

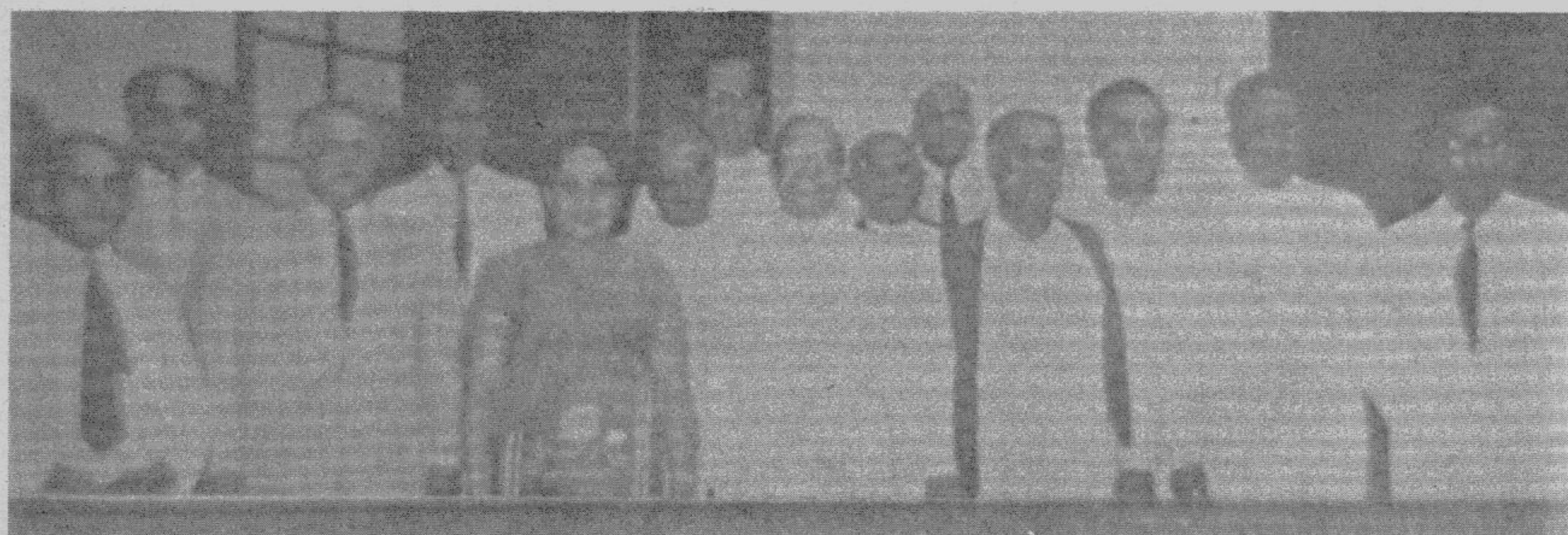
TROTSKYISM TODAY



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Fruits of Pabloite politics: the 1964 coalition in Ceylon, including renegade 'Trotskyists'.

FOURTH INTERNATIONAL - PROBLEMS AND TASKS

This document, adopted at the Founding Conference of the WSL on the 19th October, is intended to form the basis of a discussion within the world Trotskyist movement on the theoretical problems and tasks which need to be confronted in rebuilding the Fourth International. By beginning an analysis of the history of the post-war Trotskyist movement, and centrally, of the problems posed by the development of post-war Stalinism, the document attempts to focus discussion on some of the fundamental questions of method and principle which in the view of the WSL have to be clarified before a firm basis can be established for a reconstructed International.

PART 3

WOHLFORTH'S CONTRIBUTION

In fact, the attempt on the part of the WRP leadership to bury that early period almost certainly goes back further than the publication of *Trotskyism versus Revisionism* in 1974. Although the SLL and OCI leaderships did not take these questions up at the time of the SWP's reunification with the Pabloites, their supporters in the SWP did. The outcome was Wohlforth's *The Theory of Structural Assimilation: A Marxist Analysis of the Social Overturns in Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia and China*. Work on this document started right after the January 1961 National Committee Plenum of the SWP, at which the large majority adopted the position that Cuba was a workers' state and began their political return towards the Pabloites.

The document was completed in September 1963, after the SWP had reunified with the Pabloites, and issued publicly at the end of 1964, after the pro-International Committee tendency in the SWP, headed by Wohlforth and Robertson, had been expelled, and was acting independently. Although the document was sold by the remaining IC sections in the 1960s it was never, so far as can be told, formally discussed nor a position taken on it. Nor do Wohlforth's subsequent writings on the period refer to it.

Yet *The Theory of Structural Assimilation* is an attempt to set out an overall political reply to the basis on which the SWP leadership reunited with the Pabloites, and to justify the standpoint that Cuba remained a capitalist state. In essence it argued - through a factual study of the political events - that the social overturns in Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia and China were a form of 'defensive expansionism' by the Soviet bureaucracy, undertaken to protect the military and strategic position of the Soviet Union.

In the case of most of the Eastern European states the transformations were carried out directly, in the case of Yugoslavia and China by the protection provided to the native Stalinist parties. This process, Wohlforth argued, had reached its limit in China in 1953.

Events in Cuba, he argued, were quite distinct, as Khrushchev's retreat in the 1961 missile crisis confirmed, and Cuba was not a workers' state. Moreover he argued that since workers' states could - aside from the independent revolutionary action of the working class - only come into being by the expansion of a state power which was itself the result of proletarian revolution, the

new workers' states, being essentially extensions of the Soviet Union, should also properly be described as 'degenerated' (rather than 'deformed') workers' states.

Wohlforth's *Theory of Structural Assimilation* had, and has, definite limitations which make it essential that it be fully developed. But it has also great strengths. In the first place it was a definite attempt to set out an overall standpoint on the development of class relations and world politics during and since the Second World War against the series of 'reassessments' and impressions of Stalinism put about by the Pabloites.

It sought to grasp how it was that Stalinism remained, and had reinforced its position as, the main counter-revolutionary tendency in the workers' movement, while at the same time abolishing capitalist relations of production in the areas which came under its military and political control.

