

Fourth International

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

APRIL 1966

VOLUME 3 NUMBER 2

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ALGERIA

by David Francis

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Independence**

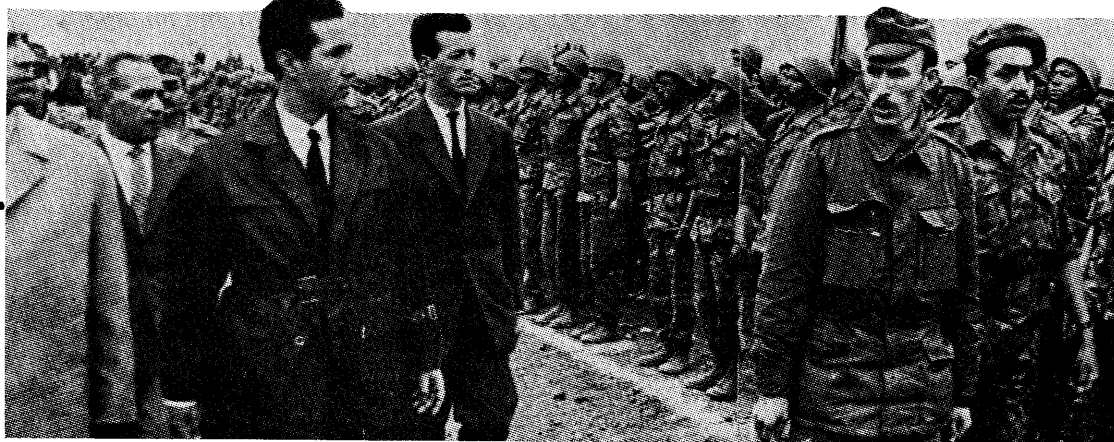
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(iv) American Trotskyism without Trotsky

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EDITORS—TOM KEMP, CLIFF SLAUGHTER

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FOR a number of years Castro's every word has been enthusiastically hailed by many 'Marxists', and especially by the supporters of the 'United Secretariat' in Paris and the Socialist Workers' Party in the USA, both misleadingly calling themselves 'Trotskyist'.

These groups, after hailing Castro as a 'natural Marxist' and an obvious successor to Lenin and Trotsky, now find themselves considerably embarrassed by the last part of Fidel Castro's speech at the Havana Tri-Continental Conference, translated in the issue of 'The Newsletter' for February 26, 1966.

Castro, hailed by these so-called Trotskyists as a great fighter against bureaucracy and someone who insisted on 'the truth', has now viciously attacked Trotskyism. His words, condemning Trotskyists as 'agents of imperialism', are taken directly from the speeches of Joseph Stalin in 1937 to justify the Moscow trials and subsequent liquidation of opposition throughout the USSR.

Such is the fate of revisionists, of those who abandon Marxist method for impressions and enthusiasm for surface events, and

who abandoned the construction of independent working-class parties for the worship of Castro and 'Castroism'.

The Newsletter, February 5, 'Castro Slanders Trotskyism', February 12, 'Whither Castro', and February 19, 'Statement of the International Committee' has presented a Marxist analysis of Castro's service to the Stalinist bureaucracy, and of the pathetic response of Joseph Hansen and the 'United Secretariat'. They suggest that 'Fidel' may have been 'irritated by the statements of the ultra-left Posadas tendency', itself a breakaway from the revisionists, or that Castro attacked Trotskyism in order to deceive the Soviet bureaucracy into thinking he was an anti-Trotskyist.

Since 1961, the Socialist Labour League and the International Committee have continuously exposed the departure from the Marxist method of these revisionists. They are no longer able to approach political developments from the point of view of the international class struggle. Instead, they present 'interpretations' of the motives of individuals, and impressions of 'how things are going' in different parts of the world.

Castro's speech, when seen in full, gives us the opportunity to deepen our understanding of what he really represents and of the urgency of our own tasks, completing the fight against revisionism in practice as well as in theory.

When Castro makes his attack on Trotskyism, followed only two weeks later by his second public attack on China, he does so as part of a world development in Stalinism.

The recent arrest of Trotskyists and left oppositionists in Poland and the repressions now reported in Hungary, following militant actions by the factory workers, together with the ruthless campaign of the Russian Communist Party to isolate the Chinese Revolution, are similar indicators of this fundamental rightward turn of Stalinism.

Inside the advanced capitalist countries, the Stalinist parties have launched a campaign of 'Popular Front' or 'left unity' proposals which amount to the virtual liquidation of the Communist Parties and are accompanied by attacks on Trotskyism.

In Vietnam, the Russian Communist Party leaders continue to press for a deal with the United States imperialists. Kosygin does his best, at Tashkent, to resolve the difference between the ruling classes in India and Pakistan, shoring them up against the social and political tensions which threaten to blow sky-high the insecure base of United States imperialism in Asia.

All over the colonial and semi-colonial world, from India and Indonesia to Algeria, Nigeria and Latin America, social and political conflict is rapidly intensifying, posing afresh the question of the leadership and programme of the anti-imperialist struggle.

Behind all this is the deepening crisis of imperialism, made all the more severe by the crisis of the Stalinist bureaucracy, upon whose betrayals of working-class leadership imperialism has been dependent in every serious crisis since 1926.

This analysis of the linked crises of imperialism and of the Stalinist bureaucracy is the basis of the 1966 Conference of the International Committee of the Fourth International, upon which the reconstruction of the Fourth International will be carried out.

In the 'underdeveloped' countries, the consequences of this crisis are especially severe. Faced by their 'liquidity crisis', the advanced metropolitan countries have tried to stave off their difficulties by increasing the exploitation of the backward countries.

The world market prices of the products of these countries fall farther and farther behind those of the products of the industrial countries.

Consequently, it becomes impossible for the 'left nationalist' leaders, like Sukarno, Ben Bella, Nkrumah, Castro and others, to maintain 'national fronts' of workers, peasants and capitalists.

In countries where direct imperialist agents remain in power (as in Latin America) the programme of a bloc with the national capitalists gets less and less 'realistic' and tendencies appear which advocate a *socialist* programme behind working-class leadership.

The Stalinist bureaucracy faces a similar problem 'at home'. The contradictions of the economy

of Russia, Eastern Europe and China can be resolved only by their industry and agriculture being integrated with the resources and advanced means of production of the imperialist countries. Having betrayed the international proletarian revolution which alone can accomplish this historically necessary task, the Stalinist bureaucrats have adopted the strategy of co-operation with imperialism.

But the resurgence of the workers' own struggle in Poland, Hungary and the 'Soviet bloc', threatens them from one side, while the revolutionary struggles of the workers against imperialism threaten the bosses to whom they make their approaches.

Thus international Stalinism is called upon once again to carry out its role as the principal counter-revolutionary force, the gravedigger of the revolution on the international scene.

The approach towards a 'rehabilitation' of Stalin and the warning given to the Soviet intelligentsia by the writers' trial in Moscow are part of the same development as the arrests in Poland and Hungary.

Everywhere it is a question above all of striking blows against the development of alternative leadership which can provide a programme of struggle for workers' power in the conditions of deepening crisis.

Fidel Castro and the Tri-Continental Conference were an instrument of this international campaign. The delegations to that Conference were carefully hand-picked to exclude those suspected of 'Trotskyism'.

An impression was created of the Communist Parties of Latin America and elsewhere having been converted to the prospect of 'armed struggle'. But this was only a cover for the real business of the Conference, to restrain the national liberation struggles within the framework of peaceful co-existence.

Castro's speech against Trotskyism was in fact not a last-minute afterthought, but the surest indication of the actual politics of the Conference and of Castro himself.

Hansen and his friends of the United Secretariat have interpreted the Havana Conference, apart from the 'mysterious' blemish of Castro's anti-Trotskyist outburst, as an important, even 'historic' move to the left. They accept the demagogic talk of 'armed rebellion', as a sign that 'Castroism', and the 'genuinely revolutionary trend', has defeated the 'peaceful roads' line of the Stalinist parties.

As we have seen, however, the truth is the exact opposite!

Castro has carried out a special assignment in preparing international repressions against the real revolutionary programme and leadership, in line with the needs of Stalinism. The talk of armed rebellion is the cover for this move.

To accept it as the reality is to reveal the unbelievable depths to which revisionism has sunk. Not only were the revisionists unable to defend Posadas' supporters in Havana, or later Ché Guevara, they remain blind to the Stalinist threat to themselves and to Trotskyism.

This is only the inevitable consequence of their attitude to Castro and to the international revolutionary struggle over years. Their journals have been spattered with fulsome praise of Castro for years. For example, Joseph Hansen wrote in 'World Outlook' for May 8, 1964: 'The Cuban Revolution is headed by independent figures who have displayed political talent and a moral stature not matched since the days of the Bolsheviks.'

Hansen, who now points out that Castro 'knows better' than to tell vicious lies about Trotskyism, apparently feels no responsibility to answer for his commendation of Castro's 'moral stature', not to mention his 'independence'. When The Newsletter warned consistently of Castro's actual role, Hansen referred to our 'thickheadedness', and insisted that our 'primary concern was simply to preserve certain ultra-left dogmas'.

But Hansen's singing of the praises of Castro's political independence in May 1964 did not have to await the Havana Conference in order to be exposed. Hansen himself had to comment in January 1964, i.e., five months before his words of adulation, on the sugar agreement and declaration published after Castro's visit to Moscow.

Instead of warning his readers of the dangers to the Cuban and Latin American revolutions of Castro's agreement with Khrushchev, Hansen performed the most exquisite political acrobatics.

Thus, although Castro signed a joint statement condemning 'factional and sectarian activities in the ranks of the Communist and workers' parties and in the international Communist movement', Hansen, far from recognising a trend which set course for the Havana anti-Trotskyist speech, wrote:

'There are, nevertheless, strong indications that Castro

did not make all the concessions that Khrushchev would have liked to have. . . . In addition, there is striking restraint in relation to the Chinese. In none of these statements does the gross, open condemnation of the Chinese appear which Khrushchev has demanded up to now from those who have capitulated to his pressure.'

What now, Joseph Hansen? Do you conclude anything from the fact that Castro now *does* openly and bitterly attack the Chinese? Does this indicate that Castro has 'capitulated to the pressure' of the Kremlin bureaucrats, and does not this necessitate a different interpretation from your's of his speech against Trotskyism?

Hansen concluded his article with what must rank as one of the most remarkable forecasts even in the history of Pabloite revisionism:

'There is little likelihood that the revolutionary Fidelistas throughout Latin America will alter their present course in order to adopt the one adopted by such Khrushchevites as Codovilla of Argentina and Prestes of Brazil who insist on an alliance with the national bourgeoisie at any cost.'

But Yon Sosa was eliminated from the Guatemalan guerrilla leadership precisely because he opposed the Communist Party's policy of the 'bloc of four classes' (including the bourgeoisie), and Castro used this victory of the right in Guatemala to spark his attack on Trotskyism at the Havana Conference.

Hansen found a worthy collaborator in Ernest Germain, of the United Secretariat. Germain wrote in 'World Outlook' on January 8, 1965, after quoting Trotsky's last major writing on the Permanent Revolution:

'In that sense the July 26 Movement of Fidel Castro, the heroic fighters of the Algerian revolution, the followers of Pierre Mulele in the Congo, of the Trotskyist Hugo Blanco in Peru, and the Bolivian Trotskyists at Sora-Sora, are much closer to the tradition of Lenin and Trotsky, at least so far as their understanding of the colonial revolution goes, than the editors of The Newsletter.'

Germain also wrote a number of 'rave' reports about the 'socialist' regime in Cuba after his visit there last year.

All the while, these gentlemen failed miserably to defend the Cuban Trotskyists, followers of the sectarian Posadas, just as they

failed to attach any significance to Castro's ban on the visit by Canadian students to Cuba in 1965.

There surely is now not the slightest doubt that that decision, taken in the knowledge that Canadian Trotskyists shared the organising of the trip, was a prelude to the Havana outburst of January 1966.

And yet one of these Canadian students, writing on the basis of his 1964 visit, before the ban, committed himself to print in the Canadian 'Young Socialist Forum', identified with 'Workers' Vanguard' and the American 'Militant', supporters of the politics of the United Secretariat, in the following sickening terms about Cuba, as late as the January-February 1966 issue:

'By channelling the best, the most idealistic, the most hard-working rank and filers into the party, a cadre will be built which, by pooling its experiences, and making its decisions democratically, can safeguard the forward movement of the revolution.'

Castro's move against Escalante, an old-guard Stalinist, is written up thus:

'The effect of Fidel's speech rang through the island like thunder; it is said (!) that people came out in the streets and danced. Anibal Escalante, the party secretary, and several others were instantly dismissed, the party was thoroughly re-organised and new elections were held.

'Fidel's role in the battle against bureaucratisation has been a ruthless one.'

And finally:

'One may best describe Fidel as the heartbeat of the revolution. Fidel commands more popular affection and trust than any other political figure today.'

Thus did the spokesmen of revisionism, to the very last minute and even beyond, in Hansen's and Pierre Frank's pleas to Castro to correct his error (Pablo himself makes a similar appeal), prepare their followers for Castro's open counter-revolutionary attacks on Trotskyism.

Castro's evolution is by no means finished. But time is running out for those in the ranks of the revisionists who do not learn quickly to reject the whole course of the United Secretariat.

We are confident that many of them, especially in the ranks of the SWP, will take this opportunity of returning to the

genuinely revolutionary road of reconstruction of the Fourth International.

The International Committee's international conference this spring provides the focus for the reconstruction of the revolutionary Marxist forces in the Fourth International.

In their attitude to Castro, the revisionists express the disastrous results of their abandonment of the Marxist method and the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International. By 1952-53 Pablo and his followers had concluded that in the post-Second-World-War situation the struggle for socialism would be fought through *without* the construction of independent revolutionary parties of the Fourth International. Their first capitulation was to world Stalinism: they asserted that 'mass pressure' would force the Stalinist parties to take state power.

Through the 'fifties the same role was attributed to the petty-bourgeois nationalist leaders in the colonies and semi-colonies. When Castro successfully led the revolt against the corrupt Batista regime in Cuba and was then forced to resist the US imperialists, the Socialist Workers' Party of the USA, having broken with Pabloism in 1953, returned to support of the revisionists, giving their blessing to the establishment of the 'United Secretariat' in 1963.

The characterisation of Cuba as a workers' state, and the uncritical acceptance of Castro as the successor of Lenin and Trotsky, was made the yardstick of this 'reunification'.

Of course, the dominance, for a period, of people like Nkrumah, Ben Bella, Sukarno, or Castro, was only a transitory expression of one phase of imperialism's handling of the revolution of the colonial workers and peasants in the epoch of crisis of leadership. Instead of going to the deep and insoluble crisis of the imperialist system, and understanding from this the need to build a proletarian international, the Pabloite revisionists and the SWP 'united' in their prostration before the Stalinists and the middle-class nationalists.

The 'unification' was achieved only shortly after a split in the revisionist ranks. The followers of Juan Posadas, who controlled the Latin American Bureau of the Pabloite revisionists, had already, in the very course of the 'unification' approaches, broken away from the Pabloites and proclaimed themselves the 'real' Fourth International. They adopted a perspective of revolution only in Latin America, with the advanced countries being radicalised through

nuclear war.

It was only a few months after the agreement of the SWP and the Pabloite secretariat (of course, the Voorhis Act in the USA prevented the SWP from any organised affiliation with international movements) that yet another major split occurred. Pablo himself, together with followers in a number of sections, was first suspended, and then, in 1965, expelled from the Germain-Frank-Maitan-led 'United Secretariat'. Then followed the unmitigated disaster, for the revisionists, of N. M. Perera's capitulation in Ceylon.

We have pointed out above the deepening crisis of imperialism and of the Stalinist bureaucracy and its allies. All over the world the resurgence of working-class militancy raises the question of independent revolutionary leadership. This is what explodes the revisionists' unity. It was on this question that they broke from Marxist programme and method.

Their infatuation with Castro and his ilk has found them tailing along behind the forces which are used to crush the drive to an independent leadership, instead of being able to place Trotskyism at the head of the revolutionary proletarian forces.

Part of Joseph Hansen's 'reply' to Castro's slanders was to refer to the record of his tendency in 'defending' Cuba and Castro. Hansen's aim was to dissociate himself from the Posadas tendency explicitly quoted by Castro, and draw attention to others in Latin America who have followed his own line of prostration before Castro. He chose as 'typical' of the revisionists' attitude to Castro one Manuel Moreno, who wrote in the Argentine magazine *Estrategia* concerning the Guevara disappearance:

'First, against the campaign of the writers in the pay of imperialism and its exploiters, we reject any insinuation that Guevara was "purged" by the Cuban regime and its undisputed leader, Fidel Castro. In our opinion as we characterise the regime and its leader, the persecution of revolutionary militants, or leaders, whether Cuban or foreigners, is excluded.'

All this despite the purging of the Escalante group without discussion of any sort, despite the suppression of the Posadas-led Trotskyist group in Cuba, despite the cloud of secrecy over Guevara's removal after his speeches in North Africa in early 1965.

This same Manuel Moreno is capable of preparing the same

betrayals in his own country as his revisionist friends have prepared internationally. Moreno has for years acted as one of the leaders of the 'left wing' of the Peronist movement. Its paper, *Paabra Obrera*, appears with front-page photographs side by side, of Fidel Castro and . . . Peron! The paper announces itself as 'organ of revolutionary workers' Peronism', published 'under the discipline of General Peron and the Higher Peronist Council'!

Peron, at present domiciled in Franco Spain, is a left-bourgeois nationalist of the classical Latin American type, held in the background as potential head of a 'radical' national government able to mislead and contain the working class, persuading them of the advantages of a front with the bourgeoisie, rather than a socialist revolutionary struggle at the head of the peasantry, against the imperialists, landlords and capitalists, all of whom are inseparably interlinked in Latin America.

While Pablo, Frank and Hansen implore Castro to correct his errors and 'return' to the revolutionary path, the International Committee of the Fourth International goes from strength to strength. On the basis of its principled struggle against revisionism, the International Committee calls a conference this year which draws together forces from all over the world to hammer out the prospects of the socialist revolution and the reconstruction of the International.

While the revisionists were preparing to hail the Tricontinental Conference, their hero Castro was playing his part in the suppression of the revolutionary tendency in the Latin American movements. The Soviet bureaucracy had become extremely disturbed by the revolutionary challenge to their policy of peaceful co-existence and collaboration with the bourgeoisie in these countries. It was thus no accident that Castro chose to concentrate his attack on Guatemala.

Castro told the Tricontinental Conference that the Guatemalan guerrillas, and especially their leader, Yon Sosa, had been misled by a 'Trotskyist' political agent, working for the Yankee imperialists, into an adventurist policy, isolating them from the masses. Another leader, Turcios, had successfully opposed this tendency and restored the movement to sensible paths.

What are the facts? The most detailed information available in the English language is that provided by Adolfo Gilly in the

American Monthly Review of May-June 1965. Gilly showed that the MR-13 guerrilla movement of Yon Sosa was working out a definite line of proletarian leadership in the revolution, and a break from the bourgeoisie. They were also explicit about the continental and international revolutionary implications of a successful struggle in Guatemala itself.

