges to remove various elements from the Stalinist parties of these countries. These purges showed the way in which the process was headed. First out were many bourgeois elements who had recently joined and had been allowed into the Communist Parties as part of the coalition moves. They were now purged as part of the steps towards structurally *transforming* the countries, for which many bourgeois personnel were not sufficiently reliable. Secondly those within the CPs who might be more conservative on the pace of transformation were purged. Third, and most important, almost all those with some roots in the mass movement, or roots in the old CPs from before the war who might possibly seek to defend the national interests of those countries against the overall domination of the Soviet Union, were purged. Particularly feared were those who had the possibility of actually mobilising action against the direct exploitation of their countries by the Soviet Union. These purges were absolutely massive—for instance in the Polish party, 370,000 were purged, in the Czech party 550,000, in Hungary 200,000 and in East Germany 300,000.

All these moves were aimed at setting up an absolutely monolithic Communist Party absolutely subservient and dependable for the Soviet Union. At the same time came the decision to fuse the numerically depleted CPs with the national social democratic parties. The leaders of the social democratic parties had devoted their whole existence to subservience to their own national bourgeoisie. As a result they had become very much accustomed to the idea of simply administering whatever state regime happened to be around. They could therefore provide some safe but experienced personnel to step into leading positions in these monolithic parties.

At the same time there was the massive increase in the

size of the state administration apparatus. In Poland for instance it increased to the point that the state bureaucracy virtually doubled while the population substantially fell as against the pre-war period. The increase in the state administrative bureaucracy was accompanied by a fusing of the party apparatus with the state bureaucracy, so that in a process directed *from above* the state machine and the state bureaucracy was taken over completely by a purged and a monolithised Communist Party.

All these changes in these countries were imposed *from above*, without the involvement and even in many cases despite the feelings of the masses. This period following 1946-47 was not a period of working class upsurge. There was no 'pressure from the masses' on these CPs to lead these actions. Instead it was a period in which the postwar upsurge which had flowed through these countries had been squashed or allowed to die away by the governments in those countries. All of these policies were imposed in a bureaucratic manner by a Stalinist leadership determined to avoid the mobilisation of the masses in the slightest independent action.

The only slight exception to that was in Czechoslovakia, where in order to remove a slightly more stubborn bourgeois element from the coalition, the Communist Party effectively mobilised mass demonstrations and in the end a coup against it. That was the only real exception in the main Eastern European countries to a process in which the masses were consciously excluded while piecemeal and empirical social changes were partly and unevenly taking place in each of these countries.

Tim Wohlforth in *Structural Assimilation*, spells out the impossibility of analysing such a complex process by taking single aspects of developments. He shows the way in which that process is a whole series of *quantitative* changes which at a certain point—extremely hard to define—finally produces a degenerated workers' state. He says,

'No single factor, such as nationalisations, or even the dominance of the CPs, should be viewed in isolation, but rather one must seek to understand the process as a whole. Essentially, structural assimilation is a combined process of the *destruction* of the political and social power of the bourgeoisie through administrative means, the *consolidation* of a monolithic party, which is essentially an extension of the soviet bureaucracy, the *purging* of the state apparatus of the bourgeois elements, and the *fusion* of the party and the state bureaucracy into a single ruling bureaucratic caste'.

Of course we must add that it all took place under the aegis of the Red Army, in many cases physically present in those countries, in other cases implicitly present in that the Buffer Zone had been ceded by imperialism to the 'sphere of influence' of the Soviet Union. The imperialists didn't feel able to combat that process or intervene in those countries in order to hold it back.

What took place there was the crumbling of bourgeois power cracked by its own self-created crisis, and the moving into that vacuum of new forms of government, under conditions where the masses were *not* mobilised and power was at all points kept *out* of the hands of the rank and file of the workers movement and of the peasantry.

This is the general pattern for Eastern Europe. But because of the importance of Yugoslavia in subsequent discussions, I'll go through Yugoslavia in a little more detail just to show the way that it fits and the way that it slightly differs from this pattern.

In Yugoslavia, the partisan struggles against the Nazis

during the war period were led by the CP. The CP was under the leadership of Comintern agent Tito. It was a monolithic CP. Tito had been sent in with the specific command to construct a monolithic CP subservient to Moscow, and had done so. The national bourgeoisie, in many other countries had been prepared in one form or another of a popular front to struggle to a limited extent against the occupying Nazis.

But in Yugoslavia the bourgeoisie saw a threat in its programme that their Communist Party put forward for the partisan struggle.

This was because in order to win a sufficient force to actually challenge the Nazis in Yugoslavia, the Communist Party had to include demands for land reform and nationalisation. When attempts were made to remove that from the programme of the partisans, the peasant forces on which they were dependent threatened to depart. It was therefore impossible for Tito to actually remove those demands, although he would very much have liked to do so then in order to involve the bourgeoisie in the fight.

The call for land reform and nationalisation meant that the national bourgeoisie thought it much preferable to keep the Nazis than to fight with the partisans against them. Indeed they actually fought *with* the Nazis in many instances. The eventual liberation of Yugoslavia concluding the victory against the Nazis and their agents within Yugoslavia, was therefore carried through by the partisan forces under the leadership of the CP.

The coalition deal that was then done—as in every other Eastern European country—was extremely fragile because the vast majority of the Yugoslavian bourgeoisie either met grisly ends at the hands of the partisans or else had decided to avoid that by fleeing the country. So the deal was done by actually *importing* exiles from the United States who were to form part of this coalition, and the Tito/Subasich agreement was drawn up in 1944. It only lasted a few months, despite the efforts of the Stalinists because of the incredibly weak position of the Yugoslav bourgeoisie. The state apparatus, which had been riddled with people who had sided with the Nazis and which had been overthrown by the partisans, had also been completely destroyed in the process of the civil war. Virtually nothing in terms of existing repressive apparatus could hold back the working class in Yugoslavia.

But this did not mean that Tito, even given those conditions, was prepared to move in and legitimise the occupation of the factories that had taken place simultaneously with the victory of the partisans.

In fact the major nationalisations in Yugoslavia, *despite* this weakened position of the bourgeoisie, took place eighteen months *after* they did in Poland or in Czechoslovakia. In other words, simply because capitalism was weakened it did not mean that the Stalinists in any way whatsoever took advantage of that to develop the movement towards transformation. In fact the mass movement that Tito confronted was seen as a problem because of the rapid collapse of the coalition whereas in the other Buffer Zone countries such coalitions lasted for two or three years. It meant that the forward tide of working class struggles hadn't entirely subsided at that point.

It was therefore necessary for Tito to move much more rapidly towards the transformational process than in many other countries in order to head off that movement and control it, and to keep it within the national confines of Yugoslavia. Tito had an advantage in this task. He had a firm base of support within the Communist Party, which he had established and led through the partisan struggle.

This CP had actually controlled distinct areas of the country prior to the complete partisan victory against the Nazis. Tito therefore felt a certain independence from the overall pattern of the Eastern European countries, and felt confident to proceed to the process of structural change within Yugoslavia.

The new constitution of Yugoslavia, which embodied most of the points which were to be commonly adopted by the Eastern European countries later, was actually adopted as early as in 1946. The beginnings of the process of removing the remaining bourgeois elements, nationalising property and so on, began fairly rapidly from that point onwards.

By the time of the 1948 break with Stalin—the break which was later heralded as Tito heading on an independent course in order to lead the victorious Yugoslav revolution—Yugoslavia had *already* virtually completed the transformation process which was to take the other Buffer countries several years more.

The process had simply begun earlier, with less resistance and complications. So when we look at the conflict between Stalin and Tito, we're not looking at a conflict between one man who wants to make a revolution against another who wants to stop him, we're looking at a disagreement over the pace and extent to which Soviet requirements could be imposed upon the economy and the new situation in Yugoslavia.

We're dealing with Tito's resentment of being ordered by Stalin not to give any support whatsoever to the Greek partisan forces with whom the Yugoslav forces on which Tito rested had formed a close fighting relationship. More important still was the question of the economic development within Yugoslavia, because Tito knew that to hold the masses within Yugoslavia within confines it was necessary to provide certain economic—not political—concessions. That would be impossible if the full-scale exploitation of the Yugoslav economy projected by Stalin was to be carried through. This was a basic element in the split between Stalin and Tito.

Stalin for his part of course couldn't allow Tito to stand up against his strategy under conditions where Stalin was still carrying out similar transformations to those in Yugoslavia, at uneven stages of development in the rest of the European Buffer Zone. If Tito could stand up and defy Stalin then Gomulka might also stand up in Poland and the various other leaders might also rebel in the other countries.

From both sides, then, the bureaucratic interests which led to the division between Stalin and Tito can be seen as flowing out of their national requirements and the contradictions they confront as bureaucracies attempting to balance between opposed social forces within their own countries and internationally—particularly in the case of Stalin. Tito was different from the other leaders in that he had a basis to resist Stalin. He had sufficient self-confidence and basis within Yugoslavia to resist Stalin's requirements.

But of course Yugoslavia didn't have the basis to proceed independently to the development of the economy on a national level. And instead of attempting any kind of a principled call within the international workers' movement, Tito preferred to put out an appeal to imperialism for economic assistance and in various ways to lean towards imperialism rather than mobilise the masses within Europe

and internationally. In that, Tito showed that he retained to the full the Stalinist heritage, the bureaucratic method of approaching these questions, seeing it as necessary to hold back the working class at all costs, and seeking a way in which the various forces can be played off one against the other in order to preserve his own position.

But because the break was not—as some subsequently claimed—on ideological grounds, when the reconciliation took place in 1956, and Tito came back into the Stalinist fold, welcomed by Khrushchev, toasted in the blood of the Hungarian workers, it was without any internal ideological problems within the Yugoslavian CP.

The break with the Kremlin had not been carried through as an ideological break, but had been an empirical move based on bureaucratic interests. When bureaucratic interests dictated, Tito and Khrushchev moved back together again.

We should look also at the events in China which to a certain extent show a parallel. One clear parallel is that as in the case of Yugoslavia, nobody in the Trotskyist movement between 1947 and 1949 interpreted the Chinese struggles in the way they described them after the event. Nobody claimed that the Chinese events were an initiative taken by Mao Tse Tung's party as they were to describe them afterwards. Everyone went back to reapproach these questions and substantially rewrite them in order to fit in with later impressions—as was the case with Yugoslavia.

In China as in almost every country there was a post-war upsurge of militancy within the working class movement. In Shanghai there were strikes and occupations with demands for a sliding scale of wages against the Chiang Kai Shek government. There were demonstrations, there was student unrest, and peasant struggles throughout China. This was part of the world wide movement of the working class in the immediate post-war period. But this was precisely the period in which the Chinese CP was most earnestly seeking a coalition with Chiang!

Far from mobilising, developing and strengthening these movements of the working class, Mao's party was hoping for a coalition with an increasingly bankrupt and discredited bourgeois nationalist government, and no lead was given to these struggles.

This is an exact parallel with the moves in Europe and in the Buffer Zone countries by the Stalinists in order to consolidate 'peaceful co-existence'. The problem that Mao faced was that Chiang did not want a coalition. He wanted Mao's head on a plate and the heads of the militants within the Chinese CP. Mao's eventual offensive which began in response to determined moves by Chiang to extinguish the CP once and for all, didn't begin until 1947, after the main post-war upsurge had again fallen away and Chiang had been able to impose massive repression. Chiang found however, as he began to confront the CP, that his administration completely lacked popular support, and was completely discredited in the eyes of the whole population of China.

As one defeat followed another, there were no forces remaining that Chiang could call on to stand up against the offensive of the Chinese CP. It was precisely a sense of such weakness that had brought Chiang to refuse a coalition deal with Mao. Even though Stalin withheld open assistance to Mao, we should point out that in a number of ways the influence of the Soviet Union was of great importance in the eventual victory of the CP-led forces.

Firstly the Chinese CP had been armed by the Soviet Union with equipment that they had taken off the defeated Japanese forces during the war. In this way they were equipped with modern arms capable of setting them up as a full-scale army. Secondly, the industry within Manchuria that Stalin had ceded back to Chiang was destroyed. The means of production were put out of commission before they were handed back. In other words, a major economic base was not returned to Chiang, though of course the act of ceding the territory back could well be questioned.

Thirdly, and most importantly, the *international* balance of forces between imperialism and the USSR, combined with the internal problems of the imperialist countries led to the decision that they were unable to intervene at that point. It was ruled out under conditions where they estimated that by intervening they could well confront a decision by the USSR to intervene on behalf of the Chinese CP.

Even after the fall of Chiang after 1949, Mao's objective was not initially to construct a workers' state. He set out instead to try and create a new coalition. Only the private holdings that had been deserted by their owners were taken over. Other whole sections of substantial holdings and capitalist enterprise remained, and though the capitalist class was defeated, it was actually propped up and put in a position of influence by the Stalinists' continued craving for popular front regimes.

Mao in 1949 stated explicitly that 'Our policy is to restrict capitalism, not to eliminate it'. It was much more gradually and in a much less planned manner than in Eastern Europe that the social changes took place in China. The old state apparatus was retained for a long period, with many of the old bourgeois personnel still in their offices; and it was only gradually, and without at any point the real involvement of the masses, that the steps towards the structural transformation in China were taken.

Firstly, under the pressure of capitalism, steps were taken to suppress and then eliminate the bourgeois parties and cliques from the coalition and from high office within the administration. Secondly, steps were taken to purge and to change the composition of the CP. Thirdly, a process of nationalisation of bourgeois holdings took place from above and of course, moves to merge the party and the state apparatus in China. This process was *not* carried out under the instructions or direct control of the USSR, but there was no evidence at the time that Stalin disagreed with Mao's course of action.

Despite the fact that capitalism had to all intents and purposes been defeated and crushed in China in 1949, the dictatorship of the proletariat was not declared there until 1956. Throughout that period, the relationships with the Kremlin had been close.

We can say therefore that the CCP was a *Stalinist* party throughout that period of struggle and throughout the period of transformation. It never departed from Stalinism, and it was the most enthusiastic supporter of the Kremlin attack on the Hungarian workers in 1956.

It would be absolutely wrong to allow impressions of divisions that developed subsequently to make us attempt to backdate them. Undoubtedly differences *did* develop later. But it is essential in defending the basic method of Trotskyism to see the processes that brought these differences as *processes*, and not simply attempting to label or backdate the finished result. To start today, for instance, from the various positions being taken by Maoism and simply say that Maoism has *always* been this or that, going

back to find instances that prove the case, would be obviously ridiculous. It was a similarly false and deceptive method applied by Pablo, which did great damage to the building of the Trotskyist movement.