CONCRETE

It was, quite consciously, an attempt to develop consistently Trotsky's pre-war work on Eastern Europe. It attempts to make concrete the central concept that the crisis of mankind is concentrated in the crisis of revolutionary leadership, and that the main plank of counter-revolution is, in the post-war world, the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Its essential limitation was that it saw the nature and scope of state power and its action as too narrowly confined within the geographical and population borders of particular nation states, independently of their relative importance in the struggle of classes on a world scale. In fact, the state power of giant states - especially the USA and the USSR - is necessarily employed to settle and mediate in class struggles, up to and including questions of state power - on a world scale. It is not necessarily limited, for example, to areas bordering geographically on the Soviet Union.

Thus, as the world economic crisis accelerates and the international class struggle passes more and more out of the control both of American and other imperialist powers, and of the major Stalinist apparatuses, these forces are compelled to negotiate and re-negotiate a series of attempted re-divisions of the world into 'spheres of influence'.

In many areas, particularly in the countries under imperialist domination, the character of the native state power is thoroughly weak and disintegrated. The state machines defending capitalist and imperialist property relations can survive only with the aid of continuous, direct, financial, military and other assistance from one or more of the major imperialist powers, not to mention the open or tacit collaboration of Stalinist or other bureaucratic elements within the workers' movement. In Chile, in Indochina, and in Portugal, what is at stake is not only, or even necessarily primarily, the state power exercised by the native bourgeoisie but the state power of American imperialism itself, exercised on a world scale.

EXTENSION

This extension of the character of state power, the fact that it now has a national form but an international content, reflects, of course, not any conscious decisions by the major imperialist ruling classes, but the fact that with the delay of the world revolution and the survival of imperialism the nation state as such becomes more and

more an historical anachronism; while the forces of production, the social relations of production, and the state power which is based upon them and defends them, break more and more through the boundaries of the nation states formed in earlier historical periods.

Yet the essential premise (or analogy) from which Wohlforth's work takes its departure, and which is part and parcel of Trotsky's analysis of the degeneration of the Soviet Union, remains an indispensable basis for understanding the role of Stalinism in world politics. It is this: that the Stalinist apparatus is a parasitic caste based upon definite conquests of the working class, just as the bureaucrats in the leadership of a powerful trade union are.

COMPROMISE

Just as trade union bureaucrats will, on occasion, seek to defend or extend their trade union base, and even on occasion give, in a distorted form, a lead to trade union struggles - not as part of an overall policy to defend the working class and prepare for the overthrow of capitalism, but in an attempt to preserve their own position and basis of support - so the major Stalinist apparatuses, acting on a world scale, seek in the long term to preserve a relationship of compromise and equilibrium with imperialism, but, in particular cases, will employ their state and military power, and the diplomatic leverage which expresses these, to promote or protect the abolition of capitalist social relations in particular areas.

Equally, they do this not as part of any international strategy to lead the working class for the overthrow of imperialism, but, again, in order to consolidate and defend the basis of state power and socialised production on which their own existence as a parasitical social formation rests. From this point of view the kernel of Wohlforth's view remains correct: that post-war political developments on a world scale, and especially the role of Stalinism, must be seen as the bureaucratic limitation of the drive of the working class to overthrow imperialist state power, and in no way as the result of the historical initiative falling to Stalinism, either consciously or unconsciously.

Stalinism could only possess such initiative as a new ruling class. In this sense Pabloism and state capitalism reflect parallel abandonments of the revolutionary character of the working class.



Hungary 1956 - testimony to the counter-revolutionary role of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

AFTER THE 1963 "REUNIFICATION"

The re-unification of the SWP was, without question, carried out with a good deal of cynicism as far as most of the SWP leaders were concerned. The record of negotiations with Joseph Hansen, published to the membership of the SLL after the break with the SWP had become definite, (27) shows clearly that Hansen - at the same time that he was negotiating the basis for re-unification with the Pabloite leaders - was unwilling to discuss the political bases or lessons of the 1951-53 split.

In fact, prior to the re-unification it was Mandel, on behalf of the Pabloites, who evinced a greater willingness to conduct political discussion with the British and French sections of the International Committee than did the SWP



SLL demonstration in 1968 calling for support for political revolution in Czechoslovakia

leadership. Mandel in fact attended a camp held by the SLL and addressed SLL members. The SWP re-unified with the Pabloites on the basis that there had, especially since the 1956 Hungarian revolution and the revelations of the 20th Congress of the CPU in that year, been a convergence between the political standpoints of the two tendencies on the basis of their joint recognition that Cuba was a workers' state and of the supposed historical importance and decisiveness of guerilla and petty-bourgeois nationalist movements in Latin America and other areas of the colonial world.

Hand in hand, however, with this 'political' agreement went an agreement to defer discussion of the split which culminated in the open letter of 1953. And, in fact, this discussion has never taken place within the USFI despite the fact that ever more open and serious political disagreements have erupted along their ranks, to the point where there is now a more or less public and permanent factional opposition between the SWP leadership and the minority groupings supporting them internationally on the one hand, and the Mandel-Frank-Krivine grouping, holding a majority on the international leadership bodies on the other.

In fact one of the main political disagreements has revolved around the SWP leadership's condemnation of the 'ultraleftism' and 'adventurism' of the Mandel tendency in giving too uncritical support to guerilla and terrorist tendencies in Latin America - almost a 180-degree about-turn from the SWP's position in relation to Castro in the early 1960s. These differences were crystallised, organised and set out in a series of opposed documents when the SWP declared an independent faction within the USFI early in 1973.

UNPRINCIPLED

But, independently of the form they take at a particular time, they express the fact that what was brought together in the USFI was an unprincipled political bloc, based on the burying of the past and an agreement that the lessons of the Pablo split and the relationship of the Trotskyist cadres internationally would not be studied by either the membership or the leadership.

Naturally, with the growth and systematisation of the differences within the USFI, the SWP leadership have started to resurrect some of this earlier period for their own purposes, but always within the framework of the slender international framework of discipline of the USFI and without in any way attempting to probe and criticise their actions then or since.