Armado Granados, in his interview with Gilly, delivered a criticism of the Guatemalan Communist Party in Marxist terms, opposing their policy of the 'bloc of the four classes' (including the bourgeoisie) with the alternative of a socialist revolution under working-class leadership. However, Granados offered to the Communist Party a policy of united front on the basis of their commitment to armed struggle. Said Granados:

'What the CP of Guatemala proposes, with the aim of attracting the "non-imperialist bourgeoisie" is a programme which accommodates itself to the framework of the capitalist system. We are against such a bloc: we are for the alliance of the working class and the peasantry behind a proletarian programme and proletarian leadership. . . . We do not reject all immediate democratic reforms. What we do reject is the conception of the conquest of democracy by the people within the capitalist system. We do not separate our struggle for immediate reforms from the struggle for power—immediate demands for weeks, the socialist Revolution on Sundays. We consider them to be intimately linked together. We do not have a minimum reformist programme for today and a maximum revolutionary programme for the future; we have a revolutionary transitional programme, in which all the immediate demands are inseparably linked to the struggle for the socialist revolution. On the basis of this programme we are working to establish, and we shall continue to establish, a United Front with all organisations and parties whose struggle coincides on certain points with our own.'

The campaign against Yon Sosa and his followers became necessary for Castro and his Stalinist supporters because the MR-13 spearheaded most sharply the revolutionary tendency which opposes the rightward policies of the Stalinist parties in Latin America. Not only in Guatemala,

but also in Venezuela and Colombia, the Stalinist parties have recently reinforced their propaganda for a bloc with the 'national bourgeoisie' or 'progressive' capitalists in their respective countries. That is why the Tricontinental Conference was attended by the worst nationalist and liberal demagogues as well as by Stalinists and some leaders of the guerrilla struggles, and yet the revolutionary tendency, anything savouring of 'Trotskyism', had to be excluded and calumniated in its absence.

Michel Pablo, who noted these divisions between Stalinists and the revolutionary tendencies, in his journal 'Under the Banner of Socialism' for November-December 1965, found himself just as badly caught out as the Frank-Germain-Hansen tendency. In his statement on the Tricontinental Conference two months later, he wrote:

'The method of inadmissible amalgams employed by Stalinism to fight Lenin, Trotsky and the movement inspired by his fundamental ideas must never be that of a Fidel Castro (!) . . . As for the serious accusations levelled against the heroic guerrillas in Guatemala led by Yon Sosa, we are astounded that the possible criticisms of this movement, which enjoys great prestige throughout Central America and in Latin America generally, could be made in such a summary, negative, confusionist and partisan manner. . . . The international Marxist-revolutionary tendency [i.e., Pablo's tendency] . . . expresses the sincere desire to see the Cuban leadership return to the serious regard which it has held towards the authentic Marxist-revolutionary movement which is the true Trotskyism. . . .'

Such is the impotence of the revisionists of all varieties. Their common method of tailing behind the petty-bourgeois nationalists and the bureaucracies leaves them without a single weapon.

All these developments are a remarkable confirmation of the fight against revisionism in the Fourth International. The disintegration of all the revisionist tendencies is only one necessary side of the process now under way all over the world: the resurgence and radicalisation of the working class.

In its conference this Spring, the International Committee finds in this radicalisation the objective basis for a great step forward—the rebuilding of the Fourth International.

ALGERIA

A discussion article by
by David Francis



INTRODUCTION

IT IS NOT OUR PURPOSE in this article to re-examine, even briefly, all the political problems raised by the Algerian revolution and by the class struggle in Algeria today. Our purpose is to give a 'clarification' of the content, the meaning and the consequences of the activities of the 'Pabloite'¹ revisionists in this important sector of the world revolution, in which they played a certain role as a political tendency.

The overthrow of the Ben Bella government reveals the bankruptcy of the common line of the 'United Secretariat'² of Germain-Hansen and Frank and Pablo. But the most important factor is not the crumbling of illusions resulting from

At the same time, this episode stresses the responsibilities of the International Committee and of its organisations: to 'defend Trotskyism' is to work to rebuild the Fourth International, to build its

sections in every country, to develop Marxism in that struggle. In Algeria, this struggle must find its political expression, its application in practice. the divergence between the grandiose statements on 'Algerian socialism' and reality. It is the fact that this episode deepens and makes more precise the political role of revisionism, and shows, as did the open move by the LSSP in Ceylon to class collaboration, its role in the class struggle.

1. i.e., the supporters of the so-called 'International Secretariat of the Fourth International', which was for most of its life, after the split in the Fourth International (1952-3), led by Michel Pablo.

2. United Secretariat: the body set up in 1963 after the International Secretariat reached formal agreement with the leaders of the SWP, though the latter are prevented from participating in its organisation by the United States government's Voorhis Act.

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'PABLOITE' REVISIONISM AND REVOLUTION IN THE COLONIES

As the decomposition of the international revisionist Centre accelerates, so there develops a tendency to throw responsibility for the most blatant failures on to one or other of the 'world leaders'. But if there is one sphere where this kind of move would be difficult, it is precisely in the intervention of the 'international leadership' of Pablo - Germain - Frank - Hansen - Maitan, on the question of the revolution in the colonies. Pablo and his team's para-governmental activity³ was covered up for by the revisionist movement as a whole, and the unanimity of the revisionist spokesmen was expressed in the published documents of the Pabloites.

Firstly, the resolution of the Sixth World Congress on the 'Colonial Revolution'—the congress which was held in Pablo's absence whilst he was interned in Holland—gives in advance the 'theoretical' grounds for Pablo's practical activity in Algeria.

This resolution stressed the decisive role for Africa of 'The Elite', 'Embryo of a State Bureaucracy', and 'Fundamental Element of Future Evolution'. In *In Defence of Trotskyism*,⁴ S. Just exposed the mechanics of this resolution and there is no point in returning to it. Let us simply recall its practical conclusion:

'Whence comes the specific role of the restricted native stratum which takes power and controls the state in a specific international and national context, unknown in the past?

'This stratum holds a force in itself, the state, without coming under the precise influence or the control, of a ruling class of which it would be the mandatory.

'It is through the administration of the state that this stratum develops and acquires a social importance, and not through the intrinsic needs of production or by its role in production. In the historic conditions which prevailed in the past, and up till the last war, this kind of stratum with this kind of function could only evolve towards being a comprador bourgeoisie in the service of imperialism.

'But in the present particular conditions, in which it necessarily comes under the influence of the powerful movement of the masses, of the growing strength of the Workers' States, and when it knows that it can take advantage of the East-West antagonism, this stratum acquires a bonapartist role which it imprints on the whole state, whose economic and social structures are not yet definitively directed towards a necessarily *classical*

capitalist development.' (Our emphasis.) *Quatrieme Internationale*, No. 12, pp. 61-62.

We will leave the unravelling of this curious sociological or political analysis to the enthusiasts. We must stress that Pablo merely moved its field of application a few degrees north and that he was not advancing any new idea in underlining the importance of the centre of gravity of the evolution of Algeria (its governmental elite) for it to 'imprint on the state' a 'non-classical capitalist development'.

The basis for these statements on the existence of socially *indeterminate* states in the newly-independent backward countries, capable of evolving towards socialism or capitalism according to the political orientation of those in control, is found in all the documents of this Sixth Congress on the 'Colonial Revolution', and in the resolutions of the Reunification Congress, which repeated many of the positions held by the Socialist Workers' Party.

It lies, first of all, in the way in which contemporary social reality is cut into slices—which certainly are to come together again in the far-off paradise of the 'world revolution', but which remain perfectly separate for the time being: the capitalist advanced countries—sphere of structural reform—the Stalinist world—promised de-Stalinisation—and the underdeveloped countries—the prey of the 'colonial revolution'.

For Marxists, internationalism—as a strategy—is the consequence of the international unity of the class struggle, produced by the world market and the international division of labour. This international struggle of the working class for socialism develops through specific forms, but in each case the struggle of the working class is only comprehensible from the standpoint of its international dimension. From this point of view, there is no 'colonial sector' with its own 'colonial revolution' for particular objectives (national independence, industrial development). That is how the petty-bourgeois ideologists who speak of the 'Third world' see things.

This is also quite certainly the axis of the revisionist conception. It is in this that is revealed, in the particular sphere of the revolutionary struggle in the colonies, the abandonment of Marxist method which characterises their overall positions: the abandonment of the international class struggle and of its conscious factor; the problem of revolutionary leadership as the starting point for any analysis and any definition of policy.

As an autonomous zone, the 'third world' is en-

3. i.e., Pablo's acceptance of a post in Ben Bella's state administration.

4. Published in *La Verite*, No. 531.

titled to its revolution 'of a special type', Pablo might say, since it has its own criteria and makes the best of bourgeois leaderships for the purpose of winning (however little 'revolutionary' they may be), and by the use of the famous 'élite' transforms bourgeois states into workers' states.

The method was illustrated in the case of Cuba as much by the different leaders of the International Secretariat as by the leadership of the SWP. Algeria was the other 'proof' of the correctness of the method. The SLL in its polemic with the SWP took up all the arguments put forward by the revisionists on this question. The consequences of their conceptions are clear: a refusal to start from the international reality of the class struggle to tackle the problems of the proletarian revolution in the under-developed sectors, and an abandonment of the Marxist theory of the state lead to adaptation to the conventions of the 'revolution by stages' and the 'state of national democracy'.

The idea according to which revolutionary leaderships would correspond to this particular revolution and would be adequate to the task without being selected on the basis of an *international programme* leads to an adaptation in practice to present bourgeois and petty-bourgeois leaderships.

In his pamphlet *The Colonial Revolution and the Theory of the Permanent Revolution* Pablo gives a good summary of this conception starting from the Cuban and Algerian examples.

After having noted that the historical novelty of what he terms the 'Castroite phenomenon' consists in the

'possible substitution in the role which traditionally is played by the revolutionary marxist party, of a more restricted leadership of a different ideological origin' (p. 7),

that is:

'restricted political Jacobin leaderships of a special type which show their degree of revolutionary

understanding precisely in that they take part in effective armed struggle' (p. 6),

Pablo concludes:

'... the national revolutionary movements which rise to power following independence, whether it has been conceded or gained through struggle, occupy precisely as a result of the exercise of power and the state apparatus, a particular position in society of a bonapartist character of a special type (again!)

'They are exposed to the combined pressures of their base—composed of the immense mass of the peasantry specific to these countries, of the urban proletariat, of the imperialist or capitalist firms, of the 'educated', of the nucleus of feudo-capitalist native compradors, of imperialism, of the workers' states and of the world revolution in general.

'In these conditions, the possibility exists that the state will turn towards an economic and social policy of structural reforms, of nationalisation, of radical agrarian reform, of monopoly of foreign trade, of industrialisation, of planning which *imperceptibly* (our emphasis) set the country on the preparatory path to a workers' state'

'The more the national revolutionary movement reaching power is already structured, endowed with a precise anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist programme, undergoing the pressure and the control of its revolutionary base, the greater is the chance of an *anti-capitalist* orientation of the *new state*.' (our emphasis) (pp. 13-14).

It cannot be said that, from the standpoint of its own logic, the bankruptcy of 'Pabloism' rests in its inability to build revolutionary parties—it does not aim to build such parties. In this sense its present organisational setbacks, the blows that events bring to its proclamations, are not identifiable with its defeat as a political tendency defined by its opposition to the programme of the Fourth International from which it came.

This liquidationist and revisionist tendency will only meet its real defeat—in Algeria as elsewhere—in the rebuilding of the Fourth International and the building of its sections—in Algeria as elsewhere.

REVISIONIST POLITICAL PRACTICE CONFRONTED WITH THE ALGERIAN REVOLUTION

In this chapter we intend to recall, in chronological order, the most important positions taken up by representative personalities of the revisionist and liquidationist tendency, and the practical activity of this tendency when confronted with the social and political events which have determined the evolution of Algeria since Evian. In doing this, we shall have to document our analysis very briefly, by referring mostly to already published studies.

(a) The FLN and the Evian agreements

Of course, the attitude of the International Secretariat and the subsequent United Secretariat—and the personal role of Pablo and his team—towards the Ben Bella regime, did not constitute a 'turn'. They express the general policy that we have exposed above, they are the logical continuation of their attitude towards the leadership of the FLN during the revolutionary war against

French imperialism, which was made particularly clear in their appreciation of the Evian agreements, which were the basis of the new Algerian state. Immediately after these agreements an editorial in *Quatrième Internationale* (No. 16, July 1962) defined the agreements as being

'the expression of a compromise based on the precise relationship of forces between imperialism and the revolution.'

But this definition is entirely wrong: it is impossible to speak of 'Revolution' in general—even by using a capital letter—the dynamic of the revolutionary process in question must be analysed; and also the situation and aims of the different classes taking part in it, together with their organisations and *their leaderships*.

The bourgeois nationalist leadership of the FLN, whatever the *real* and *deep* disagreements which could place the more radical elements in this leadership in opposition to a more 'Bourguiba-ist' element, did not represent the *proletarian revolution*. What was signed at Evian was an agreement between imperialism and the weak national bourgeoisie, *represented by the central apparatus of the FLN, and it was an agreement aiming at the building of a bourgeois state in Algeria.*

At Evian the FLN leadership attained *its aims*, which were not the proletarian revolution in Algeria, and confirmed its reality as a bourgeois nationalist organisation.

But, at the same time, the FLN was dying as a mass organisation channelling the struggle of the Algerian proletariat and peasantry against imperialism.

It burst into rival cliques, which threw themselves into the struggle for power, multiplying the promises of 'socialism' and 'revolution'. For the bourgeois press this was the decisive aspect because it was spectacular. But, in fact, the clash between these personalities was no more than a symptom of a deep *social crisis* which was developing.

The masses continued the struggle for their own objectives, and the substitution of the FLN apparatus for the first Evian arrangements (the provisional executive) was not sufficient in the situation created by the almost complete exodus of the European minority. Abandoned factories and land were occupied, European flats requisitioned; the trade unions were reorganising, and at local level the elements were coming together of a power directly issuing from the armed struggle.

Parallel to this, on the level of the middle cadres and militants of the FLN, there was not only fantastic confusion but also a great need for

clarification and a rapid political development. Those who were looking for really socialist solutions should have been told the truth, the meaning of the Evian agreements, and a political perspective opened for them in terms of the mobilisation of the masses and of the necessary political independence of the proletariat.

The revisionists followed the opposite road; they disarmed these militants and discredited Marxism in their eyes. Far from considering *the question of a political organisation of the working class*, instead of telling these militants that they could only carry out this task by starting with an examination of the struggle and the role of the leadership of the FLN, Pablo and his friends speculated on the evolution inside the heights of top leadership, classifying them more or less on the left, without the activity of the masses or the real problems of the Algerian revolution impinging on their analysis. The editorial article that we have already quoted analysed the situation inside the FLN as follows:

'Roughly, there can be found (in the FLN) at present, when the Algerian revolution is entering on its social phase and the decisive options, three distinct tendencies: the socialist and tending-towards-socialist left, the Bourguiba-ist right, and the undecided and opportunist centre.

'The left includes a whole range of ideological tendencies which go from a frankly revolutionary Marxist wing, through a favourist wing, to a wing of 'Arab socialism' of the Nasser type. It reflects the interests and aspirations of the plebeian base of the Algerian revolution, which includes the peasants, the workers, the radicalised petty-bourgeois of the towns, in particular the "educated".'

It is up to this very diverse left to transform the FLN into a revolutionary party, and all will be for the best:

'the FLN will transform itself into a political party which will have a programme with a clear socialist orientation...'

(b) The birth of the Ben Bella regime

As we have said, we are not retracing the political and social history of Algeria after Evian. The facts and a Marxist interpretation of these, as far as the rise to power of Ben Bella is concerned are sufficiently well known (see especially, *La Vérité*, No. 527 'Social classes and the State in Algeria').

The conclusion which has to be drawn is that the new regime was right from the start imposed against the masses. Placed in power by the ANP

(the frontier army) of which he was virtually the hostage, Ben Bella had the task of restoring 'order'—and that order embodied a respect for the essence of the Evian agreements, the control of the Algerian economy by imperialism. The new Ben Bella regime was established through the liquidation—including military liquidation—of the organs of power raised by the masses. The conflict between the GPRA (Ben Khedda, etc.) and Ben Bella was only a secondary factor with regard to these first steps towards the rebuilding of a bourgeois state in Algeria.

The International Secretariat and its publications will say nothing of all this. For them the choice is between Ben Bella—defined as the 'left'—and the old GPRA.



Ben Khedda :
*The conflict
between
Ben Khedda
and Ben Bella
only a secondary
factor . . .*

In fact, the revisionists chose the counter-revolution, based on the army, against the masses.

In September 1962, the French organisation affiliated to the International Secretariat published a pamphlet including the Tripoli programme and a study by Pablo entitled *Impressions and problems of the Algerian revolution*.

The preface already shows the level of 'Pabloite' political thought:

'the Algerian revolution already has a programme, the one adopted unanimously at Tripoli, which, if it is carried out, will make Algeria a society belonging to the Algerian peasant and worker masses, and the Algerian state into a workers' state building socialism.'

Let us not comment on the idea of 'the state building socialism'. In any case, to carry out this programme a 'socialist leadership' is necessary. But, the anonymous author of the preface adds,

'a socialist leadership cannot have the slightest chance of success if it does not very rapidly unite with the peasantry. For, in present-day Algeria it is

the only social stratum spontaneously putting forward a demand which cannot be circumvented, which will fundamentally transform the economic structures and create a powerful impetus for the masses: the agrarian reform.

'The peasantry today, reduced to extreme poverty, follows the ANP and the political bureau. It is from these facts that any socialist perspective must be traced out in Algeria.'

The moral of this text, which begins by simply eliminating the proletariat, is very simple: Ben Bella and Boumedienne are the strongest, let us therefore build 'socialism' with them!

As for Pablo's text, written for the occasion to flatter those whose servant he was, it reads today rather spicily. In the chapter entitled 'Interview with Brother Ben Bella' we learn that the latter, 'very simple, serious, thoughtful, probably overworked', made the best impressions on Pablo, who repaid him by revealing to him his future as a great leader:

'For my part, I ended the discussion by stressing the key role played by leadership in a revolutionary period, and sometimes even by a single individual, as the real animator of the collective of a leadership, of a team.' (p. 51)

But Ben Bella was precisely not alone. A kindly word was also needed for Boumedienne, of whom Pablo had

'the opportunity to measure the strength, as well as the very great degree of attachment and veneration that the soldiers and officers have for him.' (p. 43)

Here, the style of the ex-secretary of the International becomes quite high-flown:

'the magnetic personality of Colonel Boumedienne is at once charming and disturbing. The augurs are undecided: Savonarola, Cromwell, Bonaparte, Boulanger or Castro? For my part, I am inclined to believe that this man from whom emerges a deep and sincere faith in the people, I would even say in the basis, in the mystique of the revolution, and who is certainly not a "mere Nasserite Socialist" will never accommodate to a state apparatus copying the administrative system inherited from colonialism.

'He will struggle with his team of political commissars and officers as the incarnation of the revolutionary will of the ALN spearhead of the "revolution", for a deep structural reconversion of the country. His defeat would be the defeat of the revolutionary ALN, the defeat of the most positive forces in the present stage of the revolution.' (p. 43)

But the kernel of Pablo's openly counter-revolutionary position appears, even more clearly than in these psalms, in the following passage:

'in any case, the omnipotence, at the present stage, of the army, even if it does present some inconveniences for the necessary passage to the establishment of civil institutions (state, party), is the embryo of the revolutionary power which has emerged from the dislocation of the colonial state and, unfortunately, also of the political organisation of the FLN.