What I'm going to do now in analysing the response of the Fourth International to these events, is to work through in a fairly chronological way, the way the struggle and the different positions developed.

And the aspect that we are going to centre on is summed up in Trotsky's *In Defence of Marxism*,

"The primary political criterion for us is not the transformation of property relations in this or another area, however important these may be in themselves, but rather the change in the consciousness and organisation of the world proletariat, the raising of their capacity for defending former conquests and accomplishing new ones.

From this one, and the only decisive standpoint, the politics of Moscow, taken as a whole, completely retains its reactionary character, and remains the chief obstacle on the road to the world revolution."

(*In Defence of Marxism*, p. 19)

We have to look at the way that the Fourth International approached the questions of Russia and Eastern Europe in the post-war period. Firstly, we should look at the initial approaches by Mandel (writing as Germain). Mandel looked at the way in which the Kremlin bureaucracy as the centrepiece in the Stalinist movement was now forced to balance between the classes in a new world situation in which it was no longer so simple, as pre-war, to attempt to play off one imperialist nation, or one bloc, against another. Instead, the socialised property relations in the USSR had to be defended against a world-wide bloc of imperialist countries which had all been shown in the course of the war to be implacably hostile to socialism and the social system within Russia.

But at the same time the bureaucracy was completely unable to call in any way upon the international strength of the working class movement, because the mobilisation of the working class would question the bureaucracy's own role and would challenge the stability of Stalinism within the USSR itself. Mandel wrote a document in 1947 going into detail on these questions and showed how the bureaucratic answer to this was to establish the Buffer Zone. He pointed to Trotsky's *In Defence of Marxism* for a method to analyse the changes in the Buffer Zone. Comrades will recall that Trotsky in *In Defence of Marxism* sketches out the possible stages of development if the Kremlin bureaucrats should decide to assimilate Finland or Poland in the USSR in the pre-war period. He sketches the way in which that could be done from above, in a bureaucratic manner, in a way similar to that we have sketched out in discussing Eastern Europe. Trotsky demonstrates theoretically how that process could be conducted in a counterrevolutionary way. But in his hypothetical account, Trotsky included one key factor which turned out in most cases not to be borne out by events—that is the partial and controlled involvement of the masses.

Mandel however picked on this aspect and made it his centrepiece in declaring that because the masses had not been mobilised in any way in Eastern Europe, therefore it was impossible to assimilate all the elements of bourgeois property into a workers' state formation. For that reason,

Mandel argued, the Buffer had to be regarded as capitalist states. He said,

"But in order to completely assimilate a given territory, that is to say, in order to expropriate and destroy as a class the landed proprietors and capitalists, the bureaucracy is compelled—even if in a limited way and with the aim of always controlling it and crushing it where necessary—to call upon the autonomous action of the masses...because of this...because the bureaucracy fears the autonomous action of the masses like the plague, it will be unable to accomplish assimilation except on a relatively limited scale."

Mandel thus latched on to one part of *In Defence of Marxism* and attempted to apply it in a fixed way to the post-war period. This provided a wrong basis for estimating the process of change in Eastern Europe, because, as we have just seen, it was not so much a mobilisation of the masses that brought the transformations in Eastern Europe, as the state of collapse of domestic and of international capitalism in the face of the threat of action by the Soviet Union and the parties it had established in the Buffer Zone. That collapse was the decisive factor, and Mandel's search for instances of mobilisation of the working class became a dead end search leading to all kinds of wrong positions and impressionism. In 1947, however, Mandel's analysis of Yugoslavia was as follows:

"The beginning of structural assimilation corresponds to a very revolutionary pressure in Yugoslavia, but the nature of the economy and the state remains bourgeois. Nevertheless the relations of forces are such that the bourgeoisie finds itself for the moment at the mercy of an action by the proletariat. It is only the bureaucracy's fear both of the proletariat and of imperialism which restrains it from dealing the native capitalists a death blow."

In other words, Mandel in 1947 clearly sees the possibility of revolution should the bureaucracy have chosen to mobilise a mass struggle against imperialism. He clearly defines the Tito leadership as a *bureaucracy*, which holds back from that step because of its mortal fear both of the working class and of imperialism. And Mandel concludes his examination of the Buffer Zone:

"All these buffer countries, including Yugoslavia, will however be exposed to an especially powerful pressure from imperialism. It is not excluded that in this case the Communist Parties, basing themselves firmly on the revolutionary aspirations of the masses, will move forward and abolish the remnants of bourgeois power and property."

Again the notion that the masses have to be involved there somewhere, and that it is impossible to impose social change from above, in a bureaucratic fashion, creeps into even this detailed study by Mandel—a study which is about the nearest to a thorough and serious examination of the question in the immediate post-war period. The slogan that Mandel put forward as a result was "For the immediate withdrawal of all Red Army troops from the Buffer Zone countries", to focus on the need for the revolution to be carried through independently by workers themselves in the countries. That orientation formed the basis of a major resolution passed by the International leadership in 1947, which did not differentiate in any way between Yugoslavia and the rest of the Buffer Zone. It included Eastern Europe as a whole, with which Yugoslavia had simply gone further in the uneven process of transformation.

In general, however, Mandel upholds the view in 1947 that all of the Buffer Zone countries are still capitalist. He held on to that position until he collapsed in front of Pablo, and began putting a completely different position in 1951.

Of course Mandel never looked back after that and has remained collapsed before Pablo from that day to this.

In 1949 the International Executive passed a resolution which declared, "There is an undeniable existence of a police regime in Yugoslavia." That was in April 1949; but by December of that year, Pablo had begun to challenge this whole position and to question the analysis that had taken place. And in May 1950, Pablo developed the argument further to declare that:

"A revolution of a special development had taken place in Yugoslavia and it led up to a seizure of power, to a radical transformation of the capitalist property relations, and the destruction of the old capitalist state and the construction of a new state apparatus."

That was Pablo's opening shot in his offensive against the established position of the International on the role of the Stalinist party in the buffer states. And when Pablo had to confront the obvious gap in time between the CP-led partisans driving out the capitalists in 1944, and the structural transformation of Yugoslavia, which was still gradually taking place only from 1947 onwards, he did so by quoting the Titoites:

"They [the Titoites] insist that none of the political and social conquests of the struggle was endangered by the [Tito-Subasich] 1944/45 coalition with the bourgeoisie, for the simple reason that the reaction had no real base among the masses and that the coalition was realised at the top between representatives of the masses and impotent shadows of the bourgeoisie."

So if the Titoites say nothing wrong happened, then according to Pablo nothing wrong happened. Pablo set aside any idea that the revolutionary process might have actually been held back by the formation by the CP of a coalition with the remnants of the bourgeois class in Yugoslavia.

Pablo then proceeded to rewrite completely every account of Yugoslavia that had been put forward up to that point. He denied, for instance, the established Trotskyist view that the people's committees that were set up in the cities in Yugoslavia after 1944 were formed *from above* by the CP as *bureaucratic* organs specifically to *control* the working class and to limit its actions.

Pablo claimed instead that the workers were continuously active and mobilised from 1941 to 1948, and he quotes Tito's constitution to prove it. In fact Tito's constitution *does* of course say that they were active. Pablo goes on to claim—again completely in defiance of the positions that had been passed and adopted by the Fourth International—that the period of real ascendancy of the Yugoslavian revolution which resulted in a radical change of property relations, is situated precisely *between 1945 and 1948*—in other words, *precisely* the period in which the Yugoslavian CP actually did step in to stem the movement of the masses, and attempted in every way to shackle that movement. Pablo declared that this very period was the high point of the Yugoslavian revolution—the point recurs about five or six times in this 1950 document. Pablo went on to term the leadership of the Yugoslavian CP as 'partly bureaucratic', and says that the peoples' committees were

'led by a party which, for all its other merits, went through a Stalinist education and still maintained relations with Moscow'.

He is conspicuously silent as to what these 'other merits' are. Pablo added:

"Is it surprising that, freed from the yoke of Moscow (this is now alluding to the 1948 split between Tito and

Stalin) the Yugoslavian revolution raises itself to new heights, becomes constantly more democratic, etc., etc.?"

Every one of these revisionist arguments starts from the *appearances* of events and the 'left' rhetoric being used by Tito to justify both his stand against the Soviet bureaucracy and his descent to unprincipled deals with imperialism.

Pablo uses surface appearance as a starting point and then attempts to explain surface appearances by *rewriting* history, actually retrospectively rationalising the positions held by the bureaucracy. From these positions Pablo draws the conclusion that:

"Certain CPs in a favourable conjuncture, when they are linked to the real revolutionary movement of the masses, can detach themselves from the yoke of the Kremlin and begin to act on their own. To regard every victory achieved by a CP as synonymous with a victory of Stalinism is an absurd generalisation and a mistake."

Here we have the emergence of the notion that by initiating a "revolutionary" process that Pablo has just retrospectively fabricated on the basis of impressions, the Yugoslav party *broke* from Stalinism and became—at least in a partial form—a *revolutionary* force. Such a revision does not jeopardise orthodox Trotskyism, according to Pablo, because the Yugoslav events were not really a product of Stalinism at all, since according to him the Yugoslav CP *ceased* to be Stalinist!

1950 was the start of the preparation of the Third World Congress of the Fourth International, and as part of the preparation Pablo wrote the now completely notorious document *Where Are We Going?* In this document, Pablo went much further than his document on Yugoslavia. He erected an entire theory on the observations of empirical phenomena, things on the surface.

Firstly, Pablo said that the apparently permanent consolidation and expansion of Stalinism after the war meant that the world could now not be seen in class terms any more. Instead he advised the terminology of "the two camps"—"imperialism" on one hand, "Stalinism" on the other.

Now this leads directly *away from* the independent role of the working class. If you say you have the "imperialist camp" over here which is hostile to the USSR, and the "Stalinist camp" over here which is generally in favour of it, then you eliminate completely the independence of the working class in fighting *both* capitalism in the imperialist countries, and fighting the Stalinist bureaucracy in the degenerate workers' states.

The position leads away from any independent role either in defending the workers' states, or in overthrowing capitalism. In the same way, by eliminating the independent role of the working class, the path was cleared for the other notorious Pabloite conception of an imminent Third World War. Of course there were Cold War conditions which we find it hard to imagine now; there were very real tensions; there was a situation of massive witch-hunt against Trotskyists and communists of all types in the post-war period. It is not entirely realistic for us to brush this aside and say in 1977 "How could anybody even dream of a Third World War straight after the Second?"

On the other hand, the way in which the Third World War was put forward as a concept ignored completely the role of the working class in the developed countries in fight-

ing their own bourgeoisie during the course of such a war. No policy of any description was put forward for the independent struggle of workers to *prevent* such a War. Pablo made the War idea absolutely central:

"To understand that capitalism is now heading toward war, for it has no other short or long term way out, and that this process cannot be stopped short of the unavoidable destruction of the regime, is equivalent of describing a fundamental law in the evolution of the international situation."

So the War concept is a main axis, not simply an accidental trimming by Pablo. It is now simply a question, says Pablo, of how soon it all takes place, not whether or where, just how soon. Linked to this is then brought in the question of the defence of the USSR. It is this which leads in to the concept of "War-revolution"—the idea that because the USSR will have to defend itself against the whole of the imperialist world, therefore the Kremlin will be forced to call upon the CPs in every country to launch civil war against their own bourgeoisie.

Thus, claimed Pablo, by fighting for the defeat of capitalism in this new war, the Soviet bureaucracy will actually give the lead, wittingly or unwittingly, to the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism internationally, and, of course, to itself, because once capitalism goes, then so does the base of the bureaucracy.

In this context, Pablo brings in the views that he began to develop on Yugoslavia, also now increasingly extended to include China. Pablo declared:

'the Communist Parties retain the possibility in certain circumstances of roughly outlining a revolutionary orientation, that is to say, of finding themselves compelled to engage in a struggle for power. . .

Under these *exceptional conditions*, the mass movement, which found only the Communist Parties available as a channel, compelled these parties to go further than their leaderships and above all the Kremlin would have wished, and literally pushed them into power.'

The proposal for entry into the CPs is not actually included in Pablo's discussion document, or in the Third World Congress resolutions of 1951. Such calls were added later on by Pablo, after the Congress was complete. The *Theses on Orientation and Perspectives* which were adopted at the Congress (and remember this was voted for *not* just by Pablo, but by Pablo and the *whole* of the leadership of the Fourth International) said:

"It would be anti-Marxist not to recognise the possibility that CPs placed in favourable conditions may possibly see themselves obliged to undertake a struggle for power against the possessing classes and imperialism... this is proved by the experiences of the CPY and in part by the CP of China... To affirm that the weight of the bureaucratic apparatus will prove more decisive under all conditions than the weight of pressure of the masses would be anti-Marxist."

Now here you have a specific, deliberate reversal, a *revision* of the Transitional Programme. When the Programme states that the pressure of the movement of the masses is in the long term more powerful than the pressure of the bureaucratic apparatus, it is *specifically* in the context of building an independent Marxist leadership, in the context of the masses being headed by parties of the Fourth International. Not in any other context. It emerges in a whole section dealing with the crisis of leadership within the working class. To divorce it from that, and just

say that the masses, irrespective of the bureaucratic weight of their leadership, can take the power, is to deny the purpose of any form of Marxist party whatever.

Such a view, however, was endorsed by the Third World Congress. This is the stage that capitulation to surface appearances had reached within the movement: people were almost universally accepting the positions that were being argued by Pablo, precisely because they *corresponded to appearances*. Pablo's ideas were not just snatched out of nowhere, they corresponded to the appearances of the situation. And unless his opponents went to a lot of trouble to dig beneath these appearances and probe to the processes that brought them about, you could only see through Pablo from an extremely limited standpoint.

Another section from the same resolution reads:

"In the long run, objective conditions determine the character and dynamics of the movement of the masses, which, raised to a certain level, can overcome all subjective obstacles on the road to revolution."

What need, then, for a Trotskyist party, what need of independent cadres to lead that struggle?

"It is not excluded that certain CPs, with the bulk of their forces, can be pushed out of the strict orbit of the Soviet bureaucracy and can project a revolutionary orientation."

All this was passed at the Congress.

'While the counterrevolutionary role of the Soviet bureaucracy remains unchanged, its possibility of successfully performing this role is determined not by its subjective desires, but by an objectively revolutionary situation.

Developments in Yugoslavia and China are only a prefiguration of the events to come'.

Throughout that section on the Stalinist bureaucracy, there is *no* mention of the fight to build Trotskyist parties in those countries. It goes on to Tasks of the Fourth International.