The politically unprincipled character of the USFI was underlined, very shortly after the reunification, by the defection from Pabloism of the majority of the Ceylonese section, the LSSP. The LSSP had acted as a broker between Cannon and Pablo immediately after the 1953 split.

However, having failed to negotiate terms for the International Committee sections to attend the 'Fourth World Congress' of the Pabloite leadership in 1954, the LSSP leaders themselves attended that congress and in the period 1953-1963 remained a section - though autonomous in many respects - of the Pabloite International Secretariat. For their part the Pabloites accepted their support and respected their political autonomy, permitting the LSSP leadership to get more and more deeply involved in adaptation to reformism in the Ceylonese trade unions and to various forms of nationalism in their political and parliamentary work. The ground had been prepared with the negotiation of a 'United Left Front' agreement with the Stalinists and the centrist and opportunist MEP (People's United Front).

By March 1964 N.M. Perera, one of the leading right-wing parliamentarians of the LSSP was involved in secret negotiations with Mrs. Bandaranaike's bourgeois SLFP to form a coalition agreement. Despite the fact that a left wing within the LSSP leadership fought the moves towards a coalition during 1963, and warned that the 'United Left Front' was an unmistakable avenue to capitulation to the bourgeoisie, it was April 1964 before the USFI intervened with any clear warning against the course of the LSSP leadership. And by this time, of course, the SWP leadership too had made itself politically co-responsible for the wholesale betrayal of the Ceylonese section.

EXPELLED

Only at the point where three of the right-wing leaders of the LSSP had already accepted ministries in Mrs. Bandaranaike's government in June 1964, did the USFI act to expel them from their 'International' and to suspend the conference delegates who had voted for the coalition resolution.

trace through and draw the essential political lessons from the betrayal of the LSSP. Within the SWP a tendency, around Tim Wohlforth, which had opposed the drive of the majority of the SWP leadership towards re-unification with the Pabloites, continued to insist on discussion and on a proper political accounting of the Ceylonese betrayal. They were expelled late in 1964.



Mandel Frank Krivine
leaders of the Pabloite International Secretariat

The remaining sections of the International Committee - primarily the British and the French - held an international conference in the autumn of 1963, after the SWP's re-unification with the International Secretariat had been carried through, at which they set out, once again, their wish to continue with a discussion of the fundamental questions dividing the world movement, despite the SWP's leadership's opposition to any such discussion. But, at the same time, they made preparations to assume to themselves the responsibilities of reconstructing the world movement against the SWP and their new-found allies.

For example, the SLL theoretical journal, *Labour Review*, was retitled *Fourth International* and became the international theoretical journal of the International Committee. This bloc between the British and French sections, based on an opposition to Pabloism running up through the recent struggle with the SWP leadership, and now given fresh political possibilities and urgency by the beginnings of the break-up of the post-war economic 'miracle', was consolidated at the 1966 conference of the IC.

THE 1966 INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE CONFERENCE

The Third Conference of the International Committee, held in April 1966, formed the main basis of the attempts to draw the remaining sections of the International Committee together - along with other smaller organisations from other countries - to 'reconstruct' the Fourth International in a clearly renewed opposition to the politics of the USFI. From the late 1950s until 1963 the main leaders in Britain and France had fought a rearguard action against the 'drift' of the SWP leadership back towards an unprincipled re-unification with the Pabloites. In the course of this struggle they had won some support, within the SWP itself, and internationally.

The 'Third Conference' was to be the consolidation of this, a starting point for taking up collectively the main political, theoretical and historical tasks facing the movement, and a declaration before the advanced workers internationally and the world 'Trotskyist' movement of the tasks of the IC.

But in fact the outcome of the conference was an agreement for an uneasy political collaboration among the main sections, which was to last only until the split between the SLL and OCI in 1971. The main political

resolution, amended as 'Rebuilding the Fourth International', was prepared by the French leadership. (28) The disagreements between the SLL and the OCI centred around the formula to be adopted on the state of the world movement. In the result both leaderships accepted a form of amendment by Banda which removed the position that Pabloism "penetrating all sections of the Trotskyist movement, has destroyed the Fourth International as an organisation founded on the Transitional Programme and now necessitates a complete break with the theoretical, political and organisational methods of the revisionists". Instead, Banda's amendment substituted the position that: "The Fourth International has successfully resisted and defeated the attempts of petty-bourgeois opportunism, in the shape of a hardened revisionist tendency which penetrated all sections of the Trotskyist movement, to destroy it politically and organisationally."

The main concession to the French, however, was a motion proposed by Lambert that 'We agree to democratic centralism and intervention in principle, but at present it is impossible. The only method of arriving at decisions that remains possible at present is the principle of unanimity'. (29)

CONCESSIONS

The WRP now suggest (30) that the OCI participated in the Third Conference in bad faith. Yet, from the documents they publish, there was no dissimulation on either side. There were major concessions on both sides to agree the formulae of the 1966 Conference, but the fragility of the agreement reached broke surface just a year after the conference in the exchange of documents of May-June 1967. (31)

The French complained that the IC's tasks, as laid down by the 1966 conference, had 'remained a dead letter'. They opposed the idea that the Pablo split could be simply written into the past, "with the IC taking the place of the Pabloite IS". "We cannot shout 'the King is dead, long live the King. We must open a discussion on these questions which has not yet been thoroughly undertaken inside the IC. For us it is indeed a question of rebuilding the FI by bringing the fundamental reasons for the Pabloite crisis into the light of day and drawing the lessons from it'. The Fourth International, they continued, returning to the position which they had allowed Banda to amend away in 1966, 'was destroyed under the pressure of hostile social forces; its leaders capitulated to Stalinism and the bourgeoisie through not having been able to define its tasks in the class struggle'. (32)

The SLL leadership immediately replied, rejecting the OCI positions 'in toto'. They insisted that the FI lived, in the struggle against the Pabloites, and (though this was not stressed nearly so much as it came to be later) rooting this in the struggle for dialectical materialism. They rejected the OCI tactic of a 'United Class Front' and laid stress on the need for democratic centralism in the IC, following the principles set out in the Transitional Programme. They accused the OCI of preparing the road for a "complete pessimistic rejection of the whole Marxist revolutionary perspective". And they asked "What is the theoretical mistake underlying this abandonment of perspective? It is a wrong understanding of the role of consciousness, of the unity of theory and practice, and therefore of the dialectic". (33)