'it is in starting from this embryo, and not by opposing it in any way, or by ignoring it, that it will be possible to build revolutionary civil institutions ...' (p. 42)



Boumedienne :

*augurs
undecided?*

(c) The evolution of the Ben Bella regime and the positions of the revisionists

In itself, the establishment of the Ben Bella regime did not bring any solution to the stabilisation of a bourgeois regime in Algeria. The economic and political 'vacuum' created by the flight of the Europeans was spontaneously overcome by the masses (control of the abandoned property by management committees, both in the countryside and in the towns). The movement which tended, in the countryside, to place the main part of the advanced sector of the rural economy in the hands of the agricultural workers, undoubtedly constituted a stage in the agrarian revolution, and modified favourably the relation of forces in the interest of the masses. The organisations set up by the peasants, by their very existence, posed problems that went much further than the 'management' of this or that property. The need for credit, for marketing the produce, for links between the different management committees, the relationship of agriculture and industry, etc. . . . flowed from them. In fact, these were *political* problems, concerning power.

The trade unions, the UGTA, whatever the limitations of their leaders, were an essential element in the mobilisation of the masses, in the

development of their consciousness, because face to face with the petty-bourgeois apparatus of the FLN, which called on the 'nation' to gather round it, they existed as the *proletariat's class organisations*, able in their development to bring about the indispensable revolutionary alliance with the poor peasantry. It is, in any case, in this direction that the UGTA outlined its perspective, albeit confusedly and timidly.

This is why one of the first acts of the Ben Bella government, clearly confirming its nature, was the destruction of the independence of the trade unions, which were reduced to dependence on the FLN apparatus and thus on the state, after that congress in which the leadership that the most advanced sections of the Algerian working class had chosen was reduced to silence by the worst bureaucratic methods, Ben Bella enjoying the support of the peasantry in order to isolate the working class (see *La Vérité*, No. 527 in particular).

On this episode, essential for anyone claiming to be a Marxist, what has *Quatrième Internationale* to say? Michel Pablo, who was then still its 'official' spokesman, only alludes to it ironically, laughing at the 'left intellectuals' who scrutinise the 'Algerian reality' whilst regretting its 'contradictory aspects'. And Pablo adds:

'They do not lack "arguments". On the negative side, banning of the Algerian CP, bureaucratic congress of the UGTA, followed by a virtual *coup d'état* carried out by the political bureau.'

But what does Pablo think of all this? We shall never know what interests him beyond the changes in the economic and social forms initiated, for Pablo is not one of those who 'devote themselves above all . . . to the form of the political regime that they judge to be anti-democratic and personal, to the impetuous professions of Arabo-Islamic faith of some leaders, to the real dangers of the party monopolising certain sectors of political life, abolishing not only the *old style 'workerite' militancy of the unions* (our emphasis) but becoming purely and simply autonomous as the organisation of a distinct class, by its nature and its role in the Party and in the State, etc., and . . . 'are naturally ready to condemn the regime or to despair of its socialist evolution, which remains still open. . . .'

However, this lucid and objective 'Marxist' who stresses the vulgar character of politics based on the analysis of superstructures does not forget the role of personalities. Earlier in the same article he states that there is

'a landmark in this unstable and explosive situation, the Ben Bella-Boumedienne tandem, with

the forces that each represents, was and remains the most advanced incarnation of the Algerian leadership, of the revolutionary line directed towards socialism.'

Under the leadership of this tandem the 'embryos of a new social order' are being established, that is the self-managed sector. The political justifications by the revisionists of their attitude towards the Ben Bella government will never rise above this level: one can speak to them of the close depend-

ence of the Algerian economy on the French economy, of the domination of the monopolies in industry, of the non-existence of agrarian reform for most of the peasantry, they always reply 'self-management', and, of course, their enthusiasm knew no bounds when Ben Bella institutionalised self-management of abandoned property in March 1963.

We must thus dwell on this point.

SELF-MANAGEMENT, THE NATURE OF THE STATE AND THE CHARACTER OF THE GOVERNMENT

In fact, one of the most blatant aspects of the abandonment of Marxist method by the revisionists is the complete absence in the nevertheless very great volume of writings on Algeria of *an analysis of the social relations and thus of the nature of the state*. In its place one can only find bombastic phrases about a 'highly transitory' revolutionary process, vague considerations of the supposed intentions of the leading group, incantations to an abstract 'Algerian Revolution' which, endowed with capital letters, pursues its march forward outside class relations, nationally as internationally. In this group, the only solid factor that comes to the surface is the (unique and revolutionary) phenomenon of 'self-management', from which the Ben Bella government is defined as a 'workers' and peasants' government'.

Two sets of confusions are carefully maintained on the subject of the management committees, their role and their development:

1) a confusion between the movement which gave rise to the 'management committees' and the form in which the gains of this movement have been institutionalised and codified by the state.

2) a confusion between the participation of the management committees in the administration of a firm or a farm and the property relations governing that firm.

The facts on these two points have been established in the article by M. Aklouf in *La Vérité*, No. 527. All that has happened since has merely confirmed the conclusions of this article on the subordinate nature of the management committees. We will, therefore, not go into his proof in great detail here.

As far as the first point is concerned, we must start not from the decisions of the Ben Bella regime, or the orientation of the FLN, but from the spontaneous offensive of the workers in the towns

and in the countryside in the summer of 1962, in the situation created by the flight of the European minority. A number of industrial and commercial firms, like the big agricultural estates, were 'occupied' by the workers who took control of them and began production on them once again. This was the expression of a deep and authentically revolutionary phenomenon, which by its own logic questioned the content of the Evian agreements and thus the capitalist regime in Algeria. The October 1962 decrees of the Ben Bella government sanctioned an accomplished fact.

Mohamed Harbi, who was the 'left' theoretician of Ben Bella-ism, described this phenomenon more clearly than did his 'Pabloite' mentors, even if his conclusions are wrong:

'It will be remembered that the accession of Algeria to sovereignty did not take place in normal



Celebrating the accession of Algeria to sovereignty.

circumstances. It was marked by the simultaneous evaporation of the colonial state after the death throes of the OAS and the massive exodus of the European owners and the disintegration of the FLN. This double crisis and its consequences, which were the disorganisation of the administration inherited from colonialism and the absence of an organisation coming out of the resistance movement which was able to take over, left the way open for popular initiative. The aim of which had always been the dream of the masses: the seizure of the property from which they had been expropriated and defrauded, was within reach. The limiting clauses of the Evian agreements did not bind them, and those that they did bind were no longer there to stop them. They had become the power. By taking over the abandoned property the working strata expressed their wish to come on to the economic and political scene, and to become the governing force' (Chartre d'Alger).

'Self-management is the conscious codification of this spontaneous revolutionary process, born in August 1962, during a period of social crisis in Mitidja and the plain of Orleansville.'

('Algeria and its reality', a lecture given in Paris on March 22, 1965, by M. Harbi and published in the May issue of *Economie et Politique*).

Of course, the masses had not 'become the power', but they had moved towards setting up the embryo of their own power, at the same time that they were beginning to organise along class lines (in the UGTA). It is as an element in this movement of the masses leading to the appearance of 'dual power' that the phenomenon of the 'management committees' can be understood. They were the first rough outline of workers' control over one sector which, by force of circumstances, was to be nationalized, to become the *property of the state*.

But of which state? Of that which was being rebuilt thanks to the bayonets of the ANP and which, to use M. Harbi's phrase, was 'bound' by the Evian agreements, as it was being built precisely to guarantee the main terms of these agreements. The armed struggle against 'Willayism', and the destruction of the UGTA as an independent working-class organisation, showed what the Ben Bella government was.

It was to the benefit of this bourgeois state, by the actions of a government which had shown itself in fact to be opposed to the masses, that the 'codification' that Harbi speaks of took place. The famous decrees of March 1963, which institutionalised the management committees, and define 'unoccupied property', etc., in no sense have the revolutionary scope that Ben Bella's admirers attribute to them. Starting from an irreversible fact—the need for the Algerian state to take over

the 'modern' sector of Algerian agriculture as well as a certain number of industrial firms abandoned by their European owners—and from a political situation in which it was still necessary to make concessions to the masses, they canalised the movement and led it into the blind alley of managing a sector of the Algerian economy.

Not only is it not possible to define these measures as 'socialist', but there is not even any question of any workers' control over production: the instruments of this control by the class organisations having been dismantled before the decrees were passed.

In capitalist society a 'workers' co-operative' is not a 'socialist island' but a unit of the capitalist economy, determined by its laws. In the same way the existence of particular forms of administration in a firm or a sector of the economy do not cut this firm or this sector off from the economy as a whole. Neither do they give this firm or this sector a particular *social character*. What characterises the 'self-managed sector' legally, above all, is not the methods by which it is administered, but the fact that it is the *nationalized* sector. (The authority of the state, in any case, is clearly shown in the fact that the 'executive power' in a firm remains in the hands of a director which it nominates.) Socially, it is characterised by the *class nature of the state*.

But, on a Marxist analysis, as we have pointed out, the Algerian state can only be defined as a *bourgeois state*. It is progressively rebuilding the new machinery of repression which 'defends capitalist property relations in the form in which they predominantly exist in Algeria: the domination of foreign capital.' (*La Vérité*, No. 527, p. 61).

It is possible to understand this merely by looking at Algerian society: the economy remains overall under the domination of imperialism, within a framework devised by the Evian agreements and already outlined in the Constantine plan. Industrial development in Algeria is about 90 per cent the affair of private industry. In agriculture, whereas the modern sector has been nationalized, the traditional sector has not seen any modification in its plight, which is the heritage of colonialism, and the vast majority of the fellahs are still without land and without work.

It is the series of relations as a whole which the Algerian state expressed. The self-managed nationalized sector, too, is dependent on the capitalist economy.

The confusions that we pointed out above were necessary to the revisionist system, in order that the existence of a nationalized and self-managed

sector might constitute 'a proof of the development towards a workers' state' of the Algerian state and of the 'worker and peasant' character of the Ben Bella government.

Thus, the essential facts concerning the phenomenon of self-management, from the point of view of the class struggle, were knowingly conjured away. In the first place, the way in which the movement was 'codified' was a barrier to any further extension of the movement. As well as being a sizeable concession to the peasantry (the non-reappropriation of the 'vacant property' by the Moslem bourgeoisie) the decrees of March 1963, by avoiding the question of *property*, put off agrarian reform to an unspecified future date and maintained most of the Algerian peasants in their present state, separating off from them a relatively privileged minority: the workers in the modern sector of agriculture.

Again, the movement for the seizure of the 'vacant property' was undeniably the expression of social upheaval (the upsetting of the balance on which capitalist exploitation rested by the sudden disappearance of the European ruling class; the mobilisation of the peasantry and, to a lesser degree in the first stages, of the proletariat by *their demands*), and the institutionalisation of the

management committees represented a big concession to the masses on the basis of the new relationship of forces between them and the ruling class established by these upheavals.

It was a concession full of contradictions: the proletariat, and in particular the rural proletariat, would learn through the experience of the management committees that the problems raised could only have a *political* solution, at the level of power.

Consequently, it was not a question of neglecting the movement which, in a sense, the state had confiscated for its own political advantage, but of considering it as an arena for struggle and above all working for the workers to organise as a class, independently from the state.

But that required precisely a correct definition of the state and an appreciation of the character and the political nature of the Ben Bella government as a function of the historic needs of the Algerian working class, the vanguard of the Algerian revolution.

For the revisionists, on the contrary, it was a question of helping with advice and advisers the 'leading elite' so dear to the Sixth World Congress to accomplish a 'revolution of a truly special type'.

THE OSCILLATIONS OF BEN BELLA'S BONAPARTIST REGIME. THE CLASS STRUGGLE IN ALGERIA AND THE POLICY OF CRITICAL SUPPORT

In order to avoid any confusion let us repeat that we do not intend here to attempt to write the history of the class struggle in Algeria since 1962. This task remains to be accomplished, and this document only begins it by giving it a methodological framework, starting from a critique of the political positions of revisionism.

The characteristics of the Ben Bella regime, as it was established at the end of the summer 1962, were quite clear. In the framework of a bourgeois state, the machinery of which it undertook to rebuild in extremely difficult circumstances, the Ben Bella government, supported by the ANP and thus largely dependent on this force, used the unstable equilibrium between the classes in Algeria in order to lift itself above those classes and to play the part of a relatively autonomous factor.

'Relatively' means that the Ben Bella government acted within precise social limits—those of the defence of the capitalist property relations, and thus its subordination to imperialism could not be fundamentally challenged.

But inside this framework, it had ample room to

manoeuvre because for a time, in a given relationship of forces, it was irreplaceable as an 'element of order'. It could therefore, to a certain extent, blackmail imperialism into giving some ground. It could also, by this fact, make the Algerian bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie accept (more easily) their elimination from political power and the concessions made to the masses.

Towards the masses, it used these concessions and the 'successes' that the support of imperialism granted it (the 'co-operation' with the Gaullist government) to confuse them, and to isolate them from any political opposition group. Against the working class, deprived of its independent organisations, the Ben Bella regime leant on the peasantry, which was itself divided by the division inherited from the colonial period into a section enjoying certain advantages in the modern sector and the vast majority kept out of political circulation.

This bonapartism which characterised the Ben Bella regime was accompanied, so to speak, by a *second-degree bonapartism*: the struggle inside the

regime itself between the different factions for 'power'. Here, too, Ben Bella stood between the different cliques and eliminated them one after the other, by posing as a heaven-sent man. His entire policy was based on the consolidation of his personal dictatorship, and on the attempt to make the 'irreplaceable' nature of his regime permanent. The weakness of the state machine was betrayed in the fact that each element in the machine (administration, army, etc. . . .) played its own game and was a candidate for leadership of the state. The special machinery of the single-party, which Khider set out to build, was put out of the running, but the regime's fate still depended on the support of the military caste which developed through the repression and in the conflict with Morocco. Even a superficial examination of Ben Bella's government completely eliminates any idea of a 'workers' and peasants' government' as characterising it. The Ben Bella government was in no way initiating a break with imperialism. It was preparing the ground for collaboration with it. This government in no way leant on the mobilisation of the masses, assembled in their own organisations, building in the course of their actions the embryo of their own power. On the contrary, it governed against them, even if it did have to manoeuvre with them from time to time, ensuring its own power by destroying any possibilities for their organisation.

Bearing in mind that this is merely an analogy as far as its function in the class struggle is concerned, we can say that the Ben Bella government, whose aim was the rebuilding of the bourgeois state machine, was as far from being a 'workers' and peasants' government' as was de Gaulle's government in 1945, which also had to make important concessions due to the circumstances of the 'liberation'.

A. Aklouf, in the conclusion of his article published in *La Vérité*, No. 527, gives a Marxist characterisation of the regime:

'The national bourgeoisie has not the means to govern directly. It has to rely on a parasitic political bureaucracy to build a real state machine. This state, in the strict sense of the term, plays the part of a *guardian* for the bourgeoisie, ensuring the conditions for economic development by the creation of a nationalised sector. By this very fact this state enjoys a relative independence: it is in this sense that the Ben Bella regime, raised above the different social classes and taking advantage of their contradictions, is a bonapartist regime. It is evident that it does not satisfy all the strata of the Algerian bourgeoisie, but they are forced to put up with it for the time being. This type of

regime, resting on a single party, can be found, with variations, of course, in a number of countries which have reached formal independence.

'What can be added now in the specific case of Algeria is that the authoritarian nature of the Ben Bella regime should not deceive anyone: it is unstable.'

This instability is dual, in any case. The new Algerian state, in flagrant contradiction with the enthusiastic declarations about the march towards socialism, is very directly dependent on imperialism. The very functioning of the economy depends on the goodwill of French imperialism (investments, credits, external trade, fuel and power). Its industry remains essentially in private hands—mostly as subsidiaries of imperialist monopolies. Thus only on a far smaller scale than in other countries of the same type (Egypt, for example) does the state play the part of guardian.

This weakness in relation to imperialism is accompanied by and can be partly explained by the regime's weakness in relation to the masses. They may have been contained by the regime, deprived of organisation, politically confused, but the fact remains that they are not entirely controlled by it and that it could not immediately turn to repression.

In this context the Ben Bella regime could only swing back and forth from left to right, with alternate concessions to the various classes and social strata according to the needs of the struggle inside the state machine and the more general necessities of the national and international equilibrium of that state machine.

These concessions to the masses could have been used to organise the workers on class lines, to prepare a struggle against the regime, in the perspective of the socialist revolution.

But, of course, for the revisionists the question did not even arise. The 'left' concessions of Ben Bella and his team proved the revolutionary essence of the government, and the 'elite' had to be helped to penetrate further on the march towards socialism—as for the masses. . . .

Here, moreover, is the extravagant way in which an editorial of *Quatrième Internationale* posed the question:

'Some people try to lessen the government's role, arguing that it acted under the pressure of the masses. It is of no interest to enter into a discussion of this nature about which came first, the chicken or the egg.'

All along, in the evolution of the Ben Bella regime leading to Boumedienne's military dictatorship, revisionism (that is, the abandonment of the pro-

gramme of the Fourth International, of the theory of the permanent revolution, of the Marxist theory of the state, of the class independence of the proletariat), is revealed in a policy of demoralisation and of confusion, by constant adaptation to the Algerian petty-bourgeoisie, or more precisely to the faction in power, expressed under the cover of revolutionary verbiage.

We will examine only two examples:

1. In October-November 1963, Ben Bella took a new series of measures: nationalization of all land belonging to European settlers and the handing over of this land to 'self-management'—congress of the self-managed sector. Thanksgivings then appear in the various publications of the Unified Secretariat:

'The Algerian revolution has in reality entered into its decisive phase. Whilst revolutionary measures increase in the direction of a transformation of the country into a state having the economic and social structure of a workers' state, the threats against the internal and external revolutionaries are becoming clearer.' (M. Pablo, *L'Internationale*, October 1963).

'... The former Ben Bella government attacked the privileged capitalists. The new government, which can be characterised as a workers' and peasants' government, attacks the state structures inherited from the colonialists. Moreover, a series of nationalisations (transport, tobacco), the gradual but irresistible installation of protection for collective production, notably by the liquidation of the export of capital, bring nearer the moment of a quantitative turn in the Algerian revolution. A decisive, driving part of the Algerian economy having escaped capitalist production relations, the control of foreign trade being once established, capitalism being in continuous regression, controlled and directed like the rest of the economy in terms of popular interests, the government being in the hands of a socialist leadership, the Algerian Republic will be a workers' state in the politico-economic sense that the Bolsheviks gave to the term.' (M. Fiant, *L'Internationale*, November 1963).

'The left regroups the vast majority of Algerian peasants and workers and has already spoken publicly and very clearly at the peasants' congress both against the bourgeoisie and against the bureaucracy.

'This left is notably personified by Ben Bella, many of whose declarations and decisions show clearly the will to build socialism in the service of the masses based on the principle of self-management. There is, in the thought of this leader, a development which cannot fail to remind us of the road covered by Fidel Castro.

'One of the latest declarations of Ben Bella on the Finnish radio needs no comment.' (Our

emphasis).

'"Mr. President, you often speak of 'Algerian socialism', what are the peculiarities of this socialism that you call Algerian, and in what way does it differ from Marxist socialism?"

"Algerian socialism is exactly Marxist socialism in its economic analysis. But it is fundamentally different in its theoretical analysis concerning the theory of nationalism. Here, we are Arabs, we are Muslims. We are believers, and it is in this way that our socialism is different from other socialisms." (Unsigned article in *L'Internationale* of January 1964.)