'In countries where the majority of the working class still follows the CP, our organisation, necessarily independent, (this is before any call to liquidate the Stalinist parties) should orientate towards more systematic work among the ranks of these parties and the masses they influence. In the Peoples Democracies, our supporters who are not known should try to integrate themselves into the CPs'.

Those Communist Parties are ones which had had hundreds and thousands of people purged from them as dissident elements; they were CPs formed specifically *from above* as monolithic arms of Soviet policy within those countries; they had been *fused* with the state apparatus, and formed as the basis of a bureaucratic system of government.

Yet here Trotskyists are actually suggesting that Trotskyists who are not known should try and 'integrate' themselves into the CPs and remain there, 'in order to take advantage of the revolutionary possibilities that will develop'. That was *passed* at the Congress.

If the Congress was prepared to sanction this kind of policy and was in a state where no substantial opposition was put up to them, then quite obviously it was a fairly small extension from here when Pablo proceeded to claim liquidation into the European mass CPs was part of the policies endorsed by the conference. It was not actually written down, but this was the political conclusion that did indeed flow from the resolutions.

The same Congress actually passed *two* resolutions on the buffer countries—one on Yugoslavia, and one on all

the rest. In this way Yugoslavia could be singled out as a special case and all of Pablo's conceptions embodied in the resolution which declared:

'Stalinism can be defined as the subordination of the interests of workers of every country to those of the Soviet bureaucracy. The CPY, beginning in 1941, outlined an orientation which was to lead to the break of 1948, and because of this fact ceased to be a stalinist party in the full meaning of the word. The difference in orientation between the CPY and that followed by the other CPs of Europe was affected in the first place by the pressure of the masses'.

There was no call in that resolution for the building of a Trotskyist party in Yugoslavia. Obviously if the pressure of the masses could in fact break the most monolithic CP in that part of the world from Stalinism, and force it to project a course towards the taking of a power, this quite obviously questions the necessity of a Trotskyist party anywhere. It goes on:

'Beginning with this time, the CPY has ceased to be a semi-Stalinist party and evolved as a centrist party carried to power by the revolutionary masses. In this connection the positions and the attitude of the CPY towards Trotskyism, either openly or by attempting to ignore it, acquires considerable political importance. What is involved is not merely a historic rectification of the past, it is the test of whether a workers' current which emerged from Stalinism has succeeded in linking itself with the traditional programme of Bolshevism, and thereby definitively and decisively surmounting capitalism'.

We can now see strong parallels between that method of approach and the various overtures being made and conciliatory articles and debates between the USFI and the Stalinists today. You now have Mandel urging Carrillo to 'complete his break' with Stalinism by actually calling for workers democracy and allowing the right to form tendencies within his own party and so on.

The Third Congress resolution explicitly *rewrote* and went back and '*corrected*' the previous positions of the Fourth International. It was adopted with only a few people against it.

It would be nice if we could now line up all the forces that were fighting against this line for a correct line on Yugoslavia and Eastern Europe. But only a handful of individuals in the Fourth International took up a stand for the fight to build Trotskyist parties in Yugoslavia and China. The opposition was hamstrung by the same political weakness. On the one hand Mandel clung to the fact that since the masses hadn't been involved, Yugoslavia and all these other Eastern European countries theoretically ought to be still *capitalist* countries. When Mandel actually began to move from this position, he moved very dramatically and in such a way that while he toned down some of Pablo's more dramatic statements, he ended up drafting 'Ten Theses'. These were put forward at the Third Congress by the French section—against Mandel's own wishes. No vote was actually taken on the document. But the Ten Theses were only marginally better than the original account by Pablo, because they *accept* that the Yugoslavian and Chinese CPs are different and it actually says:

'In the coming revolutionary upsurge in Western Europe during the period of preparation and unleashing of war, the growing pressure of the masses is liable to force the

French and Italian CPs to modify their pacifist course of 'neutralising' the bourgeoisie. These parties could then . . . project a revolutionary orientation and see themselves forced to undertake a struggle for power . . .'

The document goes on to draw conclusions for Western Europe as well:

'during the period of preparation and unleashing of war, the growing pressure of the masses is liable to force the French and Italian CPs to modify their pacifist course of neutralising the bourgeoisie. These parties could then project a revolutionary orientation and see themselves forced to undertake a revolutionary struggle for power'.

In other words a theory based on a misunderstanding of events in Eastern Europe is actually directed by Mandel into the class struggle in the *whole* of Europe. But Mandel attempts to get away from the worst excesses of Pablo's position, declaring that 'it is one thing to project a revolutionary orientation, another to accomplish a revolution, therefore its possible only that the Yugoslavian or Chinese experience be repeated in the middle East maybe or Eastern Asia but not in Western Europe'.

He goes on to say that Stalinist parties are not reformist parties because 'they can conquer power in an independent fashion'. That's the difference that Mandel draws between them! In other words while opposing Pablo on a certain level particularly on the notion of imperialism and Stalinism as blocs and camps, at the same time Mandel wavers between Pabloism and orthodox positions. He was unable to fully develop a critique or present an independent position.

In 1951 the French section wrote an attack on Pablo's document 'Where Are We Going?' This was written by Bleibtreu, a leading member in 1951, but again started out from the conception that the Yugoslavian and Chinese CPs were *centrist* parties that broke from Stalinism and then led revolutions.

Within that framework Bleibtreu then criticises correctly many of the more appalling aspects of Pablo. This was one of the documents that we least understood when we carried through the struggle for a understanding of the Fourth International in the early period of the split from the WRP.

During the split we actually quoted chunks from Bleibtreu's document, little realising the importance of that weakness in his whole approach.

In America an individual called B. Lens and a comrade called Irving Steiner got together in 1950 to write a very sharp attack on the editorial line of the *Militant*, the SWP's paper, stressing the need for political independence of the working class.

'Fight with Yugoslavian workers against the possible Stalinist invasion? Fight with them against an actual ideological barrage? Absolutely. Support Tito in this fight? Not for an instant. But the most important thing is to build a party in Yugoslavia.'

These seem to be about the only people who ever raised that rather impolite question about building a Trotskyist party in Yugoslavia. Nobody else even thought it necessary to mention it. None of the main international documents actually put such a line forward. In England there was no opposition. Healy backed the position of Pablo.

He voted also for Pablo expelling the French majority

in 1952. In taking this step Pablo had of course gone further than the Third Congress resolution. He had actually instructed the French section to do entry work within the French CP. According to Pablo, this meant that the entire internal and external work of the Trotskyist organisation would thus have as its aim to speed up the radicalisation of the Stalinist workers and the development of a revolutionary leadership emerging basically from *within* that Stalinist movement.

The whole of the Trotskyist movement in Pablo's view had to be directed towards waiting for progressive leftwing currents to emerge out of Stalinism and the political independence of the movement was to be strictly subordinated to that. Now under those conditions it doesn't matter whether Pablo was proposing the whole of the movement going into the CP, or only half of it. In fact at that point he *didn't* advocate that everyone should go into the CP, he proposed an independent apparatus be retained to provide material aimed at their work within the CP. The political conditions within the CP and the perspective proposed by Pablo were so inadequate and so wrongly motivated that the turn could only end in the *liquidation* of the Trotskyist parties into Stalinism. Rather than draw Stalinist workers towards Trotskyism, the reverse process would be taking place with the loss of the precious cadres of the Fourth International. The French majority rejected this step, resisted it fiercely, and were expelled in 1952 by Pablo—with the full support of Healy and Cannon—for refusing to implement this policy.

To move on to the question of the 1953 split. Three events within the mass struggle of the working class internationally served as a motive force for the split with Pabloism in 1953.

Firstly the East German uprising, which was the first manifestation of the political revolution. Workers, arms in hands, were fighting to depose the Stalinist bureaucracy that had been imposed upon them by the development of the East German Buffer state into a workers state. By showing the independent movement of the working class, that uprising within what was supposedly a 'stalinist camp' showed the completely fraudulent nature of the blocs-and-camps theory, and showed the urgent need for an independent programme of Trotskyism to lead such movements in the workers' states.

All of a sudden it was realised that the Fourth International had no such programme developed in the postwar period. It didn't have any, and much of its publicity material, many of its publications, refused to put the call, for example, for the withdrawal of the Red Army from East Germany during those upheavals.

Secondly the French general strike was sold out by the Communist Party. This was the party which was supposedly going to be 'pressured' by the movement of the masses into projecting an orientation towards power. But instead it sold out the general strike, with the Pabloite forces failing to criticise it, saying that it wasn't really the job of a trade union to contend with political issues.

Thirdly of course the death of Stalin brought to a head the question of political revolution in Russia itself, and the question of what leadership was necessary to lead it. There

was some juggling around by the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union with economic reforms and various so-called 'liberalisation' measures, which were taken as good coin by the Pabloites and being put out as indications that the masses were 'pressuring' the bureaucracy to the left.

It was under these conditions that the British and Americans saw the emergence within their own parties of Pablo-sponsored factions, actually advocating these positions within their own parties and trying to worm them into the Trotskyist press in their own countries. At the same time some of the illusions had been slightly dispelled in Yugoslavia. Healy for instance was able to write in May 1953 to Cannon:

'Take this talk about Stalinism: impatient comrades thinking in terms of China, Eastern Europe and now even the USSR, see the impact of the post-war revolutionary forces, but fail to recognise one vital thing; that as far as we know, we have not one single organised cadre group in these areas'.

In other words, Healy was now at last beginning to cotton on to the fact that something had been missing from all the discussion and the high-flown theories that had been put out by Pablo—and that is, any direction towards the building of *parties*. In this way the experience of these slightly older, more experienced forces with a base in their own working class, coming together with response to the struggles taking place, began to come into conflict with the theorising and web-spinning of Mandel and Pablo.

When these parties began to be threatened by Pabloite policies, the question became of immediate relevance. The British section between May and September completely reversed its position. In May Healy defended Pablo against Cannon; by September he was denouncing him as virtually a Stalinist and attempting in every way to compare the Pablo administration to the Comintern.

There was a similar rapid turn in the SWP. Until the middle of 1953 they were taking very little interest and not bothered at all about the line being taken by the International. This hardly affected their orientation within America. Suddenly the SWP swung from indifference to issuing the Open Letter in November, making a call to break with Pabloism, and all of a sudden dragging up a whole series of well-founded but newly-discovered political criticisms of Pabloism.

Such rapid turns can only be accounted for by both the response of those leaderships to the problems of their own parties, and the way that those problems reflected the developments and the new situation in the international class struggle. But they took place only on the most sketchy theoretical basis, in particular the SWP and the British both continued to defend the positions adopted at the Third Congress, positions which Healy was so embarrassed about that if you look through *Trotskyism versus Revisionism* you will see it begins immediately *after* the Third Congress, and does not reprint any of that material. Healy also abstains consciously from printing any Pabloite material at all, making it very difficult to judge what the British and the SWP were polemicising against. In fact the whole affair becomes detached from time once you take away the sequence of events and remove the statements and documents of Pablo. Healy makes it very difficult to understand the split and to reapproach it today.

The charges of revisionism against Pablo in the Open Letter were all taken from the period *following* the Third Congress, and *none* of them attempt to trace where those positions had come from. They take up four issues. Firstly,

the failure to call for political revolution in the Soviet Union; secondly, the failure to present an independent programme in East Germany; thirdly, the betrayal by the Pabloites in the French General Strike; and fourthly, that Pablo secretly promoted factions and used Stalinist-type methods against the sections within the Fourth International.

All of these charges were absolutely well-founded. There is no reason to quibble about them being included. But none of them goes to the real problem of the disorientation of the Fourth International.

Those supporting the Open Letter were rapidly expelled by Pablo from the International before many people even realised what was going on. For that reason many sections, bemused by the lack of prior discussion, confused by the situation, unable at that point to chart an independent theoretical course of any description, failed to carry through the split with Pablo. The split was therefore confined largely to the British, French and American sections. In 1954, the inadequacy of the split was confirmed by the fact that the Pabloites went on to hold what they called the 'Fourth World Congress', in which the resolution, *The Rise, Decline, and Perspectives for the Fall of Stalinism*, managed scarcely to mention the East German uprising, but went on to say absurdly:

"The revolutionary tide which the Soviet bureaucracy is no longer capable of smashing and arresting is even being nourished by certain of its methods of self-defence applied by the bureaucracy."

In other words, the Pabloites ignored all of the lessons and questions that emerged from East Germany, turning even in 1954 to say that the bureaucracy was digging its own grave.

The resolution went on to specify the way that the Pabloite positions were an extension of the Third Congress positions, and in particular to spell out the logical conclusion of the Third Congress positions on Yugoslavia and China. It says that since the Chinese CP, and to a certain extent also the Yugoslav CP, are both in reality:

"bureaucratic centrist parties which however still find themselves under the pressure of the proletariat in these countries, we do not call upon the proletariat of these countries to constitute new revolutionary parties or to prepare political revolution in these countries."

That is the *Rise and Decline of Stalinism*, and it specifically states that it is an *extension* and not a reversal of the Third Congress. If you look at the points I have drawn out of the Congress decisions, you can see it was indeed simply spelling out the realities that had been included implicitly in the congress resolution.

Since the major questions of method had not been confronted in 1953, and the forces of the new International Committee concentrated merely on disagreement with Pabloism rather than establishing mutual agreement, there was very little in the way of an answer to the revisionist analysis put forward by Pablo from the forces that considered themselves 'orthodox Trotskyists'. This was the real weakness of the IC, despite its correct break in 1953.

But in the aftermath of the Hungarian events, the Pabloite faction held a Fifth World Congress in 1957, at which they adopted an even more appalling document, *The*

Decline and Fall of Stalinism. This repeated all of the old eulogies of the Yugoslav CP—which had since joined hands with the Kremlin in the repression of Hungary—peddled illusions in the 'left' leadership of the Polish CP which had been installed by the Kremlin in order to head off similar movements in Poland as had taken place in Hungary, and uttered no call anywhere for the necessity of building Trotskyist parties in Eastern Europe.

Some of the worst aspects of that document are taken up very sharply in an article by Bill Hunter, of the British Section, entitled *Under a Stolen Flag*. But at the same time Cannon in the USA in 1957 was saying that 'The political pronouncements of the two sides appear to come closer together than in the period prior to the formal split. If the thinking of the two sides would continue to evolve in the same way, then they both would have to consider the question of unity'—this was Cannon's response to *The Decline and Fall of Stalinism*, and it gave a hint as to the dangers besetting the International Committee as a result of its lack of political agreement on method.