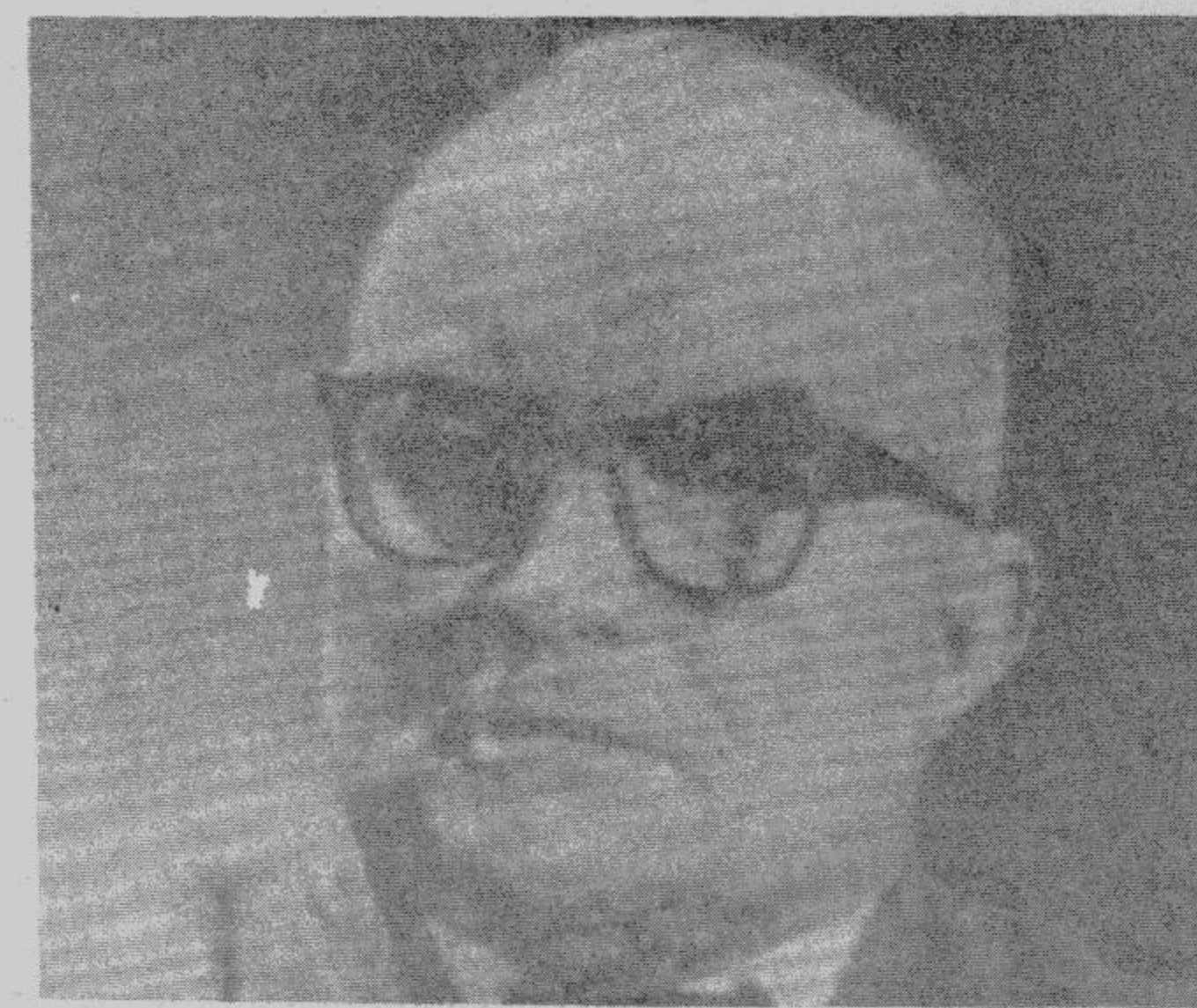
Yet, implicitly, the SLL 'Reply' acknowledges that full democratic centralism in the IC had been shelved, when it recognises that the work of the IC was essentially based on the 'collaboration' of the French and British sections.

AMBIGUOUS

The fact of the matter is that the basis and results of the 1966 Conference were themselves contradictory and ambiguous, representing the strong wish by the British and French leaderships, which had gone through fifteen years of a struggle against Pabloism, to continue their joint work, but without having a worked-out agreement on the history, the gains and problems, of their movement, or even being able to reach a workable agreement on the methods of work together as an international movement.

This is clear from the fact that Banda's amendment - declaring the FI 'alive', whereas the French draft had characterised it as 'destroyed' - was inserted without amendment to the political body of the text! Thus the political and theoretical summing-up of the state of the movement, which should have come out as the result of the concrete assessment given in the body of the resolution, was detached from it, becoming a mere formula. As such, it took its place beside the other formulae which were subsequently counter-posed: of the Transitional Programme on the one hand and the philosophy of dialectical materialism on the other.