Finally, promotion of promotions, the United Secretariat, following the perspicacious M. Fiant quoted above, awarded the Algerian government, in a resolution of February 20, 1964, the title of 'workers' and peasants' government'.

We should note that the repressions against the various 'oppositions' are only mentioned in passing (and encompassed in the struggle against reaction). We will not dwell on the fact that neither the nationalization of part of the landed property, nor the holding of a congress of land workers, deprived of all power of political decisions, brought about in themselves a modification of the nature of the state or of the government. We shall simply note the mystificatory nature of the 'Pabloite' studies which judge these measures without relating them to an overall political analysis.

In the autumn of 1963 an opposition to the regime developed amongst the masses. Corruption and speculation continued in the towns, whilst the lot of the workers had not changed. The vast majority of the peasants were also in an unchanged situation. What happened in Kabylie, a disinherited region, was not essentially a manifestation of 'regionalism' but a particular expression of the overall situation (the development of the partisans of the Front of Socialist Forces was not, in any case, confined to Kabylie).

The crumbling away of power threatens the regime itself with disintegration, and it is the impotence of Ben Bella to deal with this threat that will toll the knell of his 'personal power'. The ANP has to undertake the military elimination of the 'dissidents'.

It is in this context that Ben Bella makes some considerable concessions to the peasantry. In particular, the 'Congress of the agricultural self-managed sector' opens the road to the organisation of the agricultural workers, shows the limits of 'self-management' and unmasks the bureaucracy and despotism which are rife on the level of the management committees. The questions of per-

spective brought up by the peasants at the congress raise the problems of the extension of the agrarian reform to the 'traditional sector', of links with the working class—in short, of *political power*. The masses seize on the concession made by the government: they attempt to make it a means of *organising*. In this lies the possibility of intervention by a revolutionary vanguard working to bring together workers and poor peasants, *on a class basis* against imperialism, the national bourgeoisie and their state. The revisionists propose the very opposite. Showering praise on the government, seeing it as the decisive factor in an inexorable revolutionary process, they lead those Algerian militants that they do influence into a blind alley.

They trap them in an ineffective reformism with relation to the regime. At the same time, through the support that they give to the repressions, by their direct participation in the state machine, they confuse the militants who seek a revolutionary road in the opposition.

We must not attribute too much importance to the activities of Pablo and his movement in Algeria, any more than we should to the effectiveness of Ben Bella's manoeuvres. The causes of the rapid defeat and of the disintegration of the 'opposition' lie elsewhere but it remains true that all this activity has as its aim the prevention of the forming of a vanguard based on Marxism, and that with regard to this objective it was effective.

2. The content of revisionist politics became even clearer in the months preceding the fall of Ben Bella, during which there was a renewal of working-class activity which, struggling for elementary demands, clashed with the regime. It is the attitude of the revisionist tendency at that time which we are going to study, defining its concept of 'critical support'.

Before we do this, we should note that the mystifying and idealist nature of the system in which the revisionists imprisoned themselves was shown perfectly at the time of the FLN congress in April 1964. For any serious observer, this congress was nothing but the congress of the apparatus (the FLN, on its own admission, no longer existing as a mass organisation). By claiming to bring together in an atmosphere of 'national unity' all 'honest and revolutionary' elements, the congress aimed to strengthen Ben Bella's personal position, and to free the leadership from its military guardians. The congress can only be understood as a stage in the rebuilding of the state machine. Any analysis of the congress leads back to the overall problems of Algeria.

For the revisionists, on the contrary, the statements of the programme adopted at the congress had an intrinsic value to be taken literally. 'Socialist language' is considered as indicating a socialist reality. 'Revolutionary' statements are taken for the genuine article.

The method is circular and coherent. Under the leadership of the most progressive elements in the FLN, Algeria was on the road to socialism—the congress confirmed the leadership and the direction—it thus reaffirmed the FLN as a revolutionary party.

The programme is discussed in detail, but without its relation to reality ever being examined. All is 'as if' the FLN were a revolutionary workers' party; some details of the plan are criticised but it is recognised that overall it proves the revolutionary and socialist nature of the FLN. Thus Livio Maitan managed to write an article nine pages long in *Quatrième Internationale* entitled 'Algeria at the time of the first congress of the FLN', without mentioning *at all* the history of the FLN or analysing the Algerian state and society, the economy or external policy! There are 'problems' (industrialisation, unemployment, agrarian reform, bureaucracy, Islam, a single party or not, democracy, etc. . . .) but they are enumerated without any reference to the social framework in which they exist. The important things are the statements, and Maitan is delighted with the 'very remarkable speech of December 30, 1963' by Boumaza, the economics minister, who declared:

'Socialism will only triumph if it itself undertakes the tasks of the democratic and popular revolution, which in other countries was carried out by the bourgeois class.'

This does not prevent the said Boumaza from being Boumedienne's Minister today, and from being denounced by the publications of the United Secretariat as being the 'saboteur of self-management'.

What is important is that the programme places

'... the FLN, no longer as an advanced party among revolutionary nationalist parties, but as a revolutionary socialist party.' (G. Marquis, *L'Internationale*, May 1964).

We can appreciate how, in this framework of thought, the reality of the class struggle in Algeria could only surprise the revisionists at every stage, and at the same time bring out more clearly the counter-revolutionary characteristics of their policies.

Despite the grandiose proclamations, Algeria was staggering. The economy was still unsteady, there was still massive unemployment, and the pauperisation of the backward countryside was as bad as before.

The contradictions in the regime become more and more apparent: contradictions between the concessions made to the masses and the need for the economy to run and the state machine to be built; contradictions between the speeches and the reality of the situation of the proletariat and the vast mass of the peasantry who can see, rising above their poverty, the arrogant and cynical upstarts of the regime; they discover in practice that the mainspring of the economy remains in imperialist hands. As units integrated into the capitalist economy, the 'self-managed' firms, whether industrial or agricultural, still contain exploited proletarians — producers of surplus value. Now, attempts are being made to integrate them into the same 'trade union' as the state officials whose job it is to manage the production of these firms. They are rebelling against this, and this struggle, from its beginning, is much more than a reaction to the kicks of an 'authoritarian' state bureaucracy. It fundamentally questions the social nature of the famous 'self-managed' sector.

Parallel to this are the struggles which, in fact, raise the question, under the cover of 'self-management', of workers' control in the capitalist firms which are the property of foreign monopolies. Finally, there are the wage struggles.

The movement reaches its climax towards the end of 1964 and the beginning of 1965, on two levels: strikes in many sectors and the struggle for the 'reconquest of the UGTA'. In fact, what was posed here was the question of trade union independence from the state. The activity of the workers is such that the central organ of the UGTA, *Revolution and Labour*, after having condemned the strikers as irresponsible, has to make a retreat. The affair is taken in hand only at the second congress of the UGTA, and then only with difficulty, by sacrificing the former leadership to the anger of the workers. But the final resolution adopted by the congress confirms state control over the unions. What did the revisionists have to say in this moment of class struggle in Algeria, of extreme importance in relation to the regrouping of the proletariat on a class basis? They were unable to ignore the brutality of the government's reply, expressed by the official trade union leader-

ship:

'The strikes in the nationalised sector are inadmissible.' (Editorial in *Revolution and Labour*, January 20, 1965).

'The Executive Committee of the UGTA categorically condemns the unofficial strikes.' (Executive Committee of the UGTA, January 15).

They dissociated themselves from them, and clearly. This was the critical side of 'critical support'. But let us examine things a little more closely: *criticism* is only an aspect of *support*. Pablo and his co-thinkers of the 'United Secretariat' could not abandon the twin pillars of their system: Algeria was 'almost' a workers' state and the rising wing of the revolution was the Ben Bella leadership. Thus, all that they can say is that this situation compromises the 'revolution' and warn the leadership to take note of it.

They prattle on about the relations between the trade unions and the state, the trade unions and the party, the conflict between the bureaucracy and democracy, outside space and time, *as if* the state were a workers' state (or almost) and the FLN a revolutionary party. They are unable to raise the question in terms of the class struggle, to start from the historical interests and immediate needs of the organisations of the Algerian proletariat, for this would contradict their entire policy and method. Once again, revisionism shows its real essence; going over to the positions of the class enemy. They have to close their eyes to the blinding truth: the *radical class* opposition which opposes the proletariat to the regime and to its organisations.

The wish to preserve the appearance of revolutionary qualities leads nowhere. In *L'Internationale* for March 1965, a long article by R. Jeromet entitled 'Will the UGTA congress speed up the political cleavage?', in which we find some interesting information and even some interesting remarks on the development of the situation in Algeria, finishes thus: 'We must thus hope that Ben Bella will speak clearly on the real causes and responsibilities for the recent strikes. Up to now, in fact, the president of the Republic has maintained a silence that does not favour resistance to the bureaucracy.' The reality of 'critical support' is like the famous recipe for 'horse and rabbit pie': 'one horse, one rabbit'. Support means adaptation *de facto* to the regime, criticism means respectful suggestions to the great leader. This is not the product of personal weaknesses but expresses the logical outcome of a policy of abandonment of Marxism.

THE TASKS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE: THE REBUILDING OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL AND THE BUILDING OF THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY OF THE ALGERIAN PROLETARIAT

(a) The significance of the Algerian revolution

For Marxists, the struggles of the Algerian workers and peasants, which culminated in a revolutionary war forcing French imperialism to abandon its direct rule, struggles which lasted for decades, are an integral part of the international struggle of the proletariat against imperialism. There is no isolated Algerian revolution, which can only be understood with reference to Algerian national reality. The proletarian revolution in Algeria develops through the struggle against imperialism for the solution of the bourgeois democratic tasks and can only be analysed with reference to the international class struggle of which it is a component part.

We must, of course, retain this point of departure to analyse the final expression of the class struggle in Algeria: the problem of the revolutionary leadership, of the revolutionary party and its construction. The absence of such a party in Algeria today is not a 'national' phenomenon, but is closely bound up with international processes, in the realm of both objective factors (relative strengths of the classes, etc. . . .) and subjective factors (dislocation of the Fourth International).

The extremely rich experience of the Algerian revolution must be fully analysed in order to define the strategy for building revolutionary parties in the under-developed countries. In the Algerian revolution the most diverse forms of struggle were combined, and in its course the limits which nationalist movements with petty-bourgeois leaderships are unable to overcome were confirmed—however 'radical' they might be and however 'plebeian' their basis. They could not either *wholly* or *partially* change into revolutionary parties, that is to say that neither these movements, nor tendencies within these movements in the same ideological and political framework, could, as such, evolve to the point of changing into organisations consciously built on the basis of the programme of the world socialist revolution. This does not in any way mean that these movements or tendencies did not form the framework in which the struggle for the emergence of such a party took place, or that the most advanced militants in these parties were not potentially the backbone of such a party.

We shall return to this question. But we must first stress—what emerged very clearly between 1954

and 1962—the international character of the Algerian revolution. This character was first of all confirmed by the close relation between the armed struggle in Algeria and the class struggle in France. This link was the result of historical development, of the unique nature of colonisation in Algeria, of the fact that there was there a European minority owning most of the landed property and means of production, and that the most important part of the Algerian industrial proletariat was concentrated in France.

Also, in the case of Algeria, the interdependence between the struggle in the industrially backward sectors and in the advanced capitalist countries was directly shown by the threat that the Algerian revolution constituted to bourgeois rule in France, and by the fact that the development of the Algerian revolution as a proletarian revolution was directly linked to the actions of the French proletariat.

In this sense the Algerian revolution constituted a 'high point' of the revolution in the colonies, to the extent that, in it, the unity with the struggle of the proletariat of the advanced countries was posed not only as a perspective but as an immediate political task. From this, too, comes its explosive nature, from the fact that international imperialism under American leadership, just as much as the Soviet bureaucracy, aware of the danger, did all they could to 'limit the damage'.

In order to arrive at a provisional solution maintaining bourgeois rule in Algeria—Evian—it was necessary to initiate a profound crisis in the regime in France itself, a crisis which the bourgeoisie was only able to face by establishing a *bonapartist regime, because it was able to defeat the French proletariat without a fight, the defeat being prepared by the Stalinist and reformist political machines*, in the class struggles of the previous years, linked to the Algerian revolution.

The destiny of the Algerian proletarian revolution was not decided only in Algeria, but also in Nantes in September 1955, in the isolated struggle of the conscripts in 1956 and in the victory of Gaullism in 1958.

This does not mean that the struggles in Algeria and France were an identical process, that at each stage the development of the revolution in Algeria was mechanically dependent on what was happening in France. The continuation of the armed struggle after 1958, the demonstrations in Decem-

ber 1960 in the towns, the activity of the proletariat and the peasantry after Evian, are enough to prove the absurdity of such an idea. What this means is that *one* of the decisive factors in the relationship of forces of the revolution and the counter-revolution in Algeria was the *relationship of forces of the classes in France itself*.

This relationship appears even more forcibly at the level of the leadership of the revolutionary struggle in Algeria. The social vanguard of the Algerian revolution, the industrial proletariat, which was the basis for the selection of a revolutionary leadership able to challenge for control of the struggle for freedom (the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois leadership) was, for the most part, concentrated in France. Its intervention in the struggle of the Algerian people was linked to its intervention in the class struggle in France, and hence to the development of that struggle.

This, of course, is only the concrete expression, in the course of the revolutionary war, of the organic link joining the problems of the revolutionary party in Algeria to those of the international workers' movement. The specific forms of this link are the close relations established with the French labour movement, but through them, what emerges as the decisive factor in the non-formation of a revolutionary party in Algeria is the development of the international working-class movement, the degeneration of the Third International and its going over to social-patriotism. From this point of view, Algeria is not a special case: the character of the nationalist leadership, the limitations of its ideology, do not spring from an 'Algerian' mischance, but can only be understood as a specific manifestation of the international crisis in the working-class movement. The control of these liberation movements by petty-bourgeois leaderships is inexplicable without reference to the bankruptcy of the Third International, to the successful political separation of the proletariat of the colonial countries from those of the advanced countries. The entire history of the Algerian nationalist movement underlines this in particular. A practical and political split with the radical petty-bourgeoisie and with its ideology, and thus the building of a revolutionary party of the Algerian proletariat, was inconceivable outside an international perspective.

The absence of a proletarian leadership in Algeria was both an element in and the expression of the crisis of revolutionary leadership on a world scale, a crisis which could not find any solution but an international one, through the building of the Fourth International.

It is from these facts that a strategy could be worked out. Solidarity in action with the Algerian revolution, by a communist proletarian organisation in France, was thus expressed by the mobilisation, however limited, of sections of the French proletariat, raising the question of power by their struggle.

It was in relation to this role of the class struggle in France in the Algerian revolution that the different tendencies in the Algerian nationalist movement could be classed. The role of the Algerian proletariat in the struggle was defined in diametrically opposite ways, depending on whether or not one started from the relationship between the struggle in Algeria and the class struggle in France. In the first case it could play an all important role, by contributing, together with the French proletariat, to the preparation of an attack on the imperialist bourgeoisie in the metropolitan country itself. In the second, it was only a supporting force, secondary and isolated, to the struggle being carried out on the national territory, and seen (essentially) in military terms.

The most proletarian wing of the movement, which emerged in the course of the successive struggles of the PPA and then of the MTLD, could only link the fate of the Algerian people to that of the Algerian proletariat, and to this extent throw its forces into this struggle.

It is only by starting from this perspective that the tasks of solidarity with the Algerian revolution could be worked out, that the relationship between the struggle of the colonial masses and that of the proletariat of the industrially advanced countries could be expressed, and the permanent character of the Algerian revolution be translated into a strategy. It is only by starting from that that the building of a communist organisation of the Algerian proletariat could be undertaken. It is a fact that in this framework of thought and action errors of method were committed concerning the means of building a revolutionary leadership in Algeria.

However serious these mistakes may have been they do not make up even a partial 'explanation' of the course taken by the Algerian revolution.

The essential factor in the affair is the fact that in France, as in the other advanced countries, the vanguard organised on the Trotskyist programme was not able to extend its influence, its penetration of the working class, and increase its intervention to the extent of breaking the yoke of the bureaucratic apparatuses.

It is in this sense that we can say, together with P. Lamotte (*Informations Internationales*, No 6)



French imperialist repression—as seen here in the last days of the Algerian war—has been replaced by the bonapartist dictatorship of Ben Bella and now, by the open military tyranny of Boumedienne.

that 'the crushing responsibility for the bourgeois course taken by the Algerian revolution lies first and foremost with the traitor apparatuses, which subjected the French working-class movement to French imperialism'.

This does not diminish in any way the political responsibility of those nationalist Algerian leaders who gave their sanction to the Evian agreements, who would have liked to present them as a 'victory for the revolution', and who tried to integrate themselves into the state machine guaranteeing those agreements, rather than understand that they should have placed themselves in the *opposition* in the radical sense of the world and prepared the organisation of the proletarian and peasant masses against the regime. But it is absolutely necessary to stress that the Evian agreements were only possible because of the previous defeat of the French proletariat, organised by the bureaucratic apparatuses, and that there can be no question of blaming the most militant sections of the Algerian proletariat and peasantry, abandoned in the hardest of struggles, for the fact that in the crisis of Algerian nationalism in 1962 there did not appear to be any clear solution.

The first sentence of the *Transitional Programme* should always be borne in mind, not merely as referring to a 'general' context, but as the guide to any concrete analysis: 'The world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterised by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat.' This crisis continues. It can only be resolved in the building of its Fourth International—expressed in the building of its national sections. This is the whole meaning of the struggle carried out by the organisations of the International Committee. At each stage of the struggle, an examination of the gains and weaknesses is absolutely necessary, for Marxism can only be developed as the theory of the struggle of the proletariat through that struggle.

This struggle of the organisations of the International Committee is carried out in determinate conditions, and these conditions are not only objective ones. The disintegration of the international Trotskyist movement reorganised after the war, a stage of the road to the building of the Fourth International, the transformation of its leadership into a revisionist and liquidationist centre, are political factors of the utmost import-



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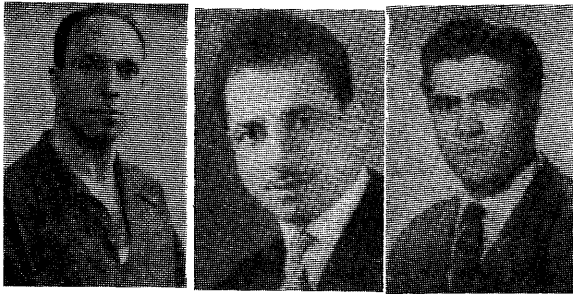
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ance in the present period of the class struggle. They played an incalculable role in the case of the Algerian revolution.

(b) On the building of a communist organisation in Algeria

We do not discuss *with* the revisionists. The programme of the Fourth International and the overall positions and activity of the revisionists are incompatible. In the class struggle, we are not on the same side of the barricades. This means, among other things, that we feel no need to justify any one of our positions in debate with these



A. Filali

A. Bekhat

A. Semmache

Nothing in common with those who covered up for the murders of these Algerian trade unionists in 1957.

people. We have nothing in common with those who sang the praises of Boumedienne after he had crushed the 'willayas', just as they covered up for the murders of the Algerian trade unionists in 1957.

On the other hand we do discuss revisionism inside the Trotskyist movement. Not for pleasure, but in order to destroy it. And in this discussion, which has meaning only to the extent that it is linked to our intervention in the class struggle, to the struggle for the Fourth International, we are led, in an attempt to deepen its lessons, to study our own activity.