It was around the Cuban events that the weaknesses of the IC were most openly displayed. While the events in Cuba [as detailed in *Trotskyism Today* number 1] had many similarities to the processes outlined in post-war East Europe, there were, of course, particular problems to be tackled, and which proved too much for those who based themselves on impressions, and equally incomprehensible for those who merely clung to wooden "orthodoxy".

The right wing Batista dictatorship was overthrown in 1959 by petty bourgeois nationalist forces led by Fidel Castro. Initially the new regime looked to implement a fairly radical programme, aimed mainly at the big land-owners and against foreign capitalist investment in Cuba. In particular they opposed the American sugar producers that imposed virtually colonial exploitation on the Cuban economy.

But the Castro government was not at first anti-capitalist. In the initial period after the downfall of Batista the first move was to set up a coalition government comprising both Castroites and representatives of the liberal bourgeoisie who also wanted to dismantle the most repressive aspects of Batista's regime and restrict US economic domination.

At first Castro was opposed to the Soviet Union from a nationalist standpoint. But as expropriation of US holdings in Cuba got underway, reprisals were taken which drove Castro towards the USSR. The US government broke off all purchases of sugar in a bid to sabotage the main bedrock of the Cuban economy and create a situation in which Castro could be overthrown by the right wing.

But the Soviet bureaucracy, for its own purposes, took over this trade, providing vital assistance to Castro. Why did they come to the direct aid of this particular petty-bourgeois nationalist regime on the very doorstep of the USA? The reason is to be found not in Cuba but in the problems confronted by the Stalinist bureaucracy in the USSR itself.

Kruschev faced an extremely serious problem. The development of the Intercontinental Ballistic Missile had tipped the balance of forces in the arms build up in favour of the USA. But in the Soviet Union similar developments were being held back by an acute economic crisis, and problems in controlling the working class. The large sums of

money necessary for such a programme were not available. But Khrushchev, to preserve his prestige at home and abroad needed to find some way of redressing the balance. The Cuban situation seemed to offer an opening for this, with the chance of establishing a low-cost military threat to the USA.

If this were to proceed it would not be enough to have a nationalist regime in Havana—Castro had to be drawn more and more into a bloc with the Kremlin, to ensure that there was a firm basis of support.

So as Kennedy responded to Castro's further expropriations by escalating to a full-scale economic blockade on Cuba, the Castro regime found itself driven further into the open arms of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Under combined Soviet and US pressure, the bulk of private property in Cuba was taken over by the Castroite regime.

The Kremlin's part in these affairs paid no regard to the interests of Cuban workers. Stalinist involvement was based on a calculation of international diplomacy and the quest for *global* 'peaceful coexistence' with imperialism. The Missiles Crisis of 1962 came and went without reference to Havana. The whole affair was one conducted between Washington and Moscow.

The Cuban Communist Party also played its role in the Kremlin's efforts at sucking Castro into the Stalinist orbit. The CP had earlier supported the Batista dictatorship—even had a minister in his wartime government. CP leaders had attacked Castro. But under Moscow directives they began, shortly before the final fall of Batista, to move closer to Castro's movement.

Castro himself needed a means of controlling and intervening within the working class movement as a whole a task that his July 26 movement could not carry out. The CP had such an apparatus, it had a political organisation which could be used for such a purpose. The CP, which also sought to control the working class in the interests of Kremlin foreign policy, was able to see a common interest emerging after the overthrow of Batista and stepped up their moves towards the Castroites.

As the American blockade and economic pressures were intensified Castro needed to rally popular support within Cuba for the measures he was forced to take, while of course he had no intention of allowing things to overstep the mark and actually raise questions of workers' control. He wanted to keep the mobilisation very much within certain confines. This too lined up with what the CP wanted to take place in Cuba—the very last thing the Stalinists wanted to see was an independent mobilisation of the working class.

In 1961 there was an attempt to fuse the CP with the July 26 Movement. But in Cuba, unlike the East European Buffer Zone, the weight of influence was predominantly with the petty bourgeois Castroites, not with the Stalinists. There was no chance of Red Army intervention to pressure Castro into submission. The unification had to be on the Castroites' terms. Conflict arose over the high-handed moves of Stalinist Anibal Escalante. He was purged from the CP, and exiled to the USSR. The merger attempt failed.

In 1963—in a move welcomed by the Pabloites and the SWP alike—Castro set up the United Revolutionary Socialist Party, intended to fulfil the role of merging the CP with the July 26 Movement. This, too, collapsed.

Finally in 1965 the Castroites and the Stalinists finally jointly and from above set up the Cuban Communist Party. The process of fusing Castro with the Stalinist movement pressed ahead, and the Soviet outpost in the Caribbean was

assured of a future.

These events provoked what appeared to be very different responses from the Trotskyist movement.

The SWP, at one on this with the Pabloites, blandly announced that Cuba had become a 'workers' state'. The only question in their minds was at what date this change had taken place.

Castro, in overthrowing Batista, they said, had gone on to lead the establishment of a workers' state. A social revolution had taken place led not by the Stalinists as in Eastern Europe, nor (obviously) by a Trotskyist party. This lent a new dimension to the problems of the 1950s.

If in Yugoslavia and China *Stalinist* parties had been seen as breaking from Stalinism and 'projecting a revolutionary orientation', in Cuba a petty bourgeois nationalist grouping appeared to have set up what the Pabloites saw as only a mildly-blemished workers' state. In other words, petty-bourgeois forces had unconsciously and spontaneously moved to embrace Marxism.

To buttress this belief, as they had done previously with Yugoslavia, the Pabloites chose all of the most 'left' appearances and statements of the Castro regime as their evidence. Every piece of Castro demagoguery, every attempt to bolster his position with the Latin American CPs in case he should be abandoned by the Soviet bureaucracy was taken as good coin and retailed in the 'Trotskyist' press of these sections. All other evidence was discarded, and Cuba was regarded not in an international context, but as a thing in itself.

But the other main position—that of Healy in Britain, and the French—was no more satisfactory. Starting from the notion that the capitalist state in Cuba *could not* have been overthrown since there had been no Trotskyist leadership, they ran into immediate problems in their analysis of the transformations in Eastern Europe and China. Just as Mandel had been crippled in fighting Pablo by his line that Yugoslavia was still a capitalist state in 1950, Healy was hamstrung on the Cuban question by his wooden 'orthodox' view that Cuba remained a capitalist state. And while the Pabloites ignored the 'bad' sides of the Castro regime, painting it as an almost undeformed workers' state, Healy brushed aside the progressive aspects of the changes that had taken place in his determination to prove it remained capitalist.

The Pabloites' joy was unlimited. At last they had 'proof' of their belief that it was not necessary to build Trotskyist parties based on the working class in every country to lead a revolution:

'What is new for Revolutionary Marxism in relation to this experience is this: that we pass from the appreciation of the revolutionary role of the peasantry and the necessity of the workers and peasants alliance to the understanding of the possibility of beginning and carrying through for a whole period the Revolution in a number of colonial and semi-colonial countries by the armed struggle of the revolutionary peasantry'. (Quoted by Wohlforth in 'The Cuban Way—the Pattern for the Future?')

And as the Pabloites began to comb the world for future Cubas and budding Castros as an alternative to the building of Trotskyist parties, the SWP, having never grasped the real issues posed in 1953, began to belittle and depoliticise the differences that had led to the split, and to call for reunification:

'While substantial differences remain, especially over the causes of the 1954 split, the area of disagreement

appears to be of secondary importance in view of the common basic programme and common analysis of major current events in world developments which unite the two sides".

(For Early Reunification of the World Trotskyist Movement, March 1963).

This attempt to dismiss the difference between the Pabloites and the IC forces in 1963 on the basis of "common analysis of major current events" recurs later in the same document:

"... it is self-evident that the continued division of the world Trotskyist movement in factions wrangling over obscure issues will vitiate its capacity to attract these new forces on a considerable scale".

While the SWP saw it as setting aside past differences, the Pabloites clearly recognised their change of position as an *acceptance* of this political method and analysis:

"The political basis of the 1953-4 split, as we saw it, was a lack of full understanding of the correctness of the International's turn in the estimate of the world situation made in 1950-51... [but] starting from the XXth Congress of the CPSU, some organisations affiliated with the International Committee or in sympathy with its political views as in the case of the SWP, corrected their evaluation of the world situation and of the evolution within the Soviet Union, and arrived at an estimation of events very close to that of the IVth International. From that time on, reunification became not only desirable but also possible".

(Quoted by Reorganised Minority Tendency in "The Rebuilding of the FI" May 1963).

So close had the SWP come to the positions of the Pabloites that the SWP in angling for unity *themselves* put forward the classic Pabloite formulation that:

"In its evolution towards revolutionary Marxism (!) the July 26 Movement set a pattern that now stands as an example for a number of other countries".

And the SWP bowed before the Pabloite notion of spontaneous revolutionary forces with whom Trotskyists could "fuse". These forces were variously termed a "newly emerging vanguard", "leftward moving currents", "a new generation of rebels" and even "mass revolutionary forces". The SWP saw the objective as "infusing" the ideas of Trotskyism into these petty bourgeois nationalist groupings:

"The infusion of Trotskyist concepts in this new Castroist current will also influence the development of a conscious revolutionary leadership, particularly in the workers' states, will help prevent "Titoist" deviations and better assure the evolution of mass pressure and direct action into the cleansing force of political revolution".

(Dynamics of World Revolution Today).

Alongside these liquidationist concepts, in which Trotskyists are reduced to the role of a left-wing ginger group within petty-bourgeois guerrilla bands, the SWP adopted the Pabloite position on political revolution—abandoning the call for the building of Trotskyist parties in the degenerated workers states and instead looking towards:

"The increased possibility of mergers between the revolutionary Marxist vanguard and the leftward-moving mass of militants in some of these [Stalinist] parties."

(Dynamics...)

The Castro leadership in Cuba was given credentials as "unconscious Trotskyists", and the reunification document voted for by SWP and Pabloite alike contained an implicit

preference for opportunism as against the "danger" of sectarianism:

"A revolutionist isolated by circumstances over which he has no control can fall into sectarianism quite unconsciously. It is therefore a more insidious danger for a small organisation than opportunism, which is generally easier to recognise."

The SWP, however, refuted this by their very reunification with the Pabloites which confirmed beyond all doubt their inability to recognise opportunism.

A year later the leadership of the USFI's Ceylonese section had put this notion into practice, and had entered a bourgeois coalition government with Mrs Bandaranaike. The Pabloites were forced to expel those responsible for overstepping the unspoken limits of opportunism.

The inability of the remaining IC forces to take up the *method* of Pabloism in 1953 and in the Cuban events disarmed their opposition to the SWP's line. While it was in this period that the SLL made a turn to philosophy, and began to challenge Pabloism as an empirical method, the whole question was confined within certain bounds. The analysis of the Eastern European transformations was not reexamined, and SLL "analysis" of form and content in Cuba started from the premise of proving that Cuba remained capitalist.

This approach also hampered those forces that fought within the SWP against the turn to Pabloism. Tim Wohlforth, who was subsequently to make the biggest theoretical contribution to the understanding of the Eastern European transformations in his *Theory of Structural Assimilation*, caved in to pressure from Healy and adopted the position that Cuba remained a capitalist state—a straight reversal of his earlier position, when he had said to the SWP plenum in 1962:

"I think the comrades in Britain are wrong. I'll say it, I'll be very happy to say it. They're not all wrong. They're right in saying that in agriculture essentially capitalist relations remain except in a few state forms, the bulk of agriculture remains in private hands. They're right in saying the planned economy isn't really yet fully planned. They're wrong in saying Castro is a representative of capital. He's not. Cuba is well on its way to becoming precisely what Yugoslavia, China and Eastern Europe are. Yes. That is my opinion. But the comrades today are reacting to an impression of Cuban reality. The same way that Pablo reacted to Yugoslavia. In my opinion they are going to be proven wrong. Or, if you prefer, he was proven half right. He was right that it was a workers' state, wrong when he thought it wasn't going to be a deformed workers' state."

"I think, very well, comrades, you may be proven half right again. It may very well be a workers' state. If you want to call it a workers' state, all right. It's a matter of the designation of the point of qualitative change. But you're going to be very, very wrong if you try to maintain, as Pablo did then, that Cuba is going to evolve into a healthy workers' state with real proletarian rule, without the proletariat independently participating in that process".

(Report to the Plenum on Minority Resolution, 1962)

Wohlforth went on, in the same speech, to hit the main point that was subsequently to get lost in the argument on what kind of state Cuba was:

"The real thing is that we [the SWP] have a policy of just going along and describing reality in Cuba and not intervening in it. We do not feel that our intervention, the

independent intervention of the working class itself in Cuba, will have a determining impact on events. We do not look to that force in Cuba today. We look to the government, we look to the state apparatus . . ."

Yet Wohlforth retreated from this line of analysis. And in blocking with Healy against the SWP leadership he retreated from his objective analysis of Cuba as a deformed workers' state. *The Theory of Structural Assimilation*, for all its strengths, was written by Wohlforth but then abandoned when Healy and the IC leadership refused to discuss it.

The basically correct though inadequate positions on Cuba that Wohlforth and his colleagues in the early Revolutionary Tendency developed, were, however, largely retained by the expelled Robertson group that is now the international Spartacist tendency. They formally upheld the view that Cuba was a deformed workers' state, and the need for the building of revolutionary parties, though their theoretical footing for this remains shaky to this day. But after their expulsion, the Robertson group decided that there was no chance of winning workers in the SWP to their positions—writing them off as too old, or careerist elements.

From this initial period of self-imposed isolation onwards the Spartacists have clung doggedly to a formal

"orthodoxy" linked to a propagandist and increasingly sectarian practice, in which they state openly their refusal to recruit workers—whom they describe as "politically backward militants".

Thus no ready made or complete answer to the Cuban question emerged in 1963 any more than a full analysis of the East European events had emerged from the 1953 split.

This account of the two major splits in the post-war International is far from complete. But it attempts to bring together an examination of the problems of method in Eastern Europe and in Cuba with a historical view of the development of post-war Trotskyism.

In this way we can see that to provide a basis for the reconstruction of the Fourth International, it is not a question of simply marrying together the "correct" position of the Pabloites on Cuba as a workers' state with the "correct" insistence by Healy on the need for a revolutionary party. The post war history of the Fourth International must be reexamined as a whole and the method of Marxism reaffirmed both in theory and in the practice of national sections.

But in broaching these issues and focussing on them at a time when both IC and USFI forces are turned firmly away from their own history and towards opportunism, we can make a contribution to the fight for the reconstruction of the Fourth International.