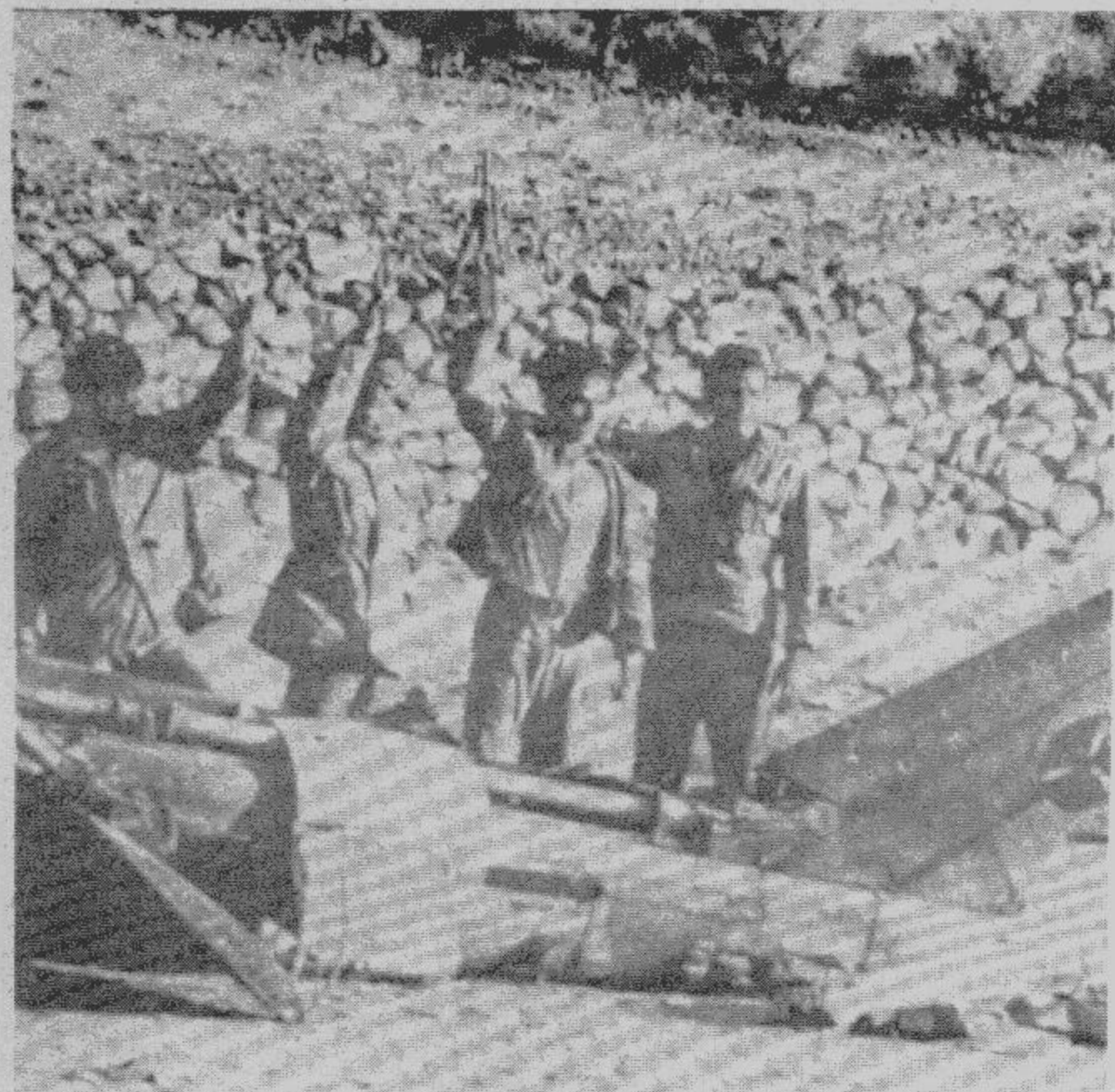
The ambiguous nature of the 1966 Conference is visible in another respect. Two of the delegations which attended - the Voix Ouvriere (now Lutte Ouvriere) group



G. Healy, National Secretary of the SLL

from France, and the Spartacists (Robertson group from the USA, which had split from the SWP in parallel with the Wohlforth group) broke with the IC, essentially over the 'formula' on the FI. The VO group, as they explained in writing before the Conference, had held this position since the 1940s - they also held that China and the Eastern European states were bourgeois states. (34)

The Spartacists left when their leader, James Robertson, was expelled, after refusing to apologise for his 'petty-bourgeois' behaviour in missing a session. His expulsion was apparently carried out mainly by the British leadership, with the passive support of the other delegations. The circumstances (later exploited to the hilt by the SWP and USFI (35)) are obscure: certainly it cannot be claimed that the grounds of the expulsion brought much political clarification to anyone. From the assessments of Voix Ouvriere and Spartacist, made shortly after the Conference by the French and British leaderships, it is hard to understand why they were brought to the Conference at all.



Palestinian liberation forces in 1973

Sharp differences erupted between the OCI and SLL with the outbreak of the Middle East War, at the beginning of June 1967. The SLL favoured critical support for the Arab states; the French regarded it as a war between agents of imperialism on both sides. The differences were never resolved, they raised the issue of principle of centralism within the IC, with the SLL pressing for an immediate joint declaration, the French for full discussion. A week after the key IC discussion, the SLL took the provocative step of instructing Dany Silvere to put their line at a public youth meeting in Paris; having seen her notes the OCI leadership refused to let her put the position, and she did not speak. (36)

Almost certainly, these differences would have led to a split much earlier had it not been for the May-June 1968 general strike in France. The IC sections defended the OCI - both against the repressions launched against all left organisations after the defeat of the general strike at the hands of the Stalinists, and against the political attacks

the time to the basis on which the conference was held. The conference also issued a political appeal to the grouping of the veteran Peruvian Trotskyist Hugo Blanco, affiliated as a sympathising section of the USFI. (39)

BREAK

The final break came very suddenly, at the International Youth Rally, at Essen in July 1971. The SLL moved an amendment to the main resolution (prepared by the OCI, but presented at the last minute) which called for the development of Marxist theory as the basis of the fight against opportunism. There was an open split, and the amendment was defeated. From then on, collaboration was at an end, and the SLL participated in none of the later meetings of the Essen Liaison Committee. In the autumn of that year the split was completed with a public break over the Workers' League and SLL attack on Lora's role in the Bolivian revolution. (40)

Within a very short time from the 1971 split, both sides had taken initiatives towards the USFI, and especially the SWP. Even before the split, in April 1970, Healy had acted in the name of the IC in holding two conversations with Pierre Frank of the USFI to discuss - very much in the abstract - the possibility of discussing the political differences and, even more remotely, of eventual unifications. These conversations got nowhere. Although secret at the time, they were leaked within months, the USFI giving 'slanders' as the main reason for rejecting any organised discussion. (41). But after the split both sides renewed the approaches separately. The OCI made a series of private approaches, starting at least as early as May 1973. In October 1974 serious - but very general - conversations were held between the OCI and a delegation provided basically by the SWP but 'supervised' by Mandel's nominees. Private negotiations presumably still continue. (42)

The SLL made a public approach in a statement of August 1973, following this up with formal approaches via Wohlforth to the SWP in October 1973 (43). The SWP rejected these as a manoeuvre. According to a recent SWP statement they did this at the same time as they were sympathetically considering the second approach from the OCI, 'more comradely' than the first. (44)

On the SLL's part therefore, the picture appears to be one of an erratic propaganda move, not aimed at procuring any sort of searching discussion, but possibly with the object of forestalling or delaying a 'bloc' against them by the USFI and OCI's international tendency. From the OCI the initiatives seem to have been based on the expectation of a split in the USFI, following which some sort of unification with the SWP on the basis of Trotskyist 'orthodoxy' was (and possibly still is) to be expected.