We mentioned above the error in method committed in the building of a communist organisation in Algeria.

This question has already been summed up in the French Trotskyist movement (*cf Informations Internationales*, No. 6, the article by P. Lamotte mentioned above) and the conclusions now form part of our public propaganda. Thus in the issue of *Informations Ouvrières* dealing with Boumedienne's *coup d'état* the question was summed up as follows:

'However radical the actions of these Algerian parties may have been from time to time, they did

not and could not break the bounds of petty-bourgeois radicalism. It might have seemed that the struggle for national independence, often carried out with ferocious determination, could lead to the perspectives of the proletarian revolution. It is a mistake that we made.' (*Informations Ouvrières*, No. 251, June 26, 1965).

Thus it is not necessary to return to these questions except insofar as they are directly linked to the present discussion, to the struggle for the rebuilding of the Fourth International, which includes the struggle for the building of its Algerian section.

The article by P. Lamotte, mentioned above, clearly points out the roots of the error: the false analysis of the Algerian people as a 'people-class' with the conclusion that the 'party of the people' could be the '*party of the class*'. It is not necessary to dwell here on his analysis of the limitations of the programme of the 'North African Star'. We simply stress that the initial false analysis did not spring from a misappreciation of the social structure of Algeria, but from the fact that the role of the *decisive* classes in Algerian society (decisive because they are part of the classes that, in our epoch, are decisive on an international scale, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie) was not yet clear enough. That is, in that the theory of the permanent revolution was not applied at a high enough level of generalisation, that is not *concretely* enough, to Algeria.

Now this error in method was not the innovation of the International Committee. It was 'in the air' inside the Trotskyist movement, where the question of links with the revolutionary struggles of the under-developed countries was generally raised only in terms of 'solidarity' and where the political parties of the colonial countries were essentially judged by virtue of their effective anti-imperialism, in action. This is certainly the decisive criterion for their support, for the establishment of a united anti-imperialist front, but does not in any way settle the question of a communist organisation.

Starting from this point it is easy to take the step, as the Pabloites were later to do, towards the conception of 'parties good enough for the colonial revolution', as they were able for the time being to carry on the anti-imperialist struggle, as a substitute for Marxist proletarian parties, for sections of the Fourth International.

In other words, we can say that the error made was of a 'Pabloite' nature or, to be more precise, that its origins lie in the series of imprecisions and confusions on which the Trotskyist movement lived

after the Second World War and which facilitated the development of the revisionist tendency and its first victories. In his article 'In defence of Trotskyism' S. Just has analysed the theoretical weakness of the Trotskyist movement, linked to the weakness of its intervention in and its penetration of the class struggle. This weakness, which showed itself in the inability to develop Marxist theory by applying it to the situation after the Second World War (the class struggle in Europe, the Eastern European countries, etc. . . .), was also true of the revolution in the colonies and semi-colonies. This was first of all very much under-estimated, then discovered as an 'autonomous' sector only relating very formally to the building of the International, finally to be sanctified and opposed to the international proletarian revolution in 'finished' Pabloite theory.

This fundamental weakness which enabled Pabloism to develop was evident just as much in the isolation of the French section at the Third World Congress as in the degeneration of the SWP, which although it had been the political initiator of the International Committee in 1953 yet re-established, in its practice, the overall conceptions and policies of the revisionists.

It is not enough to 'break with revisionism' even if one understands that it is revisionism. Experience teaches that revisionism can only be eradicated by conscious intervention in the class struggle on the basis of the Programme, and by theoretical development and generalisation in terms of that intervention.

The experience of the Algerian revolution and the examination of the Trotskyists' intervention enable us to have a more precise conception of the building of revolutionary parties in the industrially backward countries, and to oppose that conception to revisionism, which, on this particular issue, can always arise again, *including inside our own ranks*, as it is nurtured by the fact that the working class of the advanced capitalist countries remains under the control of the Stalinist and reformist bureaucracies, and that the revolution in the industrially backward areas seems to develop as a process that is to a large extent 'autonomous'.

In the most general terms, the problem can be summarised in two points:

1. Given the social structure of the industrially backward countries, the bourgeois democratic tasks on the basis of which the mobilisation of the masses is carried out, and given the fact that the working-class movement of the advanced capitalist

countries remains controlled by the reformist and Stalinist bureaucracies, the struggle of the proletariat and of the peasantry is controlled in these countries, in the first stage, by nationalist organisations with bourgeois or petty-bourgeois leaderships.

It is only possible even to envisage the building of a communist organisation by intervening in this struggle, the stages of which are, in any case, not mechanically linked to the existence and activity of a revolutionary party. The national and international dynamic of the class struggle can, in fact, drive petty-bourgeois leaders a long way down the road towards a break with imperialism and an effective struggle against it (whether military or not)—witness Cuba, or Vietnam, where a leadership that is linked to the international counter-revolutionary apparatus of Stalinism and includes bourgeois nationalists is forced to carry out a revolutionary war against American imperialism.

2. But the revolutionary struggles in the under-developed sectors only have meaning as an integral part of the international proletarian struggle; the partial successes that can be gained, including those under petty-bourgeois leaderships, can only be defended and enlarged in *the perspective of the international struggle for socialism*.

This perspective can only be concretely ('politically') present at all moments of the struggle *through the action* (whatever the forms in which it appears, expresses itself, etc. . . .) of a *communist organisation that is politically independent*. It is only through its activity that the unity of the international class struggle in the epoch of imperialism can be positively expressed: through victory on a national level—by the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, alone capable of resolving the problems of national independence—and through the integration of victory into the international class struggle, of which it is a component part.

An organisation of this kind will find its cadres and its militants in the mass movements—and thus in the nationalist movements—but it will not be born from a 'leftwards' development of a tendency with a petty-bourgeois leadership, however radical it may be. An organisation of this kind can only be the result of the open political struggle of Marxist militants organised for the class independence of the proletariat, to confirm its leading role. This political struggle can only be the specific expression of the struggle for the building of an International.

KENYA

Colonialism and the Lessons of Independence

by Peter Jay

KENYA, LIKE ALL the rest of Africa, like all of Asia with the exceptions of the USSR, Mongolia, China, North Vietnam and North Korea, and like all of Central and South America with the exception of Cuba, is a semi-colony of imperialism. Kenya cannot be seen fully except on the basis of an understanding of imperialism and of the evolution of its modes of operation. Without this general understanding no proper appreciation of the particular is possible. Since our knowledge of imperialism in general came through induction in the first instance (the work of Engels, Hobson, Lenin, etc.), the above deductive process is justified. Thenceforth, through the careful study of the particulars and their dialectic sum-total, material is provided for the further development of our understanding of the whole and thence of programmes, policies and tactics in the field of practice. These remarks seemed called for by the fate of all those who, on the spot or from afar, got drunk on 'independence' and, staggering from bath to bath in Brussels, New York, Paris, Algiers, Colombo and elsewhere, wantonly threw out many babies with but a little bath water. Their behaviour, which led to their adoption by many strange foster mothers and fathers, flowed from a deep lack of theory and, in turn, further decanted their ideological bowls. Their lack of theory led all such persons, talents notwithstanding, protestations to the contrary notwithstanding, past history notwithstanding, to a rejection of the content of the first sentence of this

article about Kenya. This underscores its importance and is at least one reason why the author began with a sentence which should be taken for granted but is, instead, now one both of description and of judgement.

THE COLOMBO PACT AND THE MOON

How is one even to start talking about Kenya and all its problems unless one first talks about the wider problem which contains the local ones? In the 'old days' one could rush in unangelically and get down to the business of dealing with the role of the colonial bourgeoisie as agent of imperialism. Nowadays, however, one finds it necessary first to make one's way through a circle of one's former friends, fawning on and being fondled by this selfsame bourgeoisie, before one can even catch a glimpse of one's object. What can one do, then, but part this once friendly curtain in order to bare the old object to the view? Hence, the need, for a moment at any rate, to talk about some ex-friends, before talking about the enemy.

The Colombo Pact—that small one brewed in the Colombo tea cup between the sadly fallen and humbled Sama Samajists and a house matron of British imperialism*—was justified to the author

* The author refers to the entry into the bourgeois Coalition government of Mrs. Bandaranaike by representatives of the Ceylon Lanka Sama Samaja Party, which had been a Trotskyist party.

along these lines: 'You don't appreciate the difficulties of the situation . . . the need for tactics . . . it is different from what we thought it would be.'

Well, of course, everything is 'different' at closer view. But is it? You see the moon from 180,000 miles away. You go there, preferably by Lunik. You get there. It is not what you thought it to be. It is 'different'. But in what way is it different? Is it made of cheese? Or is it more complex than a distant view showed it to be? Is it a moon or is it not, that is the question.

To be sure, 'independent' Ceylon (is it really necessary to explain the need for the inverted commas, even these days?) is 'different' from our pre-independence conception of it. But is it a difference of degree or one of kind? Is it a semi-colony or is it not? Is it made of cheese? Or is it what we expected it to be: a moon of British imperialism? That is the question. For Ceylon, for Algeria *vis-à-vis* her French master, for Ghana *vis-à-vis* the United Africa Company and Whitehall, for Burma, for Egypt, for Kenya.

Unless you can answer this question categorically, with a yes or with a no, you are void in theory and suicidal in practice. Because if you cannot answer this question, it means you do not know what imperialism is and this means that you do not know what capitalism is. Hence you do not know what you are fighting or whether you are fighting or collaborating. In fact, nor can you, let alone do you, know how to find and make a road to socialism, since this is the negation of something you do not understand and, in fact, are supporting, willy-nilly, at the behest of your 'new' theories. These, Labriola would say today, did not come from the sky, but from the moon.

EN PASSANT—THE COLONIAL MIDDLE CLASS

In the 'old days' one would go right ahead and say that Bandaranaike, Ben Bella, Nasser, Nkrumah, Kenyatta and company were managers of various imperialist estates. *Bas*, as they say in Swahili, i.e., that's enough. But 'nowadays' one has to be much more circumspect if one follows behind the feet of the intellectual belly-dancers curtaining such gentry from the proletarian view. Maybe, they will concede, Kenyatta is 'different' (i.e., from Ben Bella or Bandaranaike). But that is a bit awkward, since he is a head of the same Organisation for African Unity (OAU) which Ben Bella helped to father (i.e., the same organisation of African underlings, as anti-imperialists in Africa prefer to call it). It is a bit awkward, too, because Bandaranaike sat next to Kenyatta at Commonwealth

Conferences (which, in the 'old days' we would call the den of thieves of the British Empire, but 'nowadays' 'we' put on a dress suit and take a Finance Portfolio with us when 'we' visit, not London, but the 'City' and Whitehall, where the real conferences of the 'International' now take place). So it is a bit awkward to say Kenyatta is 'different', even when he has deported a Chinese journalist and an anti-apartheid South African and even when he brings in the British paratroops to preserve the spirit of 'Harambee'. For others, however, it is not awkward. It is simple, straightforward. Tantalising words these, 'nowadays'. The collaborators love to excuse themselves by saying 'nothing is simple or straightforward'. Indeed, not. But for others the simple, complex reality is: the Kenyattas, like the others mentioned, represent a colonial middle class acting as an agent (i.e., not a passive tool) of imperialism in the latter's super-exploitation and, through these agent states, super-oppression, of the semi-colonial peasantry and working class.

The tasks of national liberation fuse with the tasks of the emancipation of the semi-colonial toilers from super-exploitation. The tasks of national liberation need to be distinguished from its antithesis: African, etc., nationalism. African nationalism is the ideology of the semi-colonial quisling class serving imperialism. African nationalism is the ideological servant of imperialism in Africa and, thereby, the twin of Verwoerd-Smith-Salazar white nationalism. From Nkrumah to Kenyatta, the semi-colonial henchmen of imperialism attempt to win support from the workers and landless peasants with the appeal: 'We are all brothers, all Africans. Let us not fight each other. The spirit of class struggle is alien to the spirit of Harambee, to the spirit of African nationalism.' African nationalism, being both in theory and practice the policy of class collaboration, is for this reason the best ideological servant which imperialism has in Africa. For the anti-imperialist struggle is basically a class struggle led by the semi-colonial proletariat and the toilers allied to it. And the quisling social groups stand directly in the path of this struggle, seeking to wave it aside with the red, green and black flag of African nationalism.

This theory, like that of African socialism, was imported into Africa by the ideologues of imperialism. The main ideas of African socialism, for instance, are believed to have been brought into Tanganyika (before Tanzania was formed) by the Roman Catholic Church, straight from Rome. The idea of African nationalism comes from the

trainees abroad of Social-Democracy in Britain and Western Europe, of Marcus Garveyism at various levels in America, and of vocal civil servant and professional groups indoctrinated in the former colonies themselves. There is very little 'African' about it, in consequence of its origin and role. Under the superficial appearance of being rebellious it is deeply stamped with the slave mentality which is native to the aspiring semi-colonial middle class, aspiring to serve and serving its imperialist master, tutor and leader.

The verbal and demagogic 'anti-imperialism' of this semi-colonial quisling group (whether capitalist, tribal or feudal in its main social roots) is no more anti-imperialist than Wilson's 'socialism' is socialist. And it is as fatal to equate anti-imperialism with the 'anti-imperialist' demagoguery of the Nkrumahs, Nassers, Kenyattas, Sukarnos, etc., as it is to equate socialism with the 'socialism' of Social-Democracy.

The 'anti-imperialist' demagoguery of the quislings is not without an important purpose, which may be summed up as the technique of raising their bargaining price in their dealings with their imperialist masters. The louder they shout against imperialism the larger the share of the semi-colonial loot they expect to get from their imperialist masters. It is little more than a hard-bargaining device. This readily explains the periodic 'turns' towards the Soviet bloc states, turns which invariably go through 360 degrees back into the arms of the imperialists. Their patronage by both the Chinese and Russian bureaucracies does nothing to diminish this deception of the people, viz., that the 'anti-imperialists' are anti-imperialists.

More deceived than the 'people', however, are those who have confused 'anti-imperialist' demagoguery with anti-imperialism. They, in turn, further the deception, thereby strengthening the power of the servants of imperialism to deceive the people.

Among these deceived deceivers are those who propagate the concept of the 'Third Camp', or the 'Emergent World' as a mystique existing outside the class struggle and 'between' the Anglo-American and Sino-Russian 'camps'. The reality is that a part of Africa, Latin America, Asia, etc., is in the 'Western bloc', namely the semi-colonial quisling layers; and that the semi-colonial toilers, the peoples in the workers' states and (potentially, at least) the workers in the imperialist states are in the 'Eastern bloc'. This reality at once makes nonsense of the idea of 'West' and 'East' (the more so with Japan in the 'West') and reveals the non-existence of a 'Third Force', or 'Third Camp' and

the existence of only two socially significant 'camps', namely, the imperialist camp and its opposite and negation: the camp of the semi-colonial toilers, led by the semi-colonial proletariat, the workers' states and the proletariat in the imperialist states. This is the real international arrangement and alignment. And one of the functions of African, etc., nationalism, of Social-Democracy, of Stalinism and of Liberalism is to obscure and cut across this class division of the world.

MARX ON THE COLONIAL SYSTEM

What is happening in Kenya and places like Kenya today is the eclipse of the colonial system, of which imperialism is the last phase. A study of the rise of capitalism shows that it was both born and bred by the colonial system. This was quite clear to Marx, of course, but is still not at all clear to so many who go about shouting 'revolution' even while they are collaborating with the very mother of capitalism. Shouting 'revolution' may deafen others to one's quiet betrayals and may convince oneself that one is not a traitor, programmes, policies and deeds notwithstanding. Likewise, has it not, from the days of Kautsky and Bernstein, been the most 'Marxist' Marxists who have fought Marx's basic principle of the class struggle and rejected the proletarian dictatorship? Marx, for this reason, declared that he was 'not a Marxist'. The author is reluctant to quote from Marx, for the same sort of reason and also for another and in this case more relevant one: quoting Marx, Engels, Lenin or Trotsky is *not* an argument at all, any more than quoting from Newton, Galileo or Einstein is a valid argument in physics. Indeed physics would be in an incurable mess if mathematicians and physicists relied on what the 'great men' said *as arguments*. Yet this is precisely what so often takes the place of an argument in so-called Marxist discussions these days. A quotation from Marx and Co. is a statement by an authority and not an argument. By itself it proves absolutely nothing beyond this. When the author quotes from Marx, etc., it is only in order to present an argument he thinks correct in a much clearer way than he can and to show that his view is worth considering because it was held by an important thinker like Marx. He does not use Marx as a proof, but as a confirmation, of his argument. Marxism is a method, not a church.

Marx wrote:

'The discoveries of gold and silver in America; the extirpation of the indigens in some instances,

their enslavement in the mines in others; the beginnings of the conquest and looting of the East Indies; the transformation of Africa into a precinct for the supply of Negroes who were the raw material of the slave trade—these were the incidents that *characterised* the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. These were the idyllic processes that formed the *chief factors* of primary accumulation.' (*Capital*, Vol. 1. My emphasis.)

'Characterised' and 'chief factors' are powerful words to use. And they were a correct description of a fact which most 'Marxists' shy away from to this day; a fact dealt with in some detail by an author from Africa, Nxele Afrika, in his recent work *Colonialism Today*; a fact which is basic to thought and to action in the present world situation, namely, that colonialism has always been and as Nxele Afrika has tried to show, that it *remains* today the very foundation of the capitalist system. Maybe Marx was wrong. The author thinks that those who think so are wrong, treacherously, dangerously, hopelessly wrong. Without colonialism, no capitalism. Without imperialism, no capitalism. In the present world, it is worthwhile reading *Capital*, and not only *Capital*, all over again.

Now, in terms of this idea that colonialism is the basis of capitalism, it follows that capitalism cannot exist without super-exploitation of colonies or semi-colonies; that therefore the anti-imperialist struggle is *basic* to the class struggle and not extraneous or auxiliary to the class struggle and that, in consequence of this, one is, in actual fact, not doing anything serious in the struggle for socialism unless one *bases* oneself squarely on the anti-imperialist class struggle. All else is illusion and deception.

What, then, is the anti-imperialist struggle in the fundamental sense? Are the bourgeois, tribal and feudal social groups managing various imperialist estates, be it in Ceylon, Algeria, Ghana or Kenya, are they, the servants of imperialism, anti-imperialist? Is their 'struggle' to share in the super-profits made by their masters an anti-imperialist struggle? Or is not the anti-imperialist struggle an *international* class struggle of the colonial toilers, the workers in the imperialist countries and in the workers' states against imperialism *and* its semi-colonial servants?

This is the major question of our times and an answer to it means everything to the vast majority of mankind in the first place—namely, the 1½ billion people living in semi-colonial America, Africa and Asia—as well as to the future of the one billion people in the workers' states and the half billion

in the imperialist countries.

It is with this question in mind that one tries to look at Kenya today.

THE LEADER CULT

Arising directly out of the super-profits from the colonial system was the continual betrayal, both during and between world wars, as well as the corruption of increasing layers, of the workers in the imperialist countries. Associated with this went the abandonment of Marxist principles and, instead of 'following' principles, ex-Marxists followed 'leaders'. At the same time, in the colonies, especially after their transformation into semi-colonies by a process called 'independence', imperialism propped up and in some cases created (as it is doing in Kenya now) an 'élite' with its 'leaders'. Disenchanted with American and European 'leaders', the disillusioned turned to more 'colourful' ones and there began the cult of finding the 'best' leader, the one 'nearest' to one's own ideas, one for whom one would eventually raise funds as Finance Minister or election agent or aid-beggar. This is indeed a dismal form of capitulation in some cases, and of arrogance in others. Arrogance because it is an impertinence bred by the colonial system which made the 'European' think himself, the receiver, to be a giver and hence super-capable of 'advising' or 'guiding' or even 'leading' the inferior non-Europeans. In this sense it is an inverted form of chauvinism, as Negrophilism always is.