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Socialist feminism versus Marxism

*'A New World for Women' - Sheila Rowbotham's
biography of Stella Browne - is reviewed here by
Elizabeth Thompson.*

Back in 1973, Sheila Rowbotham's book *Woman's Consciousness, Man's World* made one of the earliest formulations in recent history of the position that "the personal is political". This kind of statement has become a truism among certain sections of the left, particularly among feminists, but it has acquired this eminence without gaining any clarity. It has become standard for periodicals such as *Socialist Challenge* (as well as more excusably polygot productions such as *Spare Rib* and *Time Out*) to carry pious references to the "relationship between political and personal concerns", or to click their tongues in indignation over the tendency among revolutionaries to underestimate this connection.

But no serious analysis of the connection, or of its possible implications for socialist theory or programme, has been attempted. The description which Rowbotham's book offered—concentrating on the existential aspect of the question, the day-to-day effects of capitalism on people's lives and relationships, and the extent to which participation in the struggle against capitalism does not undo, but indeed sometimes exacerbates, those effects—(i.e. knowing it is capitalism that makes life awful doesn't make life any less awful under capitalism)—has not been developed into an analysis in Marxist terms of the relationship between capitalism and the individual male or female personality.

Rowbotham's most recent book, *A New World for Women*, certainly attempts no progress towards this goal. It is a brief biography of Stella Browne (a "socialist and feminist" as the subtitle proclaims her), who fought from 1912 until her death in the 'fifties to alert first the British Communist Party and then the Labour Party to the necessity for abortion reform. But the book passively relies on the standard formulation: Browne, we are told, endeavoured continually to stress the "connections between sexual politics and socialism".

But her manner of maintaining this "connection" seems to have consisted of a life-long struggle for particular reforms, accompanied by an unflagging assertion of her belief in "socialism". Rowbotham is unable to perceive this

inadequacy, of course, for it is precisely the contradiction which disrupts her own attempts at "socialist history". The entire political orientation of her book is reformist, relying on a notion of the revolutionary struggle as constructing the basis for "immediate changes in personal living"; but this reformism is "corrected" from time to time by avowals of the author's socialism.

But this fails to do justice to the book's defects as biography, which are astounding. Few works of history or biography can have been written which rely so heavily on phrases such as "there could have been", "there must have been", and "probably". The book is so under-documented, contains so many disclaimers as to the problems caused by the lack of available materials, that an innocent reader might wonder why it was attempted in the first place, in preference, for example, to a biography of Browne's colleague, Dora Russell, on whom an abundance of unpublished material exists.

One answer immediately suggests itself; Browne was both a "socialist and feminist", and though the book makes no attempt to define either position, or the relationship between them, this combination is of particular "relevance" and usefulness to the "marxist-feminist" movement which has recently emerged out of the women's liberation movement, and in whose ranks Rowbotham counts herself.

In particular, Browne's preoccupation with abortion reform makes it even more convenient that she be pulled out of a hat for her relevance to the current NAC movement. The book is really a socialist-feminist version of the sort of biographies, short on facts but long on good intentions, which are written for schoolgirls; these are usually about great *ladies*, such as Queen Elizabeth I and Catherine the Great, but Stella Browne does very well as a great *woman*.

Browne was, in fact, clearly a figure of some historical significance. Like Dora Russell and many others she saw the limitations of the woman-suffrage struggle as it foundered on the 1914-18 Imperialist War, and struggled against the

bureaucratic leaderships of the Labour Party for positions which would effect important changes in the lives of men and women. These old "war-horses" worked within the perimeters of the Labour Party for decades, increasingly disappointed and bewildered, and finally embittered, at the failure of a series of Labour governments to institute the reforms (substantial maternity leave, family allowances which would provide housewives with some independence, a health service which could provide universal access to birth control and abortion) for which they had spent their lives and energies.

But to simplistically update Browne, to make her smartly pre-figure contemporary socialist-feminism, is to do injury to the specific historical role of her positions and their significance. (Rowbotham for instance shows no interest at all in the significance, for Browne's development or for that of the British Communist Party, of Browne's 1923 departure from the CP).

The importance for us of women such as Browne is not in some miraculous contemporaneity but in the historical limitations of their positions, in the analysis that might be made of their errors and confusions, their failure to link impatience with the reformist perspective of Labour Party leaders to some more consistent challenge to that leadership.

This was a problem of which they themselves demonstrated more consciousness than Rowbotham ever displays: Dora Russell's 1974 autobiography is fraught with a sense of personal and political betrayal and a deep, intuitive hostility to the Labour Party leadership, and exposes far more clearly than Rowbotham's book, the limitations of the political position which she and Browne shared, a life-long struggle against the limits, but never outside the terms of, reformism.

To annex them to contemporary socialist-feminism is to deal not in history but in fantasy, and to deny as well the particular character of their struggle and what can be learned from it.

Rowbotham of course has always demonstrated an affinity for this sort of pseudo-history: the production of vignettes out of the suppressed history of women, which will serve as thrilling examples of contemporary struggles.

Each book (her other book-length works are *Women, Resistance and Revolution* and *Hidden From History*) has featured a further degeneration of the method, so that the modesty with which she characteristically claims to be "only filling in a corner" (handing on the torch of women's history to some other, as yet undesignated, sister) seems in the case of the present book to be amply justified.

Rowbotham's model as a historian is, obviously E.P. Thompson. Like him, she is concerned with the rescue for recorded history of experiences which have gone, for clear political reasons, unrecorded: the history of working class men (women don't come in for much notice in Thompson's books) before the 1832 Reform Bill which Thompson constructs in his *Making of the English Working Class*; or of the "hidden revolts" of women, omitted or misrepresented by both bourgeois and Marxist historians, which Rowbotham attempted to sketch in her earlier books.

Like Thompson, Rowbotham is concerned with noting "patterns of resistance", instances of emergent class-consciousness or moments of rebellion, but not, fundamentally, with analysing the significance of, or the relations between, these instances.

The definition of Marxism on which Rowbotham's work relies seems to derive, too, from the Marxism of

Thompson's generation of Stalinists, for it is the most extreme form of economic reductionism. Taken to be utterly true, in its clumsy way, this "Marxism" nevertheless is seen as lacking in subtlety and needs to be augmented, supplemented by the "theories" which arise from the experiences of various oppressed groups; in particular, by feminism.

What is crucial of course is that it is not "Marxism" which is being represented here or in much of the literature produced by the current socialist-feminist movement, but a real ignorance of the work of Marx and Engels and its developments by Lenin, Trotsky and others.

There is of course theoretical work to be done by Marxists on the questions of family life and the role and experience of women in capitalist society, but this is work which can only be done by Marxist theory and not by an "alliance" between Marxism and feminism. The notion of such an alliance seems to rely on a weird, sexist mythology, as though Marxism and feminism were the male and female of theory, and the revolution was to be their bright-faced offspring.

The question remains whether the assertion that the "personal is political" can be elevated above the level of banality which it presently occupies, and given a political force in the analysis of, and the struggle against, capitalist society.

And the question must be posed not as providing a feminist face-lift for Marxism, but in terms of the development of the Marxist theory of the role of the family, and the way in which the family effects and reinforces the connections between personal life and political struggle; and an elaboration of the political tasks which may arise from a more developed analysis of the family.

For as Marxists we do not of course seek to make unprincipled links with feminists and reformists such as Sheila Rowbotham, but to make clear the differences which exist between them and ourselves. Marxists aim to understand all aspects of life under capitalism, not to ease the pain of such living, but to end the conditions of its possibility.

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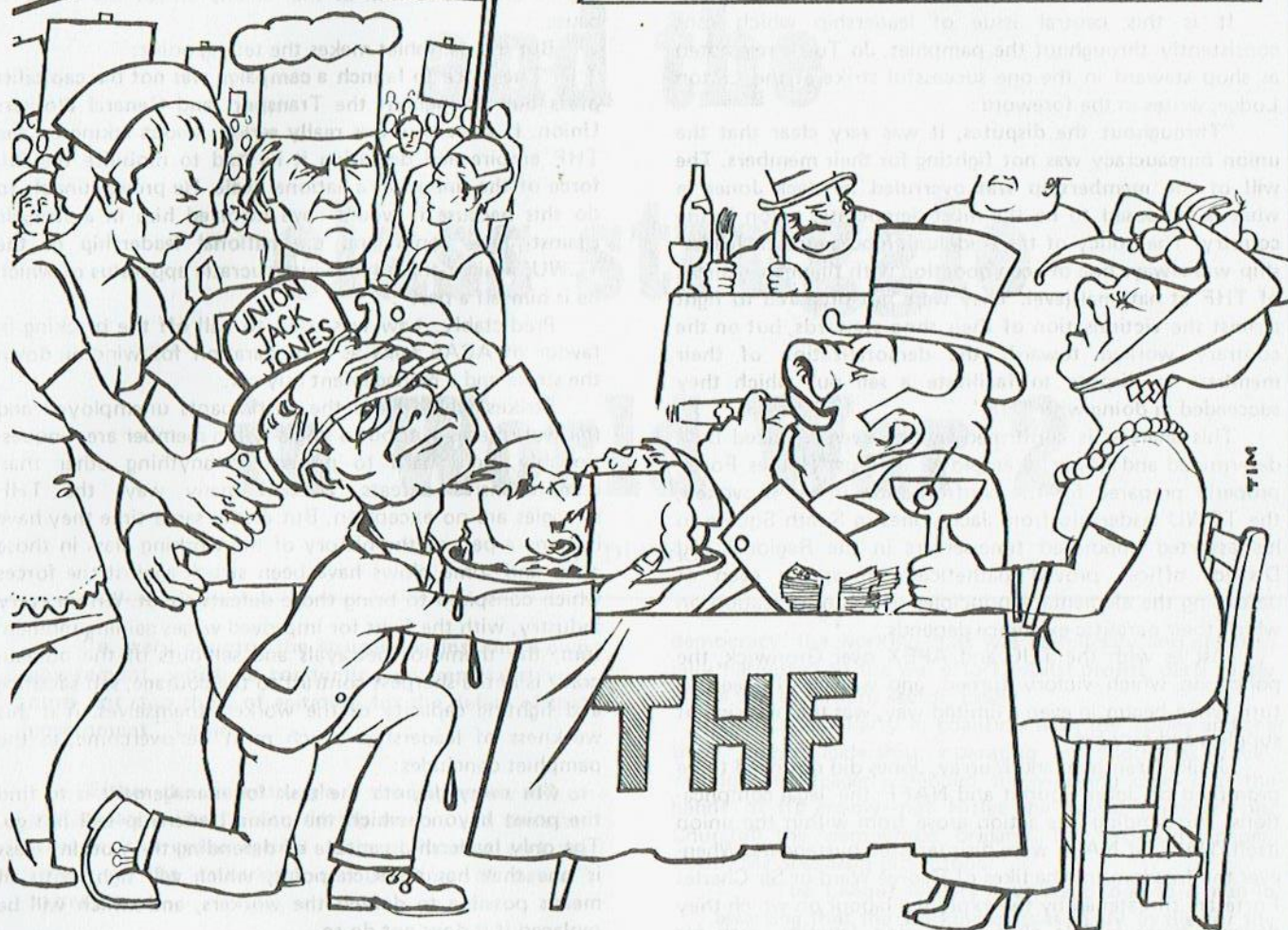
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UN
RECOGNITION

The pamphlet by the Hotel and Catering Workers National Action Committee *The Hotel Strikes; Lessons for Unionisation* is reviewed here by Pat Lally. (Reprinted from *Socialist Press*).



Political lessons from unionisation fights

This pamphlet is more than a record of the 6-month strikes for union recognition fought out by TGWU catering workers in Sheffield, Oxford and Birmingham from the autumn of 1976 until August last year. In placing those struggles firmly within the context of deepening collaboration between the labour leadership and the employers, it draws immediate connections with both Grunwick and Desoutters recognition strikes, and raises questions which extend far beyond the fight for basic union rights.

The whole industry is a combination of prestigious five star rated respectability and pay and working conditions

which compete with the lowest and worst there is to be found. The problems are legion. Tied accommodation, deliberate recruitment of immigrant workers and the constant threat of the withdrawal of work permits, and a high proportion of 'traditionally' low paid women workers, combine to make effective union organisation difficult.

It is within this section of the working class that unionisation has dramatically increased in the last few years, forced on by mounting inflation and unemployment. A major part of these new union members have turned towards the TGWU—the country's biggest union which has

grown by nearly a quarter of a million since 1974.

But, like so many more, those new recruits in Trust Houses Forte and Linton Lodge Hotels quickly learnt that joining is only the beginning of a solution. For the majority it brought bitter realisation of the chasm which separates the union membership from control of their organisations and the ability to mobilise its strength in support.

It is this central issue of leadership which runs consistently throughout the pamphlet. Jo Tosti, reinstated as shop steward in the one successful strike at the Linton Lodge, writes in the foreword:

"Throughout the disputes, it was very clear that the union bureaucracy was not fighting for their members. The will of the membership was overruled by Jack Jones in what is supposed to be the most democratic union in the country. The policy of the trade union bureaucratic leadership was always one of accommodation with the management of THF at national level. They were not prepared to fight against the victimisation of their shop stewards, but on the contrary worked towards the demoralization of their members in dispute to facilitate a sell out which they succeeded in doing with THF".

This analysis is confirmed by the events. Faced by a determined and powerful employer in Trust Houses Forte, properly prepared for the confrontation it had provoked, the TGWU leadership from Jack Jones in Smith Square to his assorted appointed time-servers in the Regional and District offices proved pathetically incapable even of defending the elementary principles of the organisation on which their parasitic existence depends.

Just as with the TUC and APEX over Grunwick, the policy on which victory turned, and was clearly seen to turn when begun in even a limited way, was the blacking of supplies and services.

Unlike Grantham and Murray, Jones did not need to be prompted by John Gouriet and NAFF; the 'legal complications' surrounding this action arose from within the union itself. Not that NAFF were disinterested bystanders. Whenever the freedoms of the likes of George Ward or Sir Charles Forte are threatened by the exploited labour on which they depend, these middle class, anti-union fanatics reach for their cheque books and lawyers.

A mass campaign of local and national press publicity against the strikers was the visible expression of their support; many things point to a much closer connection behind the scenes.

It was NAFF's industrial arm, Self Help, run by fascist Lady Birdwood, which set up the open provocation to break the Randolph's picket line in early May. Three hundred trade unionists and students responded to the call to oppose this move and faced the picket-busting Special Patrol Group. A total of 39 were arrested.

The real bankruptcy of the union hierarchy was effectively exposed only through the continual turning of the fight back into the union. Every avenue was explored and the demand for support raised at every possible opportunity. At each crucial point 'talks' and 'negotiations' between the union leaders and management would conveniently cut across action being carried out. Eventually the strikers were forced to stage an occupation of Jack Jones' office in Transport House which completely confirmed that delays and sabotage of supporting action was being orchestrated nationally.