But from none of the four largest 'blobs' manoeuvring on an international scale is there any evidence of a political basis which would permit the reassessment of the history of the International, or the conditions for a resolution of the general crisis of the world movement which opened in 1951-52. On the contrary, the sharpening of class relations internationally, and the offensive of the working class, give rise to manoeuvres, splits, political repetitions and regroupments, the falsification and burying of the movement's history, which serve only to deepen and complicate the crisis.



Bolivia 1971 - miners armed only with dynamite fight fully armed troops

possible - is not adaptation to the spontaneous leftward moves of the class, but the construction - from those elements driven into political movement and ferment - of an alternative leadership, consciously struggling to win the body of the class from the bureaucrats.

It is the material conditions that pose this task that have at the same time thrown the 'Trotskyist' organisations into crisis. A generation of their leaders has been formed under conditions of vast, hostile ideological pressure, making itself directly felt in the form of pressures to adapt and compromise the political divide between revolutionary Marxism on the one side and left reformism and Stalinism on the other. Unable, because of the lease of life granted to imperialism in its main centres, to win important sections of the working class from the influence or control of the bureaucracies, the Trotskyists of the 1950s and 1960s were in large part forced back to the defensive task of preventing the erosion and destruction of Marxism within their own - numerically and politically fragile - ranks.

OBSTACLES

In the qualitatively reversed conditions of the 1970s, the past limits imposed by circumstances on the movement became positive obstacles to the building of parties within the class, and past strengths - together with their limits - are transformed into vices. In the case of the SLL/WRP the necessarily narrow existence as a largely propaganda group, with all the strengths that came from the necessary attempts to train and retain a Marxist cadre, turned themselves within a short space of time into a shell, preventing a break out into wider sections of the class - despite the considerable human and material resources which had been brought together.

The experiences of the post-war faction fights had left their mark: workers who clashed with the WRP leadership's line of the moment were treated as potentially (and actually) politically hostile. The previous threats to the principle of Bolshevik leadership left a leadership incapable of tolerating any challenge to its position, and consequently incapable - in its own view - of error, of learning from loyal criticism within the party.

It was far from accidental that this 'ossification' accelerated at the same time as the SLL recognised the new conditions (without being able to profit from them) in transforming itself into the WRP. The need and possibility of building a party in the class was sensed and reflected in a new form, without the old propaganda leadership being able to weld together the new content. The WRP began to be built - even before its inauguration - as an inner core of activists, surrounded by a 'halo' of paper members, recruited with scarcely a shred of agreement with the programme and principles of Trotskyism. This method - at its sharpest in the election campaigns of 1974 - reinforced the effects of 'philosophy' as a 'theoretical truncheon in the hands of a leading clique.

These were the particular forms taken by the speedy political degeneration once theory and perspectives became separated, as a matter of routine, from the practice of party work. The inability of the International Committee to apply centralism to the direction of its national sections was already acknowledged in the work of the 1966 Conference; in the 1974 faction struggle we found that even the most elementary democratic rights were denied to a minority. What follows from this is that the IC (WRP) can under no circumstances be regarded as the continuator of the FI as the organised leadership with an authoritative international centre - of the World Party of the Socialist Revolution. At the same time it must be clearly reaffirmed that the sections adhering to the IC after the 1953 split and through the reunification maintained the only struggle there was for political continuity of Trotskyism - despite the fact that the IC never really operated as a centralised organisation. The fact is - belatedly - acknowledged in the loose organisational character of the OCI's organising Committee for the Fourth International.



Paris, May 13th, 1968 Workers and Students join hands in a huge demonstration prior to the sit in strikes

directed at it, mainly by the Pabloites.

The account of the May-June events by Tom Kemp, which the SLL published, implicitly criticised the failure of the OCI to call for a government of workers' parties to put the Stalinists on the spot and hinder or prevent them doing what, in fact, they were able to do: return the strike movement via wage concessions, and retreats negotiated plant by plant (37). But neither at the time, nor before the split in 1971 (as far as it is possible to tell) did the SLL leaders take the line which they now express by saying that Lambert 'helped betray the 1968 General Strike' (38).

The struggle between the OCI and the SLL was an open one within the ranks of the SLL and the YS during 1967, with an OCI speaker putting their position at the SLL conference in that year and being involved in a sharp discussion. But it appears to have been closed down, in Britain at any rate, among the rank and file in 1968 and to have re-opened only in 1970-71. In February 1971 the OCI, acting formally on behalf of the IC, but in effect, it appears, on their own initiative, convened a conference of representatives of 'sympathising' groups in Latin America.