Equally the product of the colonial system was the myth of Western European civilization and its superiority and, with it, the myth of European leadership. Coming straight from the foulest bowels of the colonial system, it long ago entered the socialist movement, *inter alia*, with the arrogant, chauvinist and presumptuous suggestion, worthy only of rejection with contempt, that the American, 'European' or British working class should *lead* the presumably 'backward' colonial peoples in the struggle for socialism. Support, yes. Lead, no. By no entitlement of its past history, by no present act, by no right, position or authority is this conceivable or acceptable. With the exception of part of Russia, of Czechoslovakia and East Germany, 'backward' colonial slaves 'lead' the 'advanced' countries by making the first, and, to date, the only, socialist revolutions in human history. Yet such is the strength to this day, of the colonial system, that, flying in the face of historical fact, the idea of American, European or British working-class leadership is still put forward, however unthinkingly.

In each country, colonial, imperialist, or ruled by Stalinist bureaucracy, the working class must construct its own leadership, a party of the Fourth International, with its strategy determined by the international struggle against imperialism and its agents. Lenin and Trotsky long ago established that, for special historical reasons concerning the uneven development of capitalism, especially accentuated under imperialism, the building of such a leadership, and even the taking of workers' power, occurred first in 'backward' countries. But this victory would be frustrated, and could not lead to socialism, without the resolution of the crisis of leadership and workers' victory in the advanced capitalist countries.

COLONIALISM—TAP-ROOT OF CAPITALISM

What has been said thus far can be reduced to this: that internationalism is sheer and mere demagoguery, charlatanism and humbug unless it is based four-square on the struggle against imperialism which enslaves the vast majority of the international proletariat, namely, the super-exploited colonial and semi-colonial toilers.

The super-exploitation of these toilers, concentrated as they are in vast plantations and mines, etc., creates the super-profits of the capitalist system. These super-profits comprise by far the major proportion of the total profits of the capitalist system taken as a whole. This is shown, in summary form, in the following table (page 36 *Colonialism Today*, by Nxele Afrika, 1962):

TOTAL PROFITS AND SUPER-PROFITS OF THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM

1. Total profits at 7% on total capital of \$3,000b. = \$210b.
2. Of this, total profits from semi-colonies:
 - (a) at 17.1% plus on \$300b. colonial capital \$51.3b.
 - (b) Manufacturing profits 'from raw materials' \$56.0b.
 - (c) Super-profits from U.S. 'Negroes' \$25.0b.

Minimum total \$132.3b.
- (d) As this is the lower limit to the real figures which range to beyond 100%, the Southern African figure of 28% is chosen as nearer to the truth, giving a further \$32.7b.

Estimated total colonial-type profits \$165.0b.

which is about three-quarters of all the profits of capitalism. This is the most general economic

measure of the utter dependence of capitalism on Latin America, Africa and unliberated Asia.

The above-mentioned work concludes with a

SUMMARY OF THE WORLD CAPITALIST ECONOMIC POSITION

	Imp. Countries	Col. Countries	World
1. Capital (constant plus variable—c plus v)	\$2,700b.	\$300b.	\$3,000b.
2. Profits (s)	\$45b. to \$78b. (max.)	\$165b. to \$132b. (min.)	\$210b.
3. Wages (v)	\$460b.	\$70b.	\$530b.
4. Rate of surplus value (s/v)	10% to 16% (max.)	235% to 190% (min.)	40%
5. Rate of profit (s/(c plus v))	1.7% to 2.9% (max.)	47% (exc. 'Negroes') to 36% (min.)	7%

More recent figures confirm this analysis. For example, analyses of Britain's so-called 'trade gap' show that 'invisible income' from earnings on shipping, banking, insurance, mercantile services and foreign investments came to £2,570 million in 1964. This is about 80 per cent of total profits made by British capitalism in 1964. Since the war, British capital exports have trebled in nominal value. There is no doubt of the overall accuracy of Afrika's figures. The political conclusions to be drawn from them are clear, indeed obvious: viz., that the struggle against imperialism and its henchmen managing its semi-colonial hench-states, as they may be called, is the basic *class* struggle of our epoch. This struggle is centred on the colonial system as the tap-root which anchors the capitalist system.

This struggle is not confined to colonial areas but is taken up by the workers in imperialist countries and by the peoples of the workers' states under the rule of the bureaucracy. The semi-colonies are not 'epicentres of the world revolution'. In any geographic sense there is no 'epicentre'. But the colonial *question* is at the centre of internationalism, and being so it is an international question geographically too (for example, it is taken up by workers and students demonstrating at the Blackpool Labour Party Conference in Britain as well as by workers and peasants in Vietnam).

It is from this generalised *weltanschauung* that we view the particular semi-colony, Kenya.

IMPERIALIST DOMINATION OF KENYA'S ECONOMY

The President of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere, summed up the situation for East Africa as a whole,

when he said of Tanzania itself:

'When it comes to actual facts, this country is completely Western in Government, in business, in schools, in everything. The influence of this country is Western.' (*East African Standard*, 1.9.64).

'Western' (or rather, imperialist) influence in East Africa rests on investments. Giant British monopolies head the list of investors. In Tanzania, for example, a major investor is Harry Oppenheimer, king of apartheid South Africa's diamond mines and of Zambia's copperbelt, and head of a mining empire estimated at close on £1 billion (£1,000,000,000) in capital outlay in Africa, headquarters in London. The Isaac Wolfson Group, including Ralli Brothers, concluded an investment deal in sisal of £2 million in December 1964. The agreement was made with the Kenya government, for the Taita-Taveta area, with the largest sisal estate in East Africa. In July 1965 the Commonwealth Development Corporation, in association with James Findlay and Co. and G. Williamson Africa Ltd., signed an agreement with the Kenya government to provide the capital for processing green tea leaf grown by African small-holders in the Kericho, Kisi and Kirinyaga districts. 'The Kenya Government,' said the agreement, 'has given certain undertakings to purchase all shares and loans outstanding at face value in the event of any of these factory companies failing.' Brooke Bond Tea own the largest tea and coffee estates in East Africa, and their estates near Nairobi, in the Rift Valley and Highlands, virtually monopolise production. Government regulations have reintroduced the old British crown colony practice of prohibiting smallholders from growing coffee beans, thus protecting the Brooke Bond monopoly. The Delemare family owns vast estates, despite the pulling down of Lord Delemare's statue and the re-naming of Delemare Avenue, Nairobi, as Kenyatta Avenue.

Not only agriculture (which is almost entirely confined to coffee, tea and sisal) but also banking, commerce and transport are virtually monopolised by British firms. The major banks are British: Barclays, Grindleys and Standard (with its well-known South African connections. Incidentally, despite the 'boycott' Standard Bank has recently extended its operations in West Africa as well, even into Nkrumah's Ghana). Insurance is dominated by British firms: Norwich Union, the Old Mutual (another major South African-cum-British company), etc. The largest shipping line, Union Castle, is British plus South African and plies

regularly between Mombasa and South Africa and Portuguese East African ports, despite the 'boycott' and despite the protests of the militant Mombasa Dockworkers' Union. The same applies to the British-India Line. Both these lines, as well as the Italian Lloyd Triestino Lines, operate various forms of colour bars and segregation with regard to passengers and crew (recruitment, accommodation and pay), and this continues despite dockworkers' protests. The 'national' airline, East African Airways, is British supported and operates side by side with British Overseas Airways, British United Airways, etc. Taken together with British domination of agriculture, this British influence in banking, insurance, shipping and airlines makes the British imperialist economic control of Kenya almost total, in view of the almost total absence of industry (restricted to a few small areas in Nairobi, Nakuru, Mombasa, Kisumu, etc.).

The conversion of Kenya from colony to semi-colony meant, *inter alia*, its penetration by imperialists other than the old direct overlord. Italy, through the great oil monopoly, Agip, has depots and motels in many districts. In opening Agip House, in Haile Selassie Avenue on December 4, 1964, Kenyatta said: 'The Agip Company has demonstrated its confidence and trust in the future of Kenya and I assure you that this trust is not wrongly placed.' At this point it might be added that Cabinet Ministers spend much time opening petrol stations on land leased by them to the companies, and this is but one rather obvious form of political corruption. Kenyatta himself has 'risen' from a small farmer to a large landowner in a matter of three years. Among his 'presents' was the title deed to a palace of the Aga Khan, another of Britain's investors in Kenya. The mayor of Nairobi, Rubia, is director of no less than 12 major companies.

Another major form of corruption is the imperialist-sponsored system of high civil service salaries (as distinct from teachers' salaries, etc.), semi-free housing, luxury cars and allowances. The upper civil service is rapidly becoming part of the *nouveau riche* élite and, with rare exceptions, is drenched in corruption. Mwai Kibaki, Assistant Minister for Economic Planning, Kenya, summarised this development:

'There is a very great danger at the moment that the top one per cent of educated and wealthy Africans will be absorbed into the old order—into the exclusive circles. . . . This rich one per cent being absorbed and integrated into the old structure could ruin everything.' (*Nation*, 1.8.65).

The 'exclusive circles' to which Mwai Kibaki re-

ferred are the imperialist landowners, financiers and other investors from Britain, Western Germany, Italy, the USA, Japan, etc., the mainly British 'settlers' who still infest the Highlands, and the 'overseas aid' expatriates dominating education and 'advisory positions' in the civil service.

On December 4, 1964, the Kenya government signed an agreement with West Germany, including a £4,100,000 loan deal with the West German Development Corporation, giving the latter an equity participation in the Kenya Development Finance Company. The bulk was to be devoted to agriculture, thereby maintaining the pre-independence character of Kenya as a primary producer serving the imperialist secondary producers. Commenting on the agreement, Schlitter, the West German representative, said: 'The agreement covering investments was the most important item, as this is really a sound basis for any German investor to come here to invest.' Little has changed since the time of Hobson and Lenin with respect to the fundamental of imperialism: the export of capital for the purpose of super-profits extracted via cheap colonial-type labour.

It is taken as axiomatic by anti-imperialists worth their salt that imperialist 'aid'—as distinct from and opposed to aid from the Soviet Union, the Chinese Peoples' Republic, etc.—is a continuation of naked imperialist super-exploitation. This motif drove even Karume, Vice-President of Tanzania, to declare not long after the anti-feudal revolt in Zanzibar, that:

'Zanzibar did not want any foreign investment, because this only took away the people's wealth. . . . Zanzibar was not interested in loans from foreign countries which would only bring in their own people on fat salaries to run the businesses, leaving the local people no better off.' (*East African Standard*, 11.5.1964).

Oginga Odinga, Vice-President of Kenya, when in China at the same time, said that 'the imperialists had a strong grip on Kenya through economic domination . . . that is the reason of our coming to you still, to co-operate and to work together to help us to break the backbone of this worst kind of imperialist domination of our country'. Six months later, however, Kenyatta was still assuring the Nairobi Chamber of Commerce: 'that the government's aim was *not only* to continue to work together with private enterprise, but to promote conditions in which private enterprise will thrive' (My emphasis).

THE QUESTION OF NATIONALIZATION

Kenyatta, on the same occasion, stated: 'We con-

sider that nationalisation will not serve to advance the cause of African socialism.' The April 1965 *Sessional Paper on African Socialism*, adopted by the Kenya Assembly, came out clearly against nationalization except under very special circumstances. The *Paper*, which is regarded as the programme of the government, said:

'The Constitution and the KANU Manifesto make it clear that African Socialism in Kenya does not imply a commitment to indiscriminate nationalisation.' (p. 26 of *Paper*).

The *Paper* went on to argue openly against nationalization:

'It should be recognised that if the nation's limited domestic capital is used to buy existing land, livestock, buildings, machinery and equipment, the nation has no more productive assets than before—only their ownership has changed. What may be lost are the new resources that could have been purchased instead—the new schools, hospitals, roads, water supplies, irrigation schemes, rolling stock, land surveys, housing, lodges, airports and harbour development. . . . Further, the money paid for nationalized resources and the people who managed them before nationalisation would most likely leave the country, increasing our foreign exchange and skilled manpower problems. There is also the firm likelihood that nationalisation will discourage additional private investment.' (page 26, article 76).

The fact that foreign investors and 'white' settlers send the vast incomes they make in Kenya abroad and that nationalization will keep these funds inside Kenya is not mentioned. Nor is the fact that nationalization will give the government the income for hospitals, schools, surveys and all the rest, which at present goes directly into foreign banks. Nor the fact that nationalization will enable the government to put an end to the monopoly over Kenya's economy of raw material production and exports, and to build up a heavy and manufacturing industrial sector as the base of the economy.

At this point, it is worth pointing out that colonialism has persuaded the world that Africa is ideally suited to agriculture. The example of South Africa, where farming comprises less than 20 per cent of national production, adequately disproves this. In fact, Africa is ideally suited geographically and in its mineral resources for heavy and manufacturing industries, with farming as a mechanised auxiliary. Imperialism stands in the way of this industrial revolution, since it preserves both the character of Africa as a primary producer and the monopoly of Europe and North America as a

manufacturer.

To resume: the Kenya government makes it very clear that nationalization is an anti-imperialist process by warning that it 'would discourage additional private investment'. It also makes it clear that any nationalization that takes place must be with full compensation:

'These documents (i.e., Constitution and KANU Manifesto) do commit the Government to prompt payment of full compensation whenever nationalisation is used.' (*Ibid*, article 73).

This compensation principle, which is guaranteed by a special law enacted in 1964, under strong pressure from West Germany and United States interests, is associated with the *Sessional Paper's* stand on private property generally. After naive attacks on Marx (written, we are reliably informed, by an American professor who did the whole *Paper* as his 'project' in Kenya) on pages 7 and 13 of the *Paper*, it quotes the Constitution:

'No property of any description shall be compulsorily taken possession of, and no interest in or right over property of any description shall be compulsorily acquired, except in strictly defined cases where such action would be necessary "to promote the public benefit"—and in the latter case there is guarantee of "prompt payment of full compensation".' (page 17, article 50).

Regarding compensation for property taken over from European settlers, the position is as follows. Britain gives 'aid' to Kenya (e.g., a recent £20 million loan). Kenya then buys land from these 'settlers'. The settlers then take the money back to England. Britain has thus, in the end, given exactly nothing to Kenya. But now Kenya must start repaying the loan she did not receive and the capital and interest of these repayments are sure, as in the case of British 'aid' to India, to cripple the Kenya treasury. This is so well known in Kenya that even the *Sessional Paper* comments on compensation as follows:

'The settlement process was inherited from the British and was designed *more to aid those Europeans who wanted to leave* than the Africans who received the land. . . . Many European farmers wished to leave and the United Kingdom Government was willing to give grants and loans to Kenya to enable them to go. . . . It is unlikely that Kenya, in accepting the debt burden, *has obtained economic benefits of anywhere near the amount of the debt incurred.*' (page 37, article 103. My emphasis).

THE LAND QUESTION

It is clear that the question of nationalization, or, at least, of expropriation, is intimately related to

the whole land question. While Kenyatta and Co. are giving the European 'settlers' something for nothing (since they stole the land from the Kenyans in the first instance), they constantly tell the landless peasants that the 'government will give nothing freely'. Addressing a *baraza* (rally) at Kakamega, Kenyatta said:

'Many of you have refused to pay graduated personal tax (the police massacred anti-tax demonstrators in Wamba in June 1964) and instead now look upon the Government 'to give you free education, free medical services and free everything.' (*Daily Nation*, 5.4.65).

Two weeks later, Dr. Kiano, Minister for Commerce and Industry, attacked B. M. Kaggia, M.P. for Murang'a and Kenya's 'Castro' in many ways, for declaring:

'We were struggling to regain our own lands which were stolen by the British colonial government. We were not fighting for the right to buy our own land.' (*East African Standard*, 22.4.65).

Kaggia's stand has to be viewed against the background of the fraud of the 'land redistribution programme' of the government, which aimed only at creating a limited landed bourgeoisie of '28,000 to 30,000 families', and had, in its first year, settled a mere 16,000 families (out of 1½ million) on the European-owned Highlands, Kenya's richest farming land. Of these, 550 alone received 294,000 acres, ten times the average and, even so, less than half of the average holding of a *small-scale* European farmer in the Nakuru district. Farm workers were starving, unemployed and landless on farms abandoned by 'white' South Africans who left after Uhuru (independence) because they could not raise the capital to buy them. Usual prices for medium farms were £85,000 or thereabouts. The *per capita* income in Kenya is £20.

When he was Minister of Home Affairs, Oginga Odinga was responsible for the forcible eviction of 'squatters' from European-owned farms. In September 1964 the government ordered the 250,000 unemployed to return to the land (land that they could not afford to buy) i.e., to swell the land-hungry Reserves—a South African term still used in Kenya. Heroic forest fighters from the Mau Mau rebellion were ordered to 'pay for settlement' or starve.

The question of expropriation of foreign investors in land-holdings is inseparable from the peasant struggle for land. Within a month of Uhuru (December 1963) 20,000 'squatters' on European-owned farms in the Rift valley were reported to be 'bringing farming to a halt'. The same day

the European landowner and Minister of Lands, Bruce Mackenzie, announced a plan for a £100 million loan abroad for tea, coffee and sisal investment. Five days later it was reported that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Labour, Mr. F. Kubai (an ex-detainee with Kenyatta) was investigating complaints by European landowners of 'a deliberate attempt by former employees to drive European farmers from the area' (Naiyasha district). He stated: 'The situation is very serious. He told farm workers who attended the *barazas* to work hard for the European farmers and so help the government to make a profit.' (sic!)

Two days afterwards, Oginga Odinga accused 'agitators' of causing 'dissatisfaction' among the 60,000 unemployed and landless in the Rift Valley. During this time the Kenya government was invoking British 'aid' to crush the Lanet 'mutiny' of 600 troops and at the same time, Uganda's quisling, Mbote, called in United Kingdom troops against Jinja 'mutineers' and sawmill strikers. By April, a European magistrate in Machakos, still retained by the government, sentenced a leader of Kyame Kya Nyumba (loosely: 'Land and Freedom Army') to 12 years for 'oath-giving' to 1,000 peasants and on April 12 meetings were banned throughout Kenya (including May Day in the first year of Uhuru). On April 2 two 'forest fighters' were murdered by police after a fight between the police and 200 peasants in Meru. On March 12, Field-Marshal Mwariama, veteran Mau Mau general, was sentenced to 5 years by a European magistrate in Meru. The peasant struggle did not cease and was still raging when Kenyatta's police killed Field-Marshal Baimungi, famous Mau Mau general in a battle at Meru on January 26, 1965, about one year after Uhuru and one month after Jamhuri (Republic). A whole nation mourned, but there was rejoicing among the quislings, the European 'settlers' and the whole apparatus of imperialism.

We shall return to the question of nationalization and confiscation of imperialist interests in Kenya after considering racialist discrimination and education in Kenya, to which this question is as closely connected as it is to the land question.