A particularly important lesson was the drawing out of

one TGWU full-time official who had for many years formally taken his distance from the extreme right wing in the union. Alan Law was, in effect, the one-person-strike-committee at Birmingham's THF Night Out, and proved the only bureaucrat to begin to implement union policy of blacking THF owned establishments along with regular mass picketing. His demagogic statements to the newspapers established him as the 'champion' of the workers' cause.

But the pamphlet makes the telling point:

"The place to launch a campaign was not the capitalist press but throughout the Transport and General Workers Union. If Alan Law was really serious about taking on the THF empire and defeating it he had to mobilise the full force of the union on a national scale. He proved unable to do this because it would have involved him in a struggle against Jack Jones and the national leadership of the TGWU; against the union's bureaucratic apparatus of which he is himself a part".

Predictably, Law was soon to call off the blacking in favour of ACAS talks as a preparation for winding down the strike and a management buy-off.

Strikes which leave the participants unemployed and the workplaces without a single union member are, unquestionably, very hard to present as anything other than comprehensive defeats, and in many ways the THF struggles are no exception. But at the same time they have become a part of the history of the working class in those areas and some blows have been struck against the forces which conspired to bring those defeats about. Within every industry, with the fight for improved wages gaining momentum, the theme of betrayals and sell-outs of the bureaucracy is in the sharpest contrast to the courage, self-sacrifice and fighting capacity of the workers themselves. It is this weakness of leadership which must be overcome, as the pamphlet concludes:

"In every dispute the task for management is to find the point beyond which the union leadership will not go. The only leadership capable of defending the working class is one that has no such point, which will fight with all means possible to defend the workers, and which will be replaced if it does not do so.

"As the hotel workers view the betrayals at Grunwick and Desoutters, as they see official after official reaching the limit of action they are prepared to sanction, the hotel workers must see clearly that what happened in their strikes is not an isolated story of individual betrayals. It is a crisis of leadership as deep as the class struggle itself. Solving that crisis remains the most important task of the working class today."

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British Trotskyists and the class struggle in World War 2

By Di Parkin

"In every country the struggle against one's own government, which is conducting an imperialist war, must not stop short of agitation for the defeat of that government." Lenin.

"Either the class struggle is the imperative law of proletarian existence also during war . . . or the class struggle is a crime against national interest and the safety of the fatherland also in time of peace." Luxemburg.

Between 1938-44 a debate took place within the British Trotskyist movement as to how the policy of revolutionary class war was to be conducted during a period of inter-imperialist world war.

At issue was how the policy of revolutionary defeatism as argued by Lenin and Luxemburg was to be implemented.

Just as the first inter-imperialist world war had scythed through the workers movement dividing principled internationalists from the cringing collaborators and chauvinists of the Second International, so the second major struggle of world imperialism to redivide the world's spoils and markets amongst itself also acted to divide the international workers movement.

War was seen as something entirely different from peace and the class alliances of peace time were abandoned for nationalist line-ups.

Whole sections of the labour leadership in Britain and elsewhere capitulated lock, stock and barrel to their own bourgeoisie. Labour and trade union leaders were entirely involved in coalition and collaboration with the Church, the Tories, the army and the ruling class as a whole.

In the name of a so-called war in the 'defence of

democracy' the working class was mercilessly and dictatorially harnessed to the war effort, whilst profits, particularly in the war munitions sector, rose.

The Labour Party in coalition with the Tories and the trade union leadership, operating an 'industrial truce', willingly and eagerly handed the working class into the hands of its enemy—not Hitler the fascist gangster, but Churchill the 'democratic' brigand. The Trotskyist paper, *Youth for Socialism* put it thus:

"The Labour leaders have responded to a man in asserting that the working class is ready to die for the principles proclaimed by Chamberlain as the guiding lights of British policy. Once again the labour leaders are giving the name 'National Unity' to their betrayal of the workers to the boss class war."

Bevin, as Minister of Labour, presided in the name of a 'war against fascism' over measures which tied the working class to the state more than any other period this century; measures of the most draconian and repressive nature such as the 'Essential Works Order' or the 'Transference of Labour'. Under the former the right to strike was lost, and under the latter, workers were compulsorily transferred to jobs of the government's choice. This was used as a method of victimisation and rate cutting and both measures lead to large numbers of workers being imprisoned for taking industrial action.

Workers were also imprisoned for lateness and absenteeism and in a period of coalition government had no opportunity to express an independent class position.

Meanwhile 'His Majesty's British Communist Party', following some of the most rapid and neck-breaking twists of policy in its snaky history took the position, following Germany's invasion of Russia, of total support for the war and were without exaggeration the most dedicated

supporters of rate-cutting, strike breaking and raising the rate of exploitation in the interest of the 'democratic' brigand. Through their control of Joint Production Committees they sacrificed everything for increased production. [See *Socialist Press* number 29 for an article on wartime Joint Production Committees and the Communist Party's role in them].

In *International* of Spring 1977 the international Marxist Group reprints an article by Brian Pearce which looks at this period of our history. It clearly distinguishes between the treacherous class collaboration of the Communist Party in this period and the principled position of revolutionary internationalism and defeatism being argued by the Trotskyist movement.

Pearce, however, presents the history a little too patly; firstly he writes as if the "Marxists" were a unified body with one policy and he also entirely ignores some of the problems in the policy of the group he does write about—the Workers International League.

In 1938 the British Trotskyist movement was divided into two major sections. Several groups had just merged to form the Revolutionary Socialist League (RSL) around Harber and C.L.R. James, the West Indian cricketer.

This group was the recognised British Section of the Fourth International, (and it is to this group which Pearce gives no mention!). The one group which remained outside this unification was the larger Workers International League (WIL), who published the paper *Youth for Socialism*, (later *Socialist Appeal*). In the leadership were Ted Grant and Jock Haston and other leading cadres included Sid Bidwell (now a Tribune MP) and Gerry Healy (now leader of the Workers Revolutionary Party).

The two groups differed principally on the question of entrism into the Labour Party and on their attitude towards the war; they were to fuse (basically on the WIL's positions) to form the Revolutionary Communist Party in 1944. The RSL argued a view on the war which, whilst very clearly and intransigently defeatist and having not the least truck with any chauvinism on the part of the masses, veered near to a position of having no truck with the masses at all, to an abandonment of the Transitional Programme and an ultimatum 'wishing things were other than they were' position.

The WIL did not stray in sectarian fashion away from the masses and was able to build a sizable base in the working class. The WIL was seen as the group which took up struggle on the industrial and political front as well as in the army. But it was not sufficiently firm on the question of the seizure of state power. Seeing the Transitional Programme as a bridge to the socialist revolution, both objectively in the fight for its demands and subjectively in the development of working class consciousness and the proletarian military policy as the wartime form of that programme, they failed to stress adequately that proceeding across that bridge was not a simple stroll on a Sunday afternoon but required a *radical* and *definitive* break with what had gone before—a total change in the relations of production and of the state.

In examining the policies of firstly the RSL and then the WIL these clear strengths and weaknesses and problems with the two positions should become clear.

The RSL position can be seen as following Lenin's line of 1914 in much more orthodox fashion. The RSL stated bluntly that the task was not to defend one imperialist

against another; but to fight for the overthrow of the social system which causes war. The RSL's slogan was:

TURN THE IMPERIALIST WAR INTO A CIVIL WAR
whereas the WIL argued:

TURN THE IMPERIALIST WAR INTO REVOLUTIONARY WAR.

In their paper *Workers Fight* in 1938 the RSL put it thus:

'We in Britain, workers and comrades, have our war to fight. True it is a war against Hitler and the German fascists and the German ruling class. But the front line trenches opposed to us are manned not by the German ruling class but by . . . the whole exploiting gang of British capitalist thieves and robbers whose weight we have born on our backs all these years. It is by fighting them and never relaxing in that fight that we do the best service to the British working class, the German working class and humanity as a whole.'

But by 1943 the RSL had entirely abandoned any idea of any fight against the German bourgeoisie:

'It is impossible for the proletariat to strike a blow in war time at the enemy bourgeoisie without striking at the proletariat of the enemy country and thus aiding its own bourgeoisie.'

Thus they would have no truck with any policy which involved British workers in a battle with Hitler:

'A revolutionary class in a reactionary war cannot but desire the defeat of its own government. The main enemy is at home. Every blow struck by the workers against British imperialism weakens its military strength and every military defeat weakens its power of resisting the workers' onslaught. Thus all military defeats of British imperialism are desired by revolutionary workers. Thus a military defeat resulting from the growth of the revolutionary movement is infinitely more beneficial to the proletariat and to the whole people than military victory assured by civil peace.'

This policy was in a perverse way nationalist; it involved the German working class and the allied working class wanting different and opposite military solutions to the war, rather than fighting on a common international position. Even fraternization with German soldiers was seen as only a weapon against the British bourgeoisie. This policy bears resemblances to the one criticised by Trotsky in 'Learn to Think', August 1938.

'An irreconcilable attitude against bourgeois militarism does not signify at all that the proletariat in all cases enters into a struggle against its own "national" army. At least the workers would not interfere with soldiers who are extinguishing a fire or rescuing drowning people from a flood; on the contrary, they would help side by side with the soldiers and fraternize with them. And the question is not exhausted merely by cases of elemental calamities. If the French fascists should make an attempt today at a coup d'état and the Daladier government found itself forced to move troops against the fascists, the revolutionary workers while maintaining their complete political independence, would fight against the fascists alongside of these troops. Thus in a number of cases the workers are forced not only to permit and tolerate, but actively to support the practical measures of the bourgeois government.'

In ninety cases out of a hundred the workers actually place a minus sign where the bourgeoisie places a plus sign. In ten cases however they are forced

to fix the same sign as the bourgeoisie but with their own seal, in which is expressed their mistrust of the bourgeoisie. The policy of the proletariat is not at all automatically derived from the policy of the bourgeoisie bearing only the opposite sign—this would make every sectarian a master strategist; no, the revolutionary party must each time orient itself *independently* in the internal as well as the external situation, arriving at those decisions which correspond best to the interests of the proletariat. This rule applies just as much to the war period as to the period of peace."

The RSL, however, not taking note of this or Trotsky's other point—that a continuation of Lenin's policy of revolutionary defeatism did not imply a repetition—would give no support to the "ten cases" where the same sign was to be affixed as the bourgeoisie, but under the control of the workers.

An example of such a case is the demand for greater air raid precautions. The WIL agitated for better air raid protection for workers, pointing out the better provision in middle class areas compared with the badly hit East End.

For the RSL however to demand better aid raid protection was to take an *offensive* against the German working class.

"Any measures taken by an imperialist government for the protection of the civilian population constitutes an integral part of the preparation for and/or prosecution of the Imperialist War. We oppose imperialist war with the call for the Socialist Revolution."

Did members of the RSL heroically and with great internationalist conscience stay *outside* during air raids, voluntarily shelter in inadequate shelters? Here we have the absurdity of putting a minus where the bourgeoisie puts a plus at its most extreme.

The RSL difference with the WIL and with the Fourth International and SWP positions on the war was to come out most clearly in the period after the 1940 fall of France when these groups were arguing for the arming of the workers. First it is necessary to examine the basis of the WIL position—the proletarian military policy.

This policy was adopted by the SWP in September 1940, only *one month* after Trotsky's assassination and undoubtedly developed in discussion with him, drawing on his discussions and conversations particularly on conscription and attacking pacifism.

Cannon put it thus:

"Confronted with these facts of universal militarism and permanent war . . . what shall the revolutionary party do? Shall we stand aside and simply say we don't agree with the war, it is not our affair? No we cannot do that. We do not approve of this whole system of exploitation whereby private individuals can take possession of the means of production and enslave the masses. We are against it but don't abstain. Equally with war. We say: 'Very well Mr Capitalist, you have decided it is so and we were not strong enough to prevent it. Your war is not our war, but so long as the mass of the proletariat goes with it, we will go too. We will raise our own independent programme in the army in the military forces, in the same way as we raise it in the factory'".

(Proletarian Military Policy).

This is implementing the policy of defeatism very differently from the way it was operated in the First World War when revolutionaries had refused to fight. Now revol-

utionaries were to go into the army and raise the independent programme inside the army.

Thus Trotsky argued:

"We cannot escape from the militarization but inside the machine we can observe the class line. The American workers do not want to be conquered by Hitler and to those who say 'Let us have a peace programme' the worker will reply 'But Hitler does not want a peace programme'. Therefore we say: We will defend the US with a workers' army, with workers' officers, with a workers' government, etc. If we are not pacifists, who wait for a better future and if we are active revolutionists, our job is to *penetrate into the whole military machine*."

(*American Problems*, August 1940)

Trotsky urged that his comrades should be "the best soldiers", as they have to be the best workers and even called them 'proletarian revolutionary militarists' stressing that confusion with the pacifists would be a far greater error.

The reason for this was that Trotsky, understanding the hostility of the masses towards Hitler, wanted to turn that hostility against the native capitalist state and did not merely stand aside in sectarian fashion proclaiming: You should not feel like this.

Instead, Trotsky's policy, as the Transitional Programme itself, started from where the workers were:

"For instance in the trade union we can argue like this: I am a socialist and you are a patriot. Good. We will discuss the differences between us. But we should agree that the workers be trained at government expense to become military experts."

(*Discussions*, 1940)

From that Cannon argued that the workers "require a program of military struggle against the foreign invaders which ensures their class independence." Cannon and the WIL argued that they were prepared to fight Hitler in a revolutionary war, *under their own leadership*.

One of the 12 points of the programme of the WIL was therefore trade union control of military training of worker officers and, especially after the fall of France, the demand for the arming of the workers, along with a socialist programme against the British ruling class and the demand to break the industrial truce and the coalition.

The demand for the arming of the workers started from the position of the masses, their hostility to Hitler and their desire to resist invasion. The WIL saw that this hostility had some class content, an interest in defending workers' own organisations and democratic gains, but the RSL believed it to be entirely chauvinist.

The fall of France was a significant turning point. For the RSL it was the point where the WIL began to accommodate to chauvinism and defencism. The two groups disputed the causes of the fall of France. The RSL said it was because the workers had not wished to fight on the side of gangster France against brigand Germany and had said "a plague on both your houses".

The WIL explained the defeat by pointing out that the French ruling class had not been committed to a fight against fascism, had been quite happy to collaborate and had refused to lead a fight or to arm the workers of France.