It was a preparatory meeting with the aim of preparing conditions for rebuilding the FI on that continent, and the most important grouping there was Lora's Bolivian POR, grouped (on conditions which were later to be disputed) with the IC since 1969. The SLL does not seem to have participated in this conference, though the OCI was fully involved, but equally it does not appear to have objected at

CONCLUSION

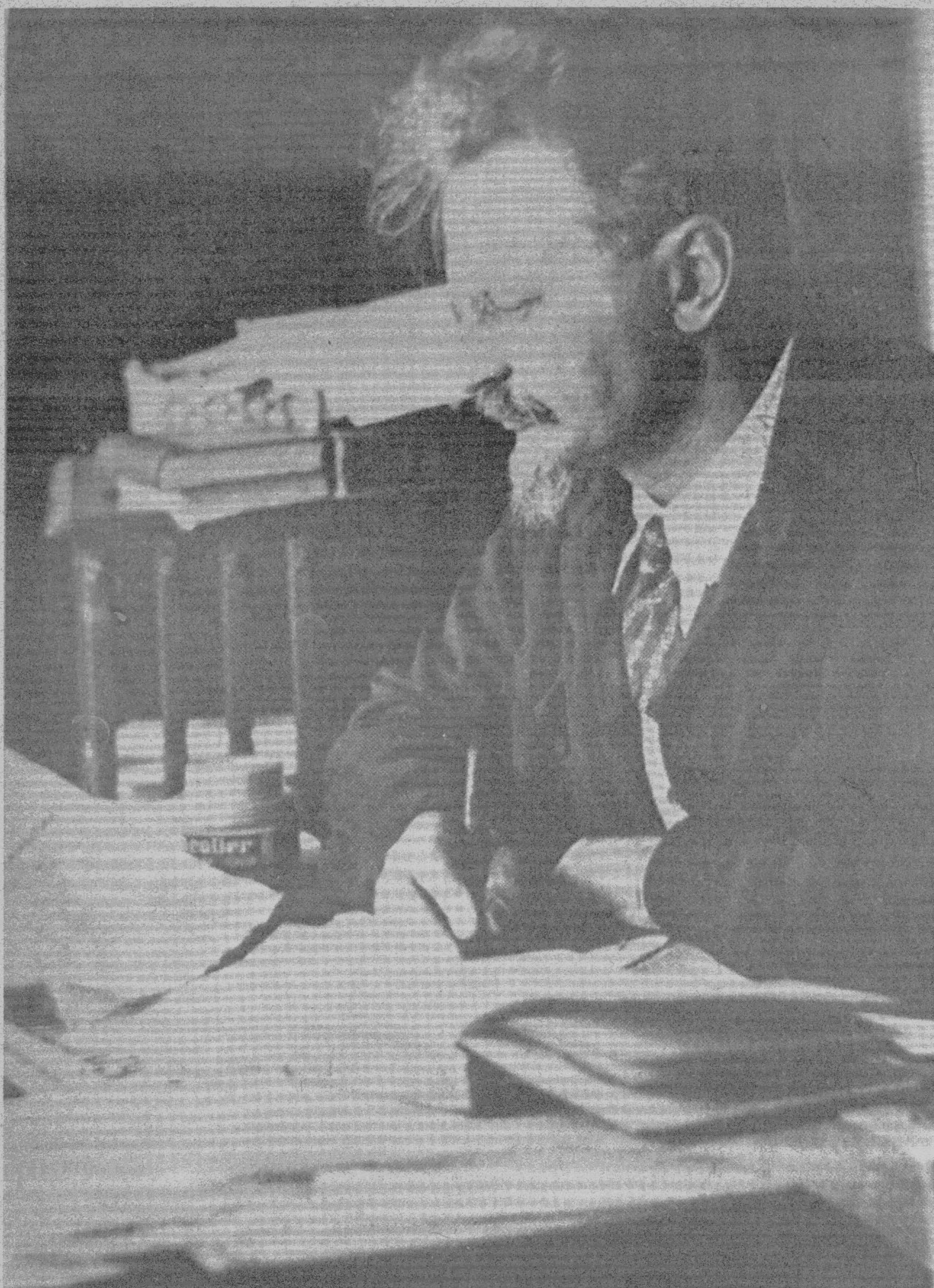
The conditions which have created the possibility of building full revolutionary parties in many countries are essentially the same as those which have produced the acute political crisis and paralysis of the International Committee (and, though less directly, of the Pabloite USFI). The collapse of the post-war boom and the development not simply of the economic crisis, but of a total social crisis, within the major capitalist states has removed the conditions under which reformism and Stalinism could consolidate and retain the hold that they reasserted following the post-war defeats and curtailment of the working class. The material development of the crisis sharpens to an intolerable pitch the contradiction between the real needs and struggles of the masses and the cowardly, treacherous, partial leadership of the bureaucrats of the labour movement.

The crisis sharpens these tensions - in innumerable spontaneous forms - but of itself it cannot break it. Spontaneity, under these conditions, can achieve nothing more than the left centrism of sections of the class, shifts and movements in the direction of revolutionary actions, the 'left' and militant criticism of the bureaucratic apparatuses. But what is required - and what is now



10,000 strong OCI youth rally at Le Bourget airport, Paris in 1970

For the WSL, therefore, it can be neither a question of attaching ourselves to an already existing 'Fourth International' which has maintained unbroken the political and organisational continuity of Trotskyism since the founding conference, nor of a pure and simple proclamation that we are ourselves the basis of the ('real') FI. The accuracy of the OCI's 1966 formula, at least, must be accepted: that the FI has been destroyed as an organising



Leon Trotsky - Murder caused leadership crisis within FI

reopening of political discussion with the USFI and its component sections, taking up the whole post-war history of Trotskyism and defending the struggle of the IC for the political independence and theoretical continuity of Marxism.

For this purpose the USFI leadership and sections cannot be regarded in advance as having placed themselves outside the world Trotskyist movement. Equally the WSL, while politically hostile to the USFI as a bloc, rejects all attempts to poison the political struggle with the USFI with accusations or insinuations of 'provocateurs' etc.