COLOUR DISCRIMINATION IN KENYA

Under direct crown colony rule Kenya was a colour-bar colony. There was anti-African and anti-Asian racialist discrimination (with the quarter-million 'Asians' used as a buffer between the imperialists and the 8½ million 'Africans') in every walk of life under direct British rule. There were separate schools, separate hospitals, separate

hotels, cinemas, restaurants and residential areas. There was at first no 'African' representation and later special 'African' representation in the Assembly and Legislative Council. There were special 'Native Reserves', 'camps' and locations, as in South Africa. There was an anti-African pass system. Wage-scales were racialist, as in South Africa. There was separation and segregation everywhere. Under the Uhuru Constitution this was made illegal.

What is the situation now, nearly two years after Uhuru? The social amenities are not segregated, except on 'class' lines, but since wealth remains concentrated in the hands of the imperialists, the European settlers, expatriate officers and a small, artificially stimulated local middle class corrupted by these three foreign groups, only this small layer of Africans, certainly not more than one per cent of the population, can enjoy social equality in real life. Thereby the class structure preserves a *de facto* colour bar.

Apart from this, however, visitors to Embakazi airport, up to recently, still had to declare their 'race'. There are still, legally, three distinct and separate hospitalisation systems, the worst for Africans, the best for Europeans and in-between for Asians (the luxury hospitals, like Princess Elizabeth Hospital, still retain even their old colonial names, whereas the 'national' hospitals like Kenyatta Hospital, have been re-named). There are three types of hospital tax, also along open racialist lines. The *de facto* wage structure is as before, with Europeans earning from 10 to 100 times the wages of Africans (for one-tenth to one-hundredth of the work). In the first six weeks of Uhuru there were 150 strikes in Kenya and nearly every one raised the question of 'white domination' in employment.

This has been the recurring theme of strikes at East African Airways (where workers carried placards: 'Equal pay for equal work. Down with discrimination'), at East African Common Services Organisation, in the Nairobi and other municipal councils, at the Mombasa harbour, in the great railway strike and the subsequent postal strike later this year. It is a constant demand of the Kenya National Union of Teachers that anti-African discrimination in teachers' salaries must go (British, American and other expatriates earn more than twice the salary of Africans with the same qualifications, even in teaching, and, in consequence, the inflow of Peace Corps and Overseas Development and other imperialist-'aid'-scheme teachers at the same time drains the schools of African teachers who refuse to work for inferior salaries, turning even to private companies for

employment (where they act as part of the 'Africanisation' show-window of the big concerns). The former European, Asian and African primary schools were re-named C, B and A respectively, but the fees structure—that most effective colour bar—was retained. One-third of the education expenditure still goes on 'European education', although the Europeans form only one-fortieth of the population and there is still 95 per cent illiteracy among Africans. The pass law still operates against work-seekers flocking to the towns as a result of land-hunger and starvation in the country. (In July 1964 the government planned to find jobs for 50,000 of the 205,000 registered unemployed—and population growth was faster than increase in the rate of employment.) Following massive rallies against unemployment and racist discrimination in jobs, the government considered an amendment to a Bill, which provided for 12 strokes of the cane for militant union leaders. Again and again, during these rallies, the Minister of Labour, Mwendwa, told workers to support the government for fear that 'they [foreign investors] would say they could not invest in Kenya because the people were against the government'. Court sentences are openly racist. Africans are gaoled for years for minor theft and assault, while Europeans are often discharged with a caution or receive light sentences (*Pan Africa* magazine reports on court cases, first half of 1965). Racist discrimination in education (a major question in terms of a Transitional Programme for Kenya) became a national issue during 1964 and resulted in the deportation in July 1965 of an anti-apartheid South African whose views and victimisation became the focus of the struggle on this issue for some time (*Pan Africa*, June, July—exposures of racial discrimination and white domination at High schools; *Nation* and *East African Standard*, July 26-31, 1965; Kenya National Union of Teachers statement, 1964, 1965).

As for real attitudes of the Europeans, the situation is not different, in practice, from what it was in Southern Rhodesia. In the words of the former Premier, R. S. Garfield Todd: 'We brought out the scum of Europe, so long as their skins were a bit white, to fire engines and get drunk and keep the black man down.'

AGAIN: ON NATIONALIZATION

When it comes to a Transitional Programme for Kenya the kernel question is that of nationalization and expropriation of imperialist assets. This is at the base of the major specific demands of the oppressed people of Kenya. These demands are no secret.

Kaggia, interviewed by *Sunday Nation* (July 18, 1965) said:

'There must be full free medical care and free education. These are two things on which the whole of our independence struggle centred.'

He continued:

'The other thing the President attacked me on was my calling for free land. . . . This is what we have always believed in. The land belongs to the Africans and it was robbed from us by the British Government.' (*Ibid*).

Kaggia then went on to say: 'I reject Communism, as such, entirely' but favoured co-op and state farms.

Mwai Kibake, Assistant Minister of Economic Planning, made it clear that the land question was crucial:

'The Government loses more sympathy on the land issue than on anything else. . . .' (*Sunday Nation*, 1.8.1965).

There is the closest interconnection between these popular demands for free land, free medical treatment and free education and also for full employment and the South African boycott. As an illustration of such a connection, we take the relation between education and unemployment. In 1964, of 120,000 children expected to take the Kenya Preliminary Examination (Primary school certificate) only 12,000 were expected to go on to Secondary school and only 17,000 into various employment. The remaining 91,000 would be unemployed (*Target*, Christian Council, August 1964). In Uganda a monthly Labour Report (January 1964) said: 'Virtually all the 12,000 youths who had just left school were most unlikely to obtain paid employment.' Large numbers of graduates, trained abroad, especially in the USSR, Czechoslovakia, etc., are unemployed. This is on top of the fact that about half the children never see the inside of a school at all, and, furthermore, the enrolment in Standard One fell from 182,227 in 1961 to 133,188 in 1964 due to higher school fees, thereby relating schooling to the wage issue.

The great estates in Kenya are owned by imperialist companies. The solution of the land question—the major social demand of the vast majority of the people—is unthinkable without expropriation and nationalization. This does not imply that all land will remain state property. This is understood in the case of most of the big estates, where state, collective or co-operative farming of various kinds, using the experience of the Soviet Union, North Korea, China and Cuba, would satisfy the agrarian demands of the farm-labour peasantry on these farms. (Note that these

labourers are not automatically non-peasant, despite their landlessness. Their main desire, in fact, is land.) In the case of other farming areas there is a great popular peasant demand, springing from land-hunger and the history of dispossession and subjugation, for private titles to land. Kaggia's Achilles heel is his preparedness to allow the government to make the landless peasants eventually pay for such land. The revolutionary demand is that this land is the historic right of the people and they demand free land, without the right either to buy or to sell. (In this regard the practices in North Korea are instructive—where it concerned free acquisition of land, but without the right to sell.) Dogmatism by 'socialists' against private titles for peasants in the case of very considerable areas and many types of farming in Kenya will have only one result: the alienation of the landless peasant from his proletarian vanguard in the towns, docks and on the plantations. The point of departure of any agrarian revolution, whatever form is adopted by peasant action and by government law, is the expropriation—in this particular case, without compensation—of the imperialist landowners, and the European 'settlers', the nationalization of the big estates and the free re-distribution of the land to those who live and work on it. The failure of the Bandaranaikes and Sukarno to carry out this nationalization of the plantation owners indexed their function as managers of the tea, coffee and other estates of the imperialists. Because of its association with the agrarian revolution, nationalization in the semi-colonies assumes a much *greater* significance, a more revolutionary significance, than it does in the imperialist countries. And in the struggle for nationalization, there cannot be the faintest doubt that the African middle class and its capitalist state stands and will continue to stand in ruthless defence of the property of its imperialist masters. The massacre of the post-Uhuru independence guerrillas in Kenya establishes this clearly.

However, it is not only its connection with an agrarian programme that makes nationalization significant in semi-colonies. It is equally its connection with the fact that the big landowners in countries like Kenya are the imperialists themselves. This fact makes nationalization an obviously anti-imperialist struggle, a class struggle, and not a mere reform at the top. It is an attack upon the tap-root of capitalism: the semi-colonial investments of imperialism. It implies the transfer of landed estates from the oppressor nation to the oppressed nation and it is the bounden duty of the working class in the imperialist country to

support the popular semi-colonial struggle for this dispossession of the imperialist bourgeoisie. Any other action would, of course, be chauvinism itself.

The question of nationalization has already arisen in Kenya in connection with the 'boycott' of South Africa. It is common knowledge that the boycott is meaningless without a struggle against the imperialist states and monopolies which control and own South Africa. In particular, it is meaningless without a struggle against the British banks and gold monopolies, since gold is the main export of South Africa. Indeed it is meaningless except within the framework of an anti-imperialist struggle in the round, particularly against British imperialism, because South Africa is Britain's *second* exporter and importer (second only to the United States). The boycott means little without a struggle against the war-moguls importing uranium from South Africa and exporting arms to South Africa (Britain, USA, Italy, France, West Germany, Spain). Now, in June 1965 the fortnightly magazine *Pan Africa*, published in Nairobi (and sponsored by Kenyatta and Odinga themselves), carried an article which stated that Kenya was allowing South African firms to operate freely in Kenya, and implied that all businesses with South African connections must be nationalized without compensation. This meant, in practice, *every* major firm in Kenya, since all, through Britain, had the closest financial and commercial links with South Africa. Following this article, a motion was tabled in the Parliament calling for the nationalization of South African firms in Kenya (a motion more limited than the *Pan Africa* suggestion). This motion was rejected out of hand by the Kenyatta Cabinet, which declared: 'We are not bandits.' Thus Kenya joined Banda's Malawi, Kaunda's Zambia and Tshombe's Congo in openly rejecting the boycott. (Less open, but no less factual is the fact that most African states, including Ghana, have financial ties—e.g., through Standard Bank—with the South African Herrenvolk regime.) Regarding the South African boycott not in isolation and not as a farce at the United Nations Organisation or its appendage, Organisation for African Unity, but as an anti-imperialist weapon, nationalization has already become an issue between the toilers of Kenya and the quislings serving imperialism. (In the case of Egypt, which is regularly breaking the boycott by allowing ships bound for South Africa to pass through the canal—just as Nasser lets British warships go through to crush popular struggles in Aden, East Africa and Malaya—the mis-utilisation of a nationalized asset becomes a further pivot of struggle around this question.)

In the case of the great popular outcry for free education, nationalization becomes again a demand which unifies the struggle on a common programme. Most of primary education in Kenya, as elsewhere in semi-colonial Africa—is owned as well as controlled directly by missionaries. The major 'ex-European' high schools are controlled directly by all-European Boards of Governors and many are owned by these boards as well. It is widely understood in Kenya that free education is not possible and with it the breakdown of racial segregation in education, without a government takeover *in toto* of both ownership and direct control of all schools at all levels. This demand for the nationalization of education may perhaps be insufficiently appreciated in 'developed' countries, but in the semi-colonies it is a burning and revolutionary issue. On this issue, the Kenyatta government has already repeatedly taken its stand: in support of the Boards of Governors and the missionaries (quite apart from and in addition to its humiliating subordination to the imperialist indoctrination agencies such as 'Teachers for East Africa' from the Ministry for Overseas Development, Whitehall, the 'Peace Corps', Washington, and the system of 'advisers' and 'expatriate officers' befouling education in Kenya).

Nationalization of imperialist companies like East African Power and Lighting Company, normally a foregone conclusion, is being stubbornly delayed by the government. Mere talk of nationalization of foreign trade and of the banks has already brought angry responses from the merchants of Harambee.

The question of nationalization is the dividing line, in terms of a Transitional Programme, between collaborators and foes of imperialism. Regarding South Africa it has some time ago become an issue heralding a struggle yet to come: viz., should the national liberation movement nationalize the gold mines, etc., or not? Those opposed to this have already offered themselves in advance as lackeys of imperialism at the moment of a critical rupture in South Africa. Those who pooh-pooh, belittle or oppose nationalization in the semi-colonies are opposing the expropriation of the imperialist bourgeoisie, the transfer of their property to the robbed countries and the easing of the passage to socialism in these countries. To put the matter bluntly in a particular case: it is historically more important for the British working class to call for and support the demand for the nationalization of British copper companies in Zambia by the Kaunda government than to call for the nationalization of steel in England by the Wilson government. When this

happens a great day will dawn for the toilers of Africa.

AFRICAN SOCIALISM

Finally, a few words about African socialism. This shibboleth has been adequately ridiculed by students of the Lumumba Institute and by certain unionists. Some have called it a 'mask for European capitalism'—a fair enough description. One aspect, however, may call for comment: namely, the appeal to the old, outmoded tribal spirit of mutual aid and co-operation in order to justify its opposite: class collaboration. The Swahili term used by Kenyatta for confusing these two historically different concepts is Harambee ('let's all pull together', so to speak). For those—and there are many—with illusions about African socialism it is enough to quote Dr. Kiano, Minister of Commerce and Industry, who said:

'People who believed in the class struggle would not work together in the spirit of harambee as championed by the Prime Minister, Mr. Kenyatta. The spirit of co-operation between employers and employees must always be preferred instead of the spirit of the class struggle which some misguided workers tried to preach.' (*East African Standard*, 3.11.64).

Kenya, however, is filled mainly with 'misguided workers'. Already a Socialist Party has been mooted. There is some serious and quiet consideration of a Workers' and Peasants' Party in class opposition to the party of the semi-colonial bourgeoisie in alliance with imperialism, namely, the Kenya Africa National Union (KANU). The mortal fear of the imperialists and their semi-colonial henchmen, as it repeats over and over again, is the class struggle and Marxism. In Kenya this means: the anti-imperialist struggle as the historically necessary and inevitable road to socialism, under the leadership of a Marxist Party within a mass movement of the semi-colonial proletariat leading the peasantry and supported by the peoples of the workers' states and the workers in the imperialist countries.

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(iv) American Trotskyism without Trotsky

The struggle for Marxism in the United States

by *Tim Wohlforth*

A. AMERICAN RADICALISM REASSERTS ITSELF—1940-1945

Within a few short months of the fundamental split with the Shachtman-Burnham-Abern faction in 1940, the Socialist Workers Party was to receive another severe blow, the death of Trotsky. This was a particularly difficult blow to the movement, for it came precisely at a time when Trotsky was beginning to make what could have been his most important contribution to the development of the American Trotskyist movement. While his role in the 1940 factional struggle was essential in order to *save* the movement, his role after the split was becoming critical to the process of *developing* that which was saved. But this learning process was terminated by Stalin's axe and the party was forced to carry on as best it could on its own resources—not the least of these being what it had learned from Trotsky in the preceding period.

It was not an easy period in which to learn, for World War II was going full blast and the United States was being drawn increasingly into the bloody battle. The American movement was largely cut off from active collaboration with Trotskyists in other parts of the world and virtually the entire responsibility for the continuation of the Fourth International fell on to its shoulders. Nor was the situation within the United States an easy one. The war boom was beginning to eat at the militancy of the working class, and pro-war chauvinism was rampant in the country as a whole. Soon the party itself was to feel directly the weight of state persecution. No, it was not an easy time to learn, but revolutionaries are not revolutionaries if they cannot survive difficult times.

Forced to rely on its own resources, it is quite natural that that element in American Trotskyism, most specifically reflected in Cannon himself and those close to him, which was both the strength *and* the weakness of the American movement, should re-assert itself—*American radicalism*. American radicalism, as we have seen, is not a homogeneous tradition but rather a combination of some quite contradictory outlooks. The two most important of these are populism, the struggle of 'democracy' against plutocracy, and syndicalism, the elemental class-consciousness of an emerging working class. We will see the various ways these divergent

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radical traditions reflected themselves through the SWP as it was put to some very severe tests during the war period.

Soon after Trotsky's death the Federal Government began the prosecution under the Smith Act of 18 leaders of the party and of the Minneapolis Teamsters. Clearly, its aim was to remove an obstacle within the labour movement to its drive to rally the workers behind its imperialist war aims. The Minneapolis Trial was a very serious challenge to the Party which threatened its very legal existence in the United States. It would be foolhardy to underestimate the responsibility for the protection of the Party which fell upon the shoulders of the SWP leadership. But the situation faced by the American Trotskyists was by no means a unique one for Trotskyists during World War II. In other so-called 'democratic' countries the Trotskyists also faced persecution, and in occupied Europe Trotskyists were forced into illegal existence where they were hounded by the Nazis, the 'democratic' imperialists, and the Stalinists. Important cadres of our movement lost their lives.

The dual task facing the American Trotskyists was both the preservation of the party's legality to the extent this was possible and the political exposure of the American capitalists and the international imperialist war as a whole. It had both to preserve the existing cadres and to lay the political basis for the growth of the American *and* international movement as disillusionment with the war grew in the world working class.

The SWP leadership saw its role as a dual one though posing it somewhat differently. Cannon states it this way:

From the first moment after the indictment was brought against us in the Federal Court at Minneapolis last July we recognised that the attack had two aspects, and we appraised each of them, we think, at their true significance. The prosecution was designed to outlaw the party and deprive it, perhaps for a long time, of the active services of a number of its most experienced leaders. At the same time it was obvious that the mass trial, properly handled on our part, could give us our first real opportunity to make the party and its principles known to wide circles of workers and to gain a sympathetic hearing from them.¹

While Cannon sees a dual role in the SWP's approach to the trial, the propaganda aspect of the trial is seen only in narrow American terms. Cannon does not see the role of the SWP as *the* spokesman for Trotskyism internationally during the critical war period. Rather he states: 'At the

trial we had the opportunity, for the first time, to speak to the masses—to the people of the United States.'² But without the SWP speaking for the world movement, the world movement was to have no real voice during the Second Imperialist War. This is pretty much the way it worked out.

Seeing the trial as a forum from which to address American workers, the SWP's trial presentation was deeply influenced by its own conception of the American working class at that particular time. 'We,' Cannon states, 'dealt with a specific trial and attempted to explain ourselves to the workers as they are in the United States in the year 1941.'³ This is how Cannon saw the American working class in 1941:

The forty million American workers, casting an almost solid vote for Roosevelt, remain in the first primitive stages of class political development; they are soaked through and through with bourgeois democratic illusions; they are discontented to a certain extent and partly union conscious but not class conscious; they have a fetishistic respect for the Federal government as the government of all the people and hope to better conditions for themselves by voting for 'friendly' bourgeois politicians; they hate and fear fascism which they identify with Hitler; they understand socialism and communism only in the version disseminated by the bourgeois press; and are either hostile or indifferent to it; the real meaning of socialism, the revolutionary Marxist meaning, is unknown to the great majority.⁴

Seeing the workers thus as 'primitive', 'fetishistic' about democracy and 'hostile to socialism', the SWP clearly had a rather difficult task of propaganda ahead of it during the trials. This explains the relatively primitive level of the exposition by Cannon during his trial testimony. The question remains as to whether Cannon accurately portrays the American working class in 1941; whether his aim at the trial should have been to reach the class *as a whole* or its more advanced militant section; further, whether his aim should have been to reach the class as it was *at that moment* or to lay the basis to reach the class as it could and shortly in part did become.

The Mexican Trotskyist Grandizo Munis wrote a very harsh criticism of the SWP's trial defence policy in 1942. As was to be true of virtually all disputes in the Trotskyist movement after the

1. Cannon, James P. 'Political Principles and Propaganda Methods', *Defense Policy in the Minneapolis Trial* (Pioneer Publishers, New York, 1942), page 5.
2. *Ibid.*, page 16.
3. *Ibid.*, page 19.
4. *Ibid.*, page 20.

death of Trotsky there was more than a grain of truth in Munis's criticisms and in Cannon's defence of SWP policy, also written in 1942. Munis showed little regard for the very real problem of the defence of the legality of the party and thus of the need for careful defensive formulations during the trial. Cannon correctly defends himself on this with ample quotations from 'the Marxist masters'.