Evidence from bourgeois commentators supports the view that it was the French ruling class who were reluctant to fight, rather than the French workers.

"Up to the last there were men like Weygand who feared above everything a popular rising organised by

the Communists. Rather than that they were prepared to accept the German terms; even when France was on the point of being defeated the police were still actively rounding up Communists and communist sympathisers, whereas for the last year there had been little attempt to round up fascist sympathisers."

(*What Happened to France?*, Gordon Waterfield).

Making this assessment the WIL argued:

"The ruling class of France showed itself completely incapable of offering any effective resistance to the Nazi legions . . . France was betrayed by the capitalists. How will Britain be defended? The workers must be armed."

But in the view of the RSL this position was a total capitulation to chauvinism.

"Nowhere is there any suggestion that it is only in the interests of the working class to resist invasion after the resources of the country have come under the control of the workers, and that until this has taken place the workers have no interest in national defence."

(Harber, *RSL Internal Bulletin*, 1941)

Slogans such as 'Arm the Workers' or 'Election of army officers under trade union control' were according to the RSL only appropriate 'under conditions of sharpening class antagonism'.

Arguing for them at other times, they said, was in fact reactionary. They also argued that to call for workers' control of production at this period was reactionary.

In the positions of the RSL in their undialectical and rigid attempt to force reality into fixed categories, there was considerable flight from reality—a refusal to face the question of *how* workers were to be broken from their defencist positions, *how* their hostility to Hitler was to be turned to a hostility to all that Hitler represented, including, in its different form, bourgeois democracy. The RSL turned away from the method of the Transitional Programme as revealed in the following statement:

"The Transitional Programme consists of a series of partial demands to be fought for by our movements under appropriate conditions and designed to lead up to the conquest of power. It is the task of our International to select such of these partial demands as are applicable to a given section at a given time. It was never intended that all should be regarded as immediately necessary."

(Harber in *RSL Internal Bulletin*, Summer 1941)

This was the rock the RSL founded on, keeping them from the kind of healthy relationship with the working class held by the WIL.

Nonetheless, the RSL avoided the opposite pitfall of opportunism in a way that the WIL did not.

On one major issue the WIL failed sufficiently to take issue with the nationalist, defencist side to the feeling of the masses. This was the question of increased production. The demand for this by the bourgeoisie was one of its chief weapons against the working class.

In the name of increased production, wages, conditions, health and all established standards were sacrificed. The Communist Party spearheaded and applauded every drive to attack the rates and conditions of work through Joint Production Committees.

The WIL opposed these committees. They opposed the notion that under the control of the capitalists there could or should be increased production.

Yet the WIL did argue that production could be increased 'under workers control'. On the one hand this

was a propaganda exercise against capitalist waste and chaos and yet on the other it blurred the question of the essential nature of the class relations of the particular factory, as a part of society as a whole.

"If capitalists were genuinely interested in increased production they would hand over to the workers. The Labour Party and Communist Party have capitulated completely to Churchill and finance capital. For workers control to ensure decent conditions. For workers control to ensure maximum production."

Yet this distorts the purpose of workers control of particular enterprises under a capitalist state. Workers control is intended to protect and defend the working class—not to line pockets of the owners of super-efficient enterprises. The WIL, however, went so far as to give uncritical support to the case of the Nottingham engineering factory where the shop stewards committee had control over earnings and conditions and where production *rose*.

To applaud increased production for private profit in the interests of imperialist war—whether or not that production is under the 'control' of the workers—is a dangerous step towards defencism.

A distinction needs to be made between production of tanks, guns and supplies for defence of a workers state (the Soviet Union) and production for a state which like Britain was enslaving not only British workers but whole nations of colonial masses. There is no need here to go into complex questions on the position of workers in capitalist allies of the workers state. The first priority in any case is that the defence of the interests of the workers state can only be achieved through resolute defence of the political independence of the workers movement in every country.

Trotsky argued in "Learn to Think" that this might even mean that in the name of internationalism and long term independence workers might need to continue producing arms for a workers state or a rebellious cause, even if this meant producing under the control of the capitalists at that moment or even breaking a strike in order to do so.

"Even if a general maritime strike broke out (in fascist Italy) at the same time, even in this case the strikers should make an exception in favour of those ships carrying aid to the colonial slaves in revolt; otherwise they would be no more than wretched trade unionists—not proletarian revolutionists."

Yet this of course in no way justifies the handing over of the workers movement to the capitalist allies of the workers state. Nor does it justify increased production, for the profit and political ends of the capitalists even under workers control.

Connecting with the feeling and experience of the masses, it is also necessary to wage a fight with them. The RSL were unable to do the former and the WIL failed in the latter task. The RSL attempted to repeat the slogans of 1914-18 and failed to have a 'programme for war', standing on the sidelines in sectarian fashion.

The WIL, however, even while engaging in a living daily struggle in the working class, leading and supporting strikes, and even while its leaders were being imprisoned for doing so, failed sharply enough to argue against the war.

It is not possible to award points or prizes for positions taken in history. It is necessary to draw the lessons of method involved, of the need to pose demands adequate to the objective situation that are able to connect with the existing consciousness of the working class without succumbing or adapting to backward elements

Left in the Limelight

In this regular feature in 'Trotskyism Today' we aim to bring together material from a wide range of sources on the left internationally, to make available to our readers information and views they may well otherwise miss, or which we feel should be savoured anew. We invite readers to submit suggested material for this feature — with or without their own comments.

Moves for a Labor Party

"In the case of a trade union where the question comes up, I will get up and say that the need for a labor party is absolutely proved by all the events. It is proved that economic action is not enough. We need political action. In a union I will say what counts is the content of the labor party, that is why I reserve something to say about the programme, but I will vote for it".

Trotsky spoke these words in 1938—but still today the American working class has failed spontaneously to make the political development posed by the call for a Labor Party. The problem remains to be solved.

The Socialist League (DC) in the USA has been carrying out a campaign in the San Francisco area for such a development in conflict with many other 'left wing' tendencies.

The October issue of their paper, *Labor News* outlined the current stage of that fight, under the headline 'San Francisco Labor Conference Passes Platform: First Step Towards Labor Party':

"In the first united labor conference of its kind, the San Francisco trade union movement passed a platform calling for a labor slate independent of the Democrats and Republicans and endorsed a slate of candidates.

The conference which was attended by over 500 trade unionists first discussed and offered amendments to a labor platform. One of

the most important amendments called for "a reduction of hours of work with no reduction of pay until every worker is able to obtain a job at union wages." This amendment was proposed in answer to the unemployment.

It was immediately opposed by CP supporter Jack Weintraub of the Teamsters union who called it "politically dangerous." Supporters of the Communist Party had introduced their own amendment calling for a 30 hour work week.

Other trade union officials from the construction trades rose to oppose the amendment on the basis that it would interfere with their contract since the amendment if implemented would change the hours of work. This argument was answered by Denise De Ann who is a member of the Executive Board of Local 400 of the city workers.

De Ann pointed out that the "opposition against the amendment was the same argument that was used by those against the 8 hour day. Other supporters of the amendment from the Labor Party Organising Committee and the Socialist League spoke for the amendment and defended it as an absolutely critical policy against the mass unemployment that millions of workers face not only in San Francisco but nationally.

Although the amendment lost in a 57 to 144 vote a large number of trade unionists saw the importance of the labor movement taking up this policy.

The most important amendment to pass at the conference called for "a commitment to the labor program passed at this conference by all candidates endorsed by this meeting" and "There should be a labor slate developed city wide independent of the Democratic and Republican parties."

Joe Belardi, President of the Culinary Workers Union and chairman of the meeting was unable to rally any support to the Democratic party during the debate on this amendment.

Not one trade unionist spoke openly in favour of the Democratic party or labor's continued reliance on it. Instead worker after worker called for the political independence of the unions from the Democrats and Republicans.

The only opposition to the amendment again came from a supporter of the Communist Party who warned the conference that his union would not go along with the policy and that the policy would cut off the trade unions from "progressive elements". The continued support by the CP for Democrats Ron Dellums, Sheriff Richard Hongisto and others would certainly be embarrassing to the Communist Party.

The amendment however was passed at the conference after two voice votes and became part of the platform.

The second part of the conference endorsed candidates in most of the eleven districts after questioning by trade unionists in each of the district meetings. Two of the candidates endorsed are Bob Barnes, President of Machinists Local 68 in district 8 and Ed Dunn, former

President of the Firefighters Union in district 11.

Although most of the endorsed candidates are running as independents some are openly supporters of the Democratic party. These include Gordon Lau who was appointed by the Democratic Mayor Moscone to a vacant supervisors seat and Terence Hallinan.

The trade union movement must demand that these candidates break from the Democratic party. The unions must have an absolute commitment to the labor platform by the candidates before political support by the labor movement is provided.

Immediately following the conference the Operations Committee (officials of AFL-CIO, Teamsters and ILWU) sought to bury the platform passed by the labor conference. The committee under the direction of Pat Jackson refused to distribute copies of the platform and the amendments that the candidates must be committed to. Instead the Operations Committee's sole purpose became the support of the candidates and collaboration with the Democratic Party in San Francisco.

This collaboration with the Democrats already violates the platform passed at the conference and in fact is part of the reason that the trade union bureaucracy refuses to print copies of the platform.

Trade unionists must demand that their union local print the platform and that there is a discussion in the labor movement on a political program for labor and the formation of a permanent political committee of all the unions that is independent of the Democrats and Republicans.

Additionally the trade union district committees which have been set up in each district must continue to meet and function as labor party district committees. This can be the first step in the construction of a labor party in San Francisco and lead the way nationally for the entire trade union movement.

The open hostility by large numbers of city workers to the Democrats was expressed many times at the conference. Mini bus drivers, city hospital workers and social service workers castigated the Democratic politicians who led the campaign to break the past city workers' strike.

An amendment introduced by a

supporter of the Labor Party Organizing Committee that called for "Full support for the right to strike of all public and private workers without government, legislative or court injunctions", was seconded and passed at the conference."

"The many political tendencies that call themselves communist were nowhere to be found at this first labor platform conference of the trade union movement in San Francisco.

The various Maoist tendencies of whom there are many had no representatives at the conference. They were joined by the Spartacists and Workers League in the boycott with not one of their trade union supporters.

Socialist Workers Party candidates attended but their atten-

Spectators from afar

For some time now representatives of the international Spartacist tendency have been touring meetings of left wings groups in Britain, making pronouncements on the British class struggle that are clearly formulated largely on the basis of reports in the capitalist press, and with no regard whatever for the development of concrete slogans for action within the working class.

A clear example of the way this standpoint distorts the reportage in their paper *Workers Vanguard* was to be seen in their article on the Social Contract published on September 16, 1977 under the minimum demand 'Break the 12-month rule'.

The two-page article was decorated with a photograph of last year's TGWU Biennial Delegate Conference 'lifted' from the pages of *Socialist Press*—indicating that the authors had received our extensive reports on the proceedings there.

Yet they conspicuously failed to mention the fact that the fight for the Trotskyist demand of a sliding scale of wages, led by WSL supporters, resulted in one third of the conference delegates backing the demand.

Nor did they themselves advance this demand—which offers the only conscious alternative to the Social Contract strategy of slashing workers' living standards.

And while restricting themselves to the syndicalist call simply to smash the 10% limit and the 12-month rule, combined with the vague call "Down with the Lib-Lab coalition", the Spartacists, as our first extract shows, stuck their neck out further than almost any British 'left' group in suggesting that TUC leaders "finally felt it necessary to oppose a Phase III. . ."

". . . Despite the government's repeated promises of a future upturn in the economy, the deepening class hostility to declining real wages and

dance was only for an endorsement in the districts that they were running candidates. The handful of union delegates from the SWP kept their mouths sealed throughout the morning conference discussion on platform amendments and some trade union members of the SWP in San Francisco were unaware that there even was a labor conference taking place at all.

To top it off the *Militant* which is the newspaper of the Socialist Workers Party did not even see fit to give one column inch to this trade union meeting. So much for their recent turn to the trade unions and their call for a labor party. It is no accident therefore that their candidates for supervisors have received not one trade union endorsement from any of the 200 trade unions in San Francisco."

soaring unemployment has touched off a series of militant, although isolated and largely unsuccessful, strikes against the pay policy during the past six months. As a result of pressure from the ranks, national conferences of two of the most important unions, the Transport and General Workers Union (T&GWU) and the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), came out against another year of the Social Contract, demanding an immediate return to free collective bargaining. The Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers also took a position of opposition to any further form of wage controls. By July even the top bureaucrats of the TUC finally felt it necessary to oppose a Phase III of the Social Contract . . ."

The article goes on to give an amusing explanation of the spinelessness of 'left' social democracy which is quite new in the so-called 'Trotskyist' movement. The 'lefts', we are told, endorsed the Lib-Lab coalition in order "to cling on to their parliamentary seats". Do the iSt mean to say that, had they all been in seats as safe as Michael Foot's the 'lefts' would all have waged a principled fight against the deal?

". . . Steel's threats to bring down the government provide the Labour Party leadership and the TUC tops with their main means of defusing working class militancy on

the one hand, and of keeping the Labour "lefts" in line on the other. Although the former may prove to be rather difficult, the latter have presented little problem, as the "lefts" have virtually ceased criticising the Lib-Lab pact, *with which they hope to cling to their parliamentary seats for another year or more.* (emphasis added) . . ."

Despite their own obvious confusion on 'left' social democracy, the iSt attempt falsely to suggest that the Workers Socialist League, in urging workers to expose the 'lefts' by putting practical demands on them, has a "strategy" which "hinges on 'make the lefts fight'."

Such a line of argument can of course only be sustained in the absence of evidence, since it bears no relation to the positions held or argued by the WSL. Such a technicality however is no problem for the Spartacists, who have become renowned for their capacity to *invent*, and subsequently hysterically 'defend' hitherto unheard-of "principles" and positions of the Trotskyist movement.

"... In an incomprehensible display of centrist double-think, a subsequent article in *Socialist Press* smugly comments that "Life has not been easy recently for those who cling on to hopes that 'left' Labourites such as Eric Heffer will some day turn and fight the reactionary Callaghan-Healey leadership" (*Socialist Press*, 17 August). One might presume that this article signaled a change in line for the WSL, whose long-term strategy for establishing socialism in Britain hinges on "making the lefts fight". But no—further down the page, in the same article, the WSL proclaims that: "... Labour 'lefts' must campaign for the removal of the Callaghan-Healey leadership".

"Despite the formal victory for Labour's wages policy at the TUC conference there is every indication that the vast bulk of British trade unionists are determined to avert the continuing deterioration of their living standards. Already a whole series of unions have lodged pay claims ranging between 30 and 50 percent. The three most powerful, and traditionally most militant unions of industrial workers are officially on record as opposing any further wage restraints.