CLEAR

In this context, too, the WSL should also make some other points clear from the outset of discussion though on these, equally, prior agreement should not be seen as the essential basis of discussion:

1. The defence of the Transitional Programme, as the highest expression in the world of the struggle for the proletarian party and its political strategy, must not become an obstacle to its development. In particular the section dealing with "The USSR and Problems of the Transitional Epoch" must be supplemented and brought up to date to provide the essential transitional demands and slogans for the leadership of the political revolution in the workers' states. The main thrust of these should be the inability of the bureaucracies to provide economic development under control of the working masses, the political usurpation and the enforcement of their political monopoly, and the bureaucracy's lethal standpoint of 'socialism in one country', subordinating themselves to imperialist diplomacy and military pressure, endangering the existence of the workers' states themselves, and sabotaging the elementary military, political and economic unity which should exist among them.
2. The initiatives of the Organising Committee of the Fourth International towards the USFI, and especially the SWP, since 1973 contain - in our view - the serious danger of erasing the essential political distinctions which must be drawn in the course of the necessary political conflict. While we are not opposed on principle to initiatives towards the USFI, we consider they should take place not 'privately' but on the basis of a public statement of position. The necessary organisational conditions must be secured through political clarity and correct and correct and open approach and response on the organisational level.
3. The claim to constitute the FI by an abstract proclamation of its necessity cannot be the basis for its reconstruction. Such a position in the absence of any political assessment of the post-war history of the FI, will become an obstacle to the struggle for political and programmatic independence which is necessary.
4. The conflict which developed between the OCI the SLL leadership over the programme on the one hand and Marxist philosophy on the other is in our view an artificial one. In the case of the SLL it has ossified the question of marxist method, separated it from the political tasks of the sections and rendered it a means for holding back not developing, the membership. The development of dialectical materialism cannot take place in the abstract, but only in the struggle to grasp and take the lead in concrete political developments.

CONCLUDED

27. In SLL Internal Bulletin, 1963.
28. Reprinted in Documents from the Third Conference of the International Committee, Bulletin International Series No.3, 1971.
29. See letter immediately after conference by Rose J., expelled Spartacist, in Marxism v Ultraleftism, pp 84-5.
30. In the editorial passages of the fifth volume of Trotskyism versus Revisionism.
31. See Trotskyism versus Revisionism Vol.5.
32. OCI Statement, May 1967, Trotskyism versus Revisionism pp 84 ff.
33. Reply to the OCI by the CC of the SLL, June 19th 1967, in Trotskyism versus Revisionism Vol.5, pp 107 ff.
34. See Trotskyism versus Revisionism Vol.5 pp 64 ff.
35. See Marxism v Ultraleftism
36. See TvR Vol.5 pp 134 ff.
37. Pamphlet by Kemp, French Revolution Betrayed, 1968.
38. TvR, glossary of names.
39. See TvR Vol.5 pp 166 ff.
40. Article in The Bulletin, Aug.30th, 1971.
41. See Intercontinental Press, July 23 and October 25, 1970, and Workers Press, 7 July 1970.
42. See Intercontinental Press, Jan. 1975.
43. See Marxism v Ultraleftism, p.195.
44. Intercontinental Press, Jan 13th, 1975.



For Lenin, Marxist philosophy was never counter-posed to programme

centre based on the Transitional Programme. But - and here is the difference - this destruction was not a simple result of Pabloism, and did not take place suddenly one day in 1952 or 1953. It was the outcome of a series of political struggles in which there have been real political gains and defences made, despite the failure to hold together and build the centralised international party which was formed in 1938. And the destruction has resulted not just from Pabloism as some outside force, but because there has been a failure to answer Pablo and his successors politically.

INITIATIVE

The primary responsibility of the WSL, therefore, is to take a position before the world 'Trotskyist' movement and the advanced sections of the working class on a political, not an organisational basis, and to take initiatives in accordance with this. There is no question that what is posed is the 'reconstruction' of the Fourth International, starting from the defence and development of the Transitional Programme and the gains which it represented. The elements of our political position should include a brief statement of the following points on which agreement should form the basis for initial discussions between ourselves and other tendencies, especially those expelled from the IC:

1. The 1951-53 split turned on a definite revision of Marxism and the Transitional Programme, especially of the position on Stalinism and petty-bourgeois tendencies within the international workers' movement. The revisionist tendency of Pablo was enabled to capture the leadership of the FI due to (a) the relative weakness and inexperience of many of the cadre and leaderships, due largely to the blows of Stalinism itself, and of the war, and (b) the apparent strength of Stalinism and imperialism, including the destruction, under Stalinism, of capitalist production relations in several countries, as the outcome of the defeats of the working class, imposed as part of the post-war settlement.

2. The actions of the PCI and SWP in 1950-53 in resisting Pablo's tendency must be defended, despite their political limits and 'hasty' character.

3. The history of the IC, as a tendency continuing this struggle through 1963 'reunification' must equally be defended.

4. Yet there is, more than at any previous time a need for the theoretical re-arming of the Trotskyist movement, in particular as regards the post-war development

The IC - while abstractly recognising the need for theoretical development - was unable to accomplish it or attack it collectively.

5. Internationally, conditions are more favourable than at any time since the war to build Trotskyist parties rooted in the working class. Equally the acceleration of the world economic crisis and the breakdown of all the arrangements of political and economic 'stability' in the advanced countries and many previously 'controlled' semi-colonial and colonial states, render this more than ever critical even for defending and advancing the elementary interests of working people, as well as in the preparation of new revolutionary leaderships.

6. This renders urgent steps towards an open, democratically organised discussion among all those striving to draw upon the gains of our movement and reconstruct the FI as a democratic centralist world party. The WSL will participate in all such discussions, and will take the initiative in seeking such discussions with tendencies and individuals. The aim of such discussions must be to prepare the political basis for open conference of tendencies, working towards political agreement and ultimate organisational unification. The form and conduct of such discussions must be agreed by the political tendencies participating.

7. No tendency internationally can lay claim to sole rights within such a discussion. Nor can participation in such discussion be interpreted as conferring immunity from public polemic. However, all tendencies have the gravest responsibility to avoid poisoning or aborting political discussion with accusations of a police, provocateur or agent character.

The general agreement of other tendencies on such a basis for discussion, should be judged, naturally, not just from their formal declarations but from their work in the class struggle itself. For our part the WSL must decide on, prepare and publish those documents - in addition to these general International Perspectives - which will form our essential platform within such discussions.

HISTORY

These must include a separate document dealing with the main developments of world history during and since the Second World War, especially the changes in the character and role of the Stalinist bureaucracies. This document must contain a critical assessment of Wohlforth's *The Theory of Structural Assimilation*.

In the view of the WSL one main purpose of the