"While Hugh Scanlon's coup at the Congress (which caused so much jubilation among London stock-brokers) ensured a comfortable paper majority for the twelve-month "rule", the AUEW brass will no doubt find it a good deal more difficult to enforce any more "austerity" on their seething ranks.

Among the miners and transport workers, opposition to any further wage restraint is so intense that both Joe Gormley (head of the NUM) and Jack Jones (of the TGWU) suffered humiliating personal defeats at their own national conferences preceding the TUC conference as they attempted to pass motions in favour of Callaghan's "orderly return to free collective bargaining".

"It is of critical importance to the British working class for all the remnants of the Social Contract to be smashed—the twelve-month rule, the "orderly return", as well as Callaghan's insulting 10 percent "norm".

Yet the iSt themselves offer *no* means for breaking workers from their continuing illusions in the 'lefts', as this final extract shows:

Dead end of centrist "Internationals"

With the current disorientation of the main international groupings laying claim to the title 'Trotskyist', the temptation has grown among certain tendencies outside the main currents to substitute organisational moves towards 'unity' and compromise formulae for genuine programmatic and practical agreement and the political fight to reconstruct the FI.

Such mini-"internationals", for all their short-term pretensions, must be doomed to disaster, as the following sorry self-criticism, circulated last autumn by the 'RFA for the Fourth International' demonstrates.

For any movement to admit that the quality of its groupings "was much lower than the medium standard of the European USec sections" is a crushing indictment of this whole approach to the problem of reconstructing the FI and of those groups, including the British ICL, that have subscribed to it.

In March of 1976, a minimum level of agreement, to start a programmatic discussion, was reached among the following organisations: the *Revolutionary Marxist Faction* (FMR) existing mostly in Italy and born from the experience of the Third International Tendency at the

"As the TUC conference amply demonstrates, the pro-capitalist misleaders of the trade unions stand as obstacles to the ability of the workers to ensure that they do not bear the brunt of the crisis of the British bourgeoisie. Only through the construction of class-struggle groupings in the unions based on the Transitional Programme can an alternative leadership to the present bureaucrats be built which will be able to ensure the full weight of Britain's powerful trade-union movement is brought to bear in the defence of working-class living standards.

"Smash the remnants of the Social Contract! Down with the Lib-Lab coalition!"

time of the Tenth World Congress of the United Secretariat) the *Spartacusbund* of West Germany, the groups *Spartacus* and *Kommunistisches Kollektiv* from Austria (which shortly afterwards fused in the *Internationale Kommunistische Liga*).

At the end of September 1976, the NII was entered by the *International Communist League* from England. In different form and in different moments an interest in the NII has been shown only by Comrade Samarakoddy in Ceylon, by the *American Revolutionary Marxist Committee* (which had joined afterwards the SWP in the USA) some leaders of the Portuguese LCI (expelled afterwards and today dissolved, after having tried to build an autonomous organisation in Portugal), and some comrades of the *Trupo Revolucao Socialista* from Angola, who have followed the same destiny as the Portuguese comrades.

The minimal level of agreement necessary to enter the programmatic discussion was expressed in a declaration, translated in several languages which was given wide publicity and which was based on three essential points:

1) A common evaluation of the

importance and the reasons of the Portuguese defeat after the semi-golpe from the Sixth Government, in November 1975. A common evaluation, in particular, of the crucial character of the problems posed by the Portuguese experience and of the necessity to face these problems in the light of concrete historical experiences.

2) A common evaluation of the failure, in the Portuguese situation, of the United Secretariat and of all those currents who pledge allegiance to Trotskyism; such a failure, while showing once more the programmatic inexistence and the organisational inexistence of the Fourth International, posed with bigger strength the necessity of rebuilding.

This point went together with some appraisals on the historical origins of the destruction of the Fourth International of the time of Trotsky and on the developments of "centrism sui generis", on which the English comrades didn't agree.

3) The appeal to build an international revolutionary-marxist tendency, after a discussion, realised in the light of common concrete experiences, of the following six points, considered as fundamental:

1. The crisis of imperialism and of our epoch.
2. The political revolution in the bureaucratised workers' states.
3. The proletarian revolution in the neo-colonial countries and the national question.
4. Popular fronts and workers' government.
5. The method of transitional programme.
6. The crisis of the Fourth International.

On these same points the discussion had already started some time before among the FMR, the Spartacusbund and the Austrian KK, and the framework of the NII has had a positive effect, allowing its conclusion and a fusion inside the FMR, expressed today by the existence of a German section and a sympathising group in West Germany and of a FMR nucleus in Austria.

However, with the comrades of the English ICL, with the majority of the Austrian comrades and with a minority tendency inside the Spartacusbund, things have not gone in such positive way: outside of the programmatic discussion, these three components converged on a common base, without programmatic references, but with a common rejection of the FMR positions (whether their true positions or the ones believed as such).

This polarisation inside the NII has rapidly taken on all the negative aspects typical of the debate among sects ("Trotskyist" sects in particular) and has rapidly degenerated into childish factional behaviour.

Among these, the worst—because it destroyed the essential aims of the NII—was the refusal to publish the International Discussion Bulletin (a task assumed by the ICL and the IKL) destroying in this way any further possibility of programmatic political confrontation.

The factional conference, which was called by the same groups who had boycotted the publishing of the international discussion bulletins, signed the definitive breakdown of the NII framework, confirming and opening the way to two national splits: one in Germany and the other in Austria, in the form of a bureaucratic expulsion of the minority.

The FMR, as a component of the NII can only accept the end and the defeat of the project, without consoling itself with the relative enlarging of its strength, as a sect would do. The defeat of the NII, in fact, disregarding the forms assumed in the last period, has shown that the difficulties of starting a process of programmatic discussion and therefore of fusion, are bigger than was presumed, and obliges the FMR today to accomplish a qualitative leap in its political orientation. An understanding of the mistakes made with the NII can represent a first step forward in such a direction.

1. A first mistake was in the method; the discussion on the programmatic points had to be done with a direct reference to precise aspects of class struggle, together with a practical collaboration among the different components. This method had been followed at the beginning with the German and Portuguese comrades (partly also with the Angolan comrades), but it was abandoned after the end of the Portuguese experience. The absence of concrete points of reference and of collaboration provokes necessarily a sterilisation and an ideological sectarianisation of the discussion. Since this time Portugal could no longer represent this point of reference, the discussion inside the NII has taken all the characteristics of an ideological debate among sects. Actually, this debate didn't really take place. The NII should have been dissolved at the end of 1976 or pushed forward around a new common experience.

2. A second mistake in the political orientation: after having verified the small interest in the NII appeal we should have considered more deeply the reasons that prevented other political currents

taking part in our framework of discussion (but also in the framework of Lutte Ouvrière, for example). In particular we didn't keep in account that the programmatic declarations of the FMR state very clearly that the best energies which pledge allegiance to Trotskyism are today those inside the USec and that with them we must have the maximum confrontation. In the NII not only were currents from the USec absent, but there were only groupings which had broken with the USec or never belonged to it; without real programmatic explanations.

Leaving aside any diplomatic language, we must admit to have built the NII, with national isolated groupings, whose quality was much lower than the medium standard of the European USec sections. For an organisation as the FMR, which represents a global programmatic alternative to the USec, and which in the past has shown its analytical and programmatic superiority on the USec in important moments of class struggle, this was a serious step backward, contrary to the ideas expressed in the Declaration.

We must admit also, that this opportunist step backward hasn't given any practical result

3. Some comrades think that another mistake has been not to build from the beginning our factions inside the centrist groupings which were taking part in the NII. This sectarian attitude must be opposed, but one must see the true mistake which we made on this ground; it was a mistake not to impose, at every step forward, a precise definition of what that step represented, in relationships to the general positions of the FMR; was it against or in accord with our programmatic declaration?

This way of proceeding would have produced an enrichment of the declaration or a process of political differentiation inside the components; it is enough to think of the opportunist positions of the ICL toward the Irish Provisionals or the abstentionism of the Spartacusbund in Germany. We have not been politically aggressive, but our aggressivity should have been a programmatic one and not organisational or factional.

The NII has died, after having accomplished only partially the *provisional* function which had been assigned to her. The FMR comes out of this experience stronger but without having exploited completely all the possibilities offered by such an initiative. The mistakes we have made shall not obviously be repeated and the fact of closing such an experience with a self critical

balance sheet belongs fully to our traditional methodology.

With all its limits and its partially negative character, the NII enters the heritage of the internationalist experiences of the FMR, just as in the past did its struggle at the Tenth World Congress of the USec or other minor experiences.

We have now the necessity to arm ourselves with a new orientation for international activity, which shall not

repeat the mistakes of the NII and will allow other steps forward on the road to build a revolutionary marxist tendency for the rebuilding of the Fourth International. We must remember that the FMR does not consider itself such a tendency, *but an essential element in the building of such a tendency..*

International Secretariat of the
RFA for the Fourth International
November 26 1977

No answer to their own question

Those that have followed the coverage of the Irish liberation struggle in the press of the International Marxist Group in Britain will have been struck by the lack of any real perspective to relate the IMG's demands of 'troops out' and 'self determination' to the question of the class struggle and social revolution in Ireland as a whole.

But this lack of direction is not confined to the British IMG. It is shared by the Irish section of the 'United' Secretariat whose paper *Socialist Republic* last October carried a classic of Pabloite evasion entitled "National Struggle and Class Questions"

As this quote shows, the USec is distinguished in every country by its ability to start from stimulating questions only to end up with the most unintelligible and hopelessly confused answers!

"... So if political demands are the key to pushing forward the struggle for socialism, what precisely should these demands be in Ireland? To answer this question it is first of all necessary to note that the state in Ireland, North and South, is a neo-colonial one. That is to say the fundamental barrier to political change is British imperialism. This is not to exonerate the Irish bourgeoisie, as the Stalinists do, but simply to say that by themselves the Irish bourgeoisie would not be politically strong enough to maintain a stable state apparatus. British imperialism helps to maintain a reasonably stable state power in Ireland by dividing the working class (through

partition), by denying civil rights to the Catholic minority (while supporting a privileged Protestant community), by relying on the obscurantism of the churches, both Catholic and Protestant, and by cajoling and compelling the Northern and Southern governments to maintain an arsenal of repressive laws and institutions.

In short, it is through the *national oppression* of Ireland that the Irish bourgeoisie and British imperialism maintain a state power that prevents the working class from changing society to satisfy its own needs. Thus national demands are *decisive* for directing the attention of the working class towards the abolition of the capitalist state and capitalist exploitation. National demands, in other words, have become the central *class* demands

Fighting the new McCarthyism

In the struggle for the programmatic demands of the Transitional Programme within the mass movement of the working class, we are forced also to take up the fight for democracy within the unions.

The union bureaucracy, driven on by the desperate plight of British capitalism and by the resultant demands placed on them by the employers to force through speed up and sackings, will attempt every possible means of stamping out principled opposition to its betrayals.

Clear example of this is the McCarthyite witch-hunt now underway within the TGWU aimed at removing the newly-elected leadership of Leyland's Cowley Assembly Plant, whose mass support in plant elections last December was integrally linked to their fight against worker participation, their opposition to wage control, and their perspective of a

of Irish workers.

ECONOMIC DEMANDS

None of this implies that economic demands are unimportant. Obviously they are important for the material, day to day, survival of workers; they give workers confidence and infuse them with an elementary class consciousness.

But by themselves day to day struggles will never convince the working class of the need to seize state power. Nor will attempts by socialists to "lend" these struggles "a political character" (e.g. demanding economic concessions not only from the employers but from the state as well) bridge the gap".

"... Once it is understood that production (and not distribution) is the source of exploitation and class struggle; and once it is understood that the process of production itself is mystified by social and political relations, then it becomes clear that (a) the day to day economic experience of the working class is warped and deformed by the contradictory values of the process of production. (b) That consequently it is futile to try and build on this deformed experience so as to extend it to socialist consciousness. (c) The fight to bring a genuine socialist consciousness to the workers must begin not with their economic experience but by attacking the social and political forces which deform that experience".

struggle to defend all jobs against company attack.

This attack is obviously aimed not at the individuals concerned but at suppressing their political positions. The charges raised against them by the TGWU District and Regional Inquiries that have been held include having a 'depth of disagreement' with the TGWU Executive over pay policy, and 'campaigning against' elected and unelected officials of the union. Such openly political charges figure side by side with such ridiculous allegations as 'walking out of a District Committee meeting' and publishing details of the 5/293 Branch secretary's commission!

If this witch-hunt is allowed to succeed then the way will be open for all those who fight in opposition to the TGWU or any other union bureaucracy to be arbit-

rarily muzzled by officials, or expelled from the union.

For this reason a broad-based campaign has been launched with the aim of preventing this attack and defending the Gowley 9.

Over 100 prominent TGWU members, including convenors, branch officers and shop stewards, have now signed the declaration reprinted here, calling a broad-based conference to fight these unprecedented moves against an elected left-wing leadership.

To all TGWU members, branches & committees;

Nine members of the Transport and General Workers Union from the British Leyland Assembly Plant at Cowley face disciplinary action from the TGWU.

They include the convenor of the plant and three deputy convenors elected by shop floor ballot in December, and two shop stewards.

The nine face recommended sentences including banning from all

office and expulsion from the union.

Most of those involved have long records in our Union. Bob Fryer, the convenor, was one of the main people involved in the unionisation of the plant. A shop steward for 30 years and convenor for 15 years up to 1974, he was re-elected last December.

Alan Thornett, steward for 16 years and deputy convenor for six years to 1974 was also re-elected last December. He is also chairman of the major TGWU branch in the plant.

Tom White, shop steward for 8 years, has been deputy convenor for six years and was re-elected in December.

Frank Corti, a shop steward for many years and Secretary of the 5/293 Branch was elected as deputy convenor in December.

Tim O'Sullivan, 5/55 Branch chairman, has been 20 years a Paint

Shop steward.

Ivor Braggins, Andy Brown, Tony Homer and Dave Pinnington have been active in the union for a long time.

We believe this matter is of great concern to all activists and genuine democrats within the TGWU, and we believe it is vital that the maximum pressure be put upon the relevant Regional and National bodies to make sure that no disciplinary measures of this kind are taken against these members. If this sort of action starts on Region 5, where will it end?

We are therefore appealing to you to send delegates and observers to the Conference for TGWU members on April 8 to hear the full facts of the matter and to discuss the best means of preventing a serious blow to basic trade union rights.

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