However, at the same time Munis made some very telling criticisms of the SWP which Cannon was unable to really answer. Here is the essential thrust of Munis's criticism:

It was there (he is referring to Cannon's testimony), replying to the political accusations—struggle against the war, advocacy of violence, overthrow of the government by force—where it is necessary to have raised the tone and turn the tables, accuse the government and the bourgeoisie of a reactionary conspiracy; of permanent violence against the majority of the population, physical, economic, moral, educative violence; of launching the population into a slaughter also by means of violence in order to defend the Sixty Families. On the contrary, it is on arriving at this part that the trial visibly weakens, our comrades shrink themselves, minimise the revolutionary significance of their ideas, try to make an honourable impression on the jury without taking into consideration that they should talk for the masses. For a moment they border on a renunciation of principles.⁵

The basic reason for this defensive political pose of the SWP, as distinguished from legally defensive formulations, is directly related both to the SWP's failure to view its propaganda tasks as international in scope and its assessment of the working class in the United States. The SWP had a political responsibility in 1941 similar to that of Trotsky in his trial following the 1905 Revolution and Karl Liebknecht during World War I. Trotsky, despite the failure of the 1905 Revolution and his own personal jeopardy, defended openly in the Czarist Court the aims of the 1905 Revolution and turned the court proceedings into a trial of Czarism itself. Appropriately his famous speech to the trial was called 'In Defence of Insurrection'. Liebknecht defended the revolutionary struggle against war and turned prosecutions against him into rallies against the bourgeois government both in his trial before the war and in his action during the war.

The responsibility that fell upon the shoulders of the SWP was to turn this prosecution of the SWP into a *political prosecution of capitalism* which had imposed the miseries of depression on the people for the past decade and was at that very

moment perpetrating the greatest bloodbath history has seen.

The trial was in fact a beautiful platform for putting capitalism on trial in a concrete way for what it was doing that very moment. Even from the point of view of risk to the party it was not such a difficult period, as the United States had not yet actually entered the war and anti-war sentiment was still a real factor in the country. Most important of all, by launching an offensive on *this* issue the SWP would have reached the very heart of the reason for the prosecution of the party itself—that is, the capitalists' desire to discipline the working class in preparation for the war. The SWP could have raised as a central propaganda issue the prediction that the war would be run at the expense of the working class and would be used to hold down and discipline the class. Thus it would have prepared the class for the events that were to come.

What the SWP did do was to *sidestep* this kind of political offensive which would have meant a sharper head-on confrontation with the capitalists. It did this by what was to become a favourite way of evading *concrete* political tasks—by treating the trials as an opportunity for a *general* socialist propaganda campaign. Thus Cannon's testimony was a basic exposition of the ABC of socialism, as was Goldman's summation. *Socialism on Trial*⁶ and *In Defence of Socialism*⁷ were very appropriate titles. Cannon's testimony in particular became a basic pamphlet for classes to educate raw recruits for many years to come. While there is nothing wrong with general socialist propaganda—a task which must always be carried out—it cannot be a *substitute* for the presentation of socialist ideas in a *concrete* way which counterposes them to the current action of the ruling class. For years the Socialist Labour Party in the United States has carried out general socialist propaganda on a very extensive scale, in fact propaganda of the most uncompromising 'revolutionary' sort. But when the time came for the US Attorney General to draw up a list of 'subversive' organisations he saw no need for putting such a harmless organisation as the SLP on the list. There was a much more important use to which the Minneapolis Trials could have been put than the publication of a socialist propaganda pamphlet.

5. Munis, Grandizo. 'A Criticism of the Minneapolis Trial', *Defense Policy . . .*, *op. cit.*, page 5.

6. Cannon, James P. *Socialism on Trial* (Pioneer Publishers, New York, Third Edition, 1949).

7. Goldman, Albert. *In Defense of Socialism* (Pioneer Publishers, New York, 1942).

Now let us take a short look at the *nature* of the general socialist propaganda the SWP did produce, viewing it even within the narrow confines of a propaganda attempt to reach the *American* workers. The weak and defensive nature of this propaganda is closely related to Cannon's assessment of the American working class and in fact Cannon's only real defence against *this* aspect of Munis's criticism is his assessment of the American working class. The problem is not so much that Cannon is only speaking for the benefit of the jury but that he does not see any great difference between the jury and the working class. Cannon sees a working class dominated by a fetishism of democracy and in fact in large part he gives in to this fetishism. Under such circumstances he seeks to picture the SWP as being respectable to the eyes of a bourgeois democrat.

Thus as Munis correctly points out he sees the ruling class acting in an undemocratic way *only* at that point when the revolutionary party has the support of the majority of the population. He implies acceptance of the United States of 1941 as a *really democratic country*. No attempt is made to show how the ruling class subverts democracy with its economic power; how it has bought up both major parties; how it denies even the phoney democracy of the bourgeois ballot to the Negro people in the South; how it resorts to violence every time the working class asserts itself in strike actions; how it forces the working class to work for it on its terms or starve, through its undemocratic control of the means of production; how it perpetrates world war and the slaughter of millions in order to protect its violent domination of society.

Even in his answer to Munis, Cannon sees the bourgeois democratic forms as being very real and meaningful, and even goes so far as to state: 'Free speech and free press, obliterated or reduced to travesty in other lands, have been virtually unrestricted here.'⁸ But the working class well knows that when it goes on strike this 'free press' to a man supports the capitalists, that this 'free press' in reality has been bought by the ruling class.

In our opinion the working class in 1941 had a somewhat more realistic conception of the real meaning of bourgeois democracy than Cannon gives them credit for. This is the working class which had just gone through the great strike battles of the 190s. It still remembered. True it had not developed class-consciousness and it therefore voted for Roosevelt. But it tended to

vote for Roosevelt with a good dose of cynicism, a certain feeling of 'lesser evilism'—not because it felt that Roosevelt truly represented the American worker. If there is one common characteristic of American workers, throughout the twentieth century at least, it is a deep suspicion of political parties and the whole political apparatus; a certain feeling of *alienation* rather than identity with government. FDR never fully broke that down.

Even assuming, however, that the American workers in 1941, after the great struggles of the 1930s, were as primitive as Cannon makes them out to be, the question still remains to what extent it is proper for revolutionaries to give in to that primitiveness. If we see that primitiveness as a *transitory* phenomenon then our propaganda should be aimed at the more advanced elements among the workers and at the workers as they *will inevitably emerge* as time passes. We would then see our propaganda tasks as *preparation* for reaching the mass in the period ahead. As it worked out in history this 'primitive' and chauvinist working class was to fight against the no-strike pledge and for the continuation of the class struggle despite the war, only two or three years from the time of Cannon's gloomy assessment of the class.

Cannon and the SWP did not see their role as that of spokesmen for an *international* movement which, while persecuted in the present, would grow throughout the world in the future on the basis of the political capital of its principled stand in the present. Rather it sought to reach the mass of American workers at the time by partially giving in to their own illusions, or illusions the SWP imagined them to have, on democracy, by seeking to picture the SWP within the framework of bourgeois democracy. This gave the propaganda in *Socialism on Trial* a populist tinge. Defensive formulations shifted over into a *defensive pose* in which the opponent is seen, at least at present, as democratic and peaceful, and we must prove to our opponent—and the working class which is seen as agreeing with our opponent—that *we also* are democratic and peaceful. While it is clear that the party did not bow to the ruling class during the Second World War there can be no doubt that in the early period it did bend a bit. And above all it acted as simply an American radical party and did not assume the leadership of the international movement thrust upon it by Trotsky's death.

8. Cannon, James P. 'Political Principles . . .', *op. cit.*, page 19.

What was true about the party's propaganda was even more true so far as concrete trade union work was concerned. Everywhere the watchword was 'caution' and the task was to preserve the precious trade union cadres gathered by the work of the 1930s. While a good deal of caution was indeed necessary for revolutionaries during such a period this conservative attitude continued even into the 1944-45 period when the working class was developing important struggles against the no-strike pledge and the wage freeze. The party held back from giving leadership to these struggles.

For instance A. Winters, a working-class comrade from Bayonne, New Jersey who ended up with Goldman and Morrow but who began his struggle in the party largely against the conservatism of its trade union work, raised some very modest proposals in late 1944. Urging only participation in concrete struggles of the class and not direct leadership of caucuses he comments: 'When workers do begin to move on a mass scale, should they follow anyone who did not previously supply some type of leadership? How would a young comrade ever gain his leadership experience and confidence while sitting it out?'⁹

He further states:

'Everywhere the workers are growing increasingly restless. More and more progressive formations are taking shape as an expression of this fact. We must learn how to *inject* ourselves in these limited struggles in this period not with the perspective of leading the workers in struggle, but of winning cadre elements to the party.'¹⁰

In June 1940 Trotsky warned the American Trotskyists of the dangers of adaptation to the backward layers of the working class. But as soon as the Minneapolis Trial started it was clear that the SWP leadership had not heeded Trotsky's warnings. In its propaganda during the Trial it adapted in part to the backward prejudices of the class. In its concrete work in the trade unions the comrades concerned themselves primarily with protecting themselves rather than assisting the working class in its struggle, which soon came to the fore. Having the responsibility of the whole international thrust upon it by the death of Trotsky, the SWP spoke and acted almost exclusively as leader of an American radical group, not as the leading spokesmen for an international political tendency, the only tendency which could overthrow the capitalist system and bring real peace to the world.

There was another aspect of the life of the Socialist Workers Party during the war. The

death of Trotsky left the SWP with a deep void which it had great difficulty in filling. In part, as we have seen, it filled this void by returning to 'American radicalism' and to basic socialist propaganda—something which it felt fully confident about. This turn led to its neglect of its international responsibilities and to a blunting of its struggle against American imperialism in the early critical stage of World War II. But there was another part to the life of the SWP, a part which helped to obscure for the rank and file the real political and theoretical weaknesses of the party—*orthodoxy*.

With Trotsky's death Cannon could no longer bloc with Trotsky. As a substitute he and the rest of the SWP leadership sought to maintain a bloc with the corpse of Trotsky. That is to say, they became the first and foremost defenders of everything Trotsky ever wrote and did. They upheld all the old positions of the Fourth International. This is, of course, a necessary task. Those who foolishly discard past theoretical achievements can never seriously build anything. But a simple repetition of past positions is no guarantee that one has really assimilated these positions and can now apply the *method* which produced these positions to new events in the world. Those who rely on *orthodoxy alone* always end up bowing before revisionism when it comes to an understanding of a changing reality—and reality always changes.

During the war both Trotsky's and Cannon's contributions to the 1940 discussion were printed as books and studied throughout the party. In addition Cannon gave a series of lectures on the history of the movement and these were published as the book, *History of American Trotskyism*. Warde was assigned to the task of educating the party in the dialectic. He also gave a series of lectures on the question which were later issued as a mimeographed study guide.¹¹ This guide was a very competent summation of the basic ideas of dialectical logic.

There is no doubt but that this educational work strengthened the SWP. However, it is one thing to pedagogically outline the basic elements of the dialectic in classes throughout the party

9. Winters, A. 'Review of Our Trade Union Policy', *Internal Bulletin*, Vol. VI, No. 9 (Socialist Workers Party), page 33.

10. *Ibid.*, page 35.

11. Warde, William F. *An Introduction to the Logic of Marxism* (Pioneer Publishers, New York, Revised Edition, 1953).

and it is quite a different thing to develop a party capable of applying a dialectical approach to the political tasks which confront it. The SWP during World War II seemed to be trying to solve its deep need for theoretical development in an *organizational* way. That is, Warde was *assigned* to lecture the party on dialectics, the local branches were *assigned* to organise classes around this lecture series, etc., etc. This educational task

properly assigned to the proper and competent people, the SWP then proceeded to proceed in its basic party work in the United States in the *old* way—that is, it stumbled along empirically from task to task on the basis of impressions of the American working class at the moment. Dialectics remained in the classes while empiricism dominated the decisive sections of party work.

B. INDIAN SUMMER—1945-1950

The immediate post-war period was a very decisive one for the SWP. A short, but highly favourable, period of productive work in the class struggle opened for it in 1945 and 1946. Relations were re-established with the Trotskyist movement in Europe. Matters were finally settled definitively with the Shachtmanites. Then the post-war prosperity set in and the cold war and witch-hunt accompanied it.

On the surface it may appear that nothing really fundamental changed in the SWP during this period. In reality it was a highly important formative period for the SWP. It was a period in which the second great crisis in the SWP, the split with the Cochranites internally and the Pabloites internationally, was being prepared. In many ways this interim period of temporary growth and the beginning of long-term retrenchment was more critical than the actual period of struggle with the Cochranites and Pabloites. It was a period in which certain things were done, and more importantly, certain things *not* done, which made the 1952-1953 struggle inevitable.

We will seek to get to the heart of the political processes going on inside the SWP by dealing with three separate but concurrent political developments: (1) the resurgence of American radicalism in an almost oppositional form to that expressed in the Minneapolis defence; (2) the strange repetition of the 1940 struggle with the Shachtmanites in a weakened form; (3) the new arrangement between the SWP and the international movement and the nature of the SWP's political participation in the international. It is important for the reader to keep in mind that these developments occurred simultaneously in time and weaved together in a special way to create a fabric of a party soon to go into deep crisis.

As early as 1944 the American working class began to assert its strength on the economic front despite the war. By 1945, when it was clear that the war was to be won by the U.S., economic

struggles increased even more. In the wake of the war they received another tremendous boost as workers began demanding that the promises of the war period now be fulfilled. It was a period of considerable radicalisation throughout the working class of the world, including the United States. It was a good healthy period for a revolutionary party.

While the SWP responded only slowly to the new militancy in the class, by 1946 a new mood of confidence in the class dominated the party, and party cadres were deeply involved in all forms of mass struggles including trade union struggles, youth demonstrations, anti-fascist demonstrations, Negro actions, etc. The political expression of this new mood was the 'Theses on the American Revolution' written by James P. Cannon and passed by the 12th National Convention of the party, November 15-18, 1946.¹² This was the convention which reported the recruitment of over 1,000 new members to the party—almost doubling the party membership in one year.

The 'Theses' is in many ways a very important document. Its positive side is its expression of the party's deep conviction in the revolutionary potential of the American working class. It expresses that positive strain in American Trotskyism, that aspect of Cannon which led to his original break from the American Communist Party. What is especially important is that the *picture* of the American working class in the 'Theses', written by Cannon, stands in sharp contrast with the picture of that same class given only four years earlier by the same Cannon. While the propaganda of the Minneapolis Trial seemed almost in the *populist* tradition of American radicalism, the 'Theses' was definitely in the class struggle traditions of the IWW.

12. Cannon, James P. 'Theses on the American Revolution', *The Coming American Revolution* (Pioneer Publishers, New York, 1947), page 8 ff.

In 1942 Cannon saw the American workers 'in the first primitive stages of class political development'. In 1946 this class is seen as 'in many respects the most advanced and progressive in the world'.¹³ While it 'has not yet taken the road of independent political action on a mass scale' it is stressed that 'this weakness can be swiftly overcome'.¹⁴ In 1942 this class is seen as being 'soaked through and through with bourgeois democratic illusions' but in 1946 it is stated: 'the American workers have the advantage of being comparatively free, especially among the younger and most militant layers, from reformist prejudices'.¹⁵ In 1942 it is stressed that the workers 'understand socialism and communism only in the version disseminated by the bourgeois press; and are either hostile or indifferent to it; the real meaning of socialism, the revolutionary Marxist meaning, is unknown to the great majority'. But in 1946 this is seen as no real problem: 'given an objectively revolutionary situation, a proletarian party—even a small one—equipped with a precisely worked out Marxist programme and firm cadres can expand its forces and come to the head of the revolutionary mass movement in a comparatively brief span of time'.¹⁶

The contrast between the two Cannons is extremely revealing and important for the light it sheds on Cannon's *method* and the method of those who shared the leadership with him. In 1942 Cannon could see only that surface conservatism of the American working class, its political backwardness, its illusions. In 1946 Cannon suddenly sees its revolutionary potentialities and correctly expresses confidence in how quickly illusions can be shed as objective conditions change, and how Marxists despised in one period can lead great masses in the next. But Cannon's assessment of 1946 completely undercuts the whole rationale of the Cannon of 1942. More important, while the Cannon of 1942 became the Cannon of 1946 when the objective situation changed for the better, it was also possible that the Cannon of 1946 could become the Cannon of 1942 once again—and even go further—once the working-class struggle receded.

The problem is one of method. Cannon's confidence in the American working class was *empirically* derived and lacked the enrichment of a real understanding of Marxist theory and method. Thus while a favourable empirical development could bring out Cannon's positive qualities he was hopeless in dealing with an unfavourable situation.

There is another aspect of the 'Theses' which

also is extremely important—*its essentially provincial outlook*. The Theses were based on a totally false understanding of the objective situation in the world economy at the time as well as of the relationship of American capitalism to the world capitalist system. According to the 'Theses' the temporary restabilisation of capitalism, already clearly apparent in 1946, would be only a mere episode of far, far shorter duration than the decade of prosperity that followed World War I. In fact Cannon states: 'From the point of view of our theses it makes no difference whether the deep-going crisis begins early in the spring of 1947, as many bourgeois economists are predicting; or six months later, as many others think; or even a year or two later, as is quite possible in my opinion.'¹⁷ Thus a deep-going crisis and pre-revolutionary situation was seen as coming into existence in the United States in two years at the very latest.

Furthermore this crisis was seen as developing *despite* the stabilisation of capitalism in Europe and the rest of the world following the failure of proletarian revolution—quite apparent by this time—throughout the rest of the world. Come hell or high water the American system was going to collapse shortly and the SWP was to be catapulted into the vanguard of the revolution. With such a perspective Cannon could very well state, as he did, that the main task of the SWP was to come to power shortly and in this way help the Fourth International. In the interim the development of the FI could not be of any great importance to it.

But the world of 1946 was not as Cannon pictured it. Cannon completely underestimated the tremendous significance of the betrayal of the post-war revolutionary wave, by the Stalinists in particular. World capitalism was clearly once again stabilising itself with the help of the Kremlin, and everywhere in the world the revolutionary tide was subsiding. This *international stabilisation* was essential to the stabilisation of American capitalism, which emerged from the war more dependent than ever on the rest of the world. The failures in Europe could not be brushed aside. These failures had prepared the way for an international situation which would shortly dry up the revolutionary actions of the American workers as

13. *Ibid.*, page 14.

14. *Ibid.*, page 14.

15. *Ibid.*, page 15.

16. *Ibid.*, page 15.

17. Cannon James P. 'The Coming American Revolution', *op. cit.*, page 26.

well as seal the party off from serious class struggles for the next decade and a half.

No, an American revolutionary orientation cannot be maintained through simply asserting it despite the rest of the world. It must flow from a full understanding of the development of capitalism as a *world system*. Such an understanding could only have shown the SWP leadership the extreme importance for *it* to assume its proper share of the leadership of the International movement, for the failures and successes of this movement would have a very direct bearing on its own failures and successes. But the Cannon of 1946 still thought in the narrow provincial terms of the Cannon of 1926. *This was to be central to the future problems of the movement.*

This perspective of the American Theses was carried over, at least in part, to the party's concept of its concrete tasks for work in the mass movement. This is to be found in an accompanying resolution passed at the same convention 'From a Propaganda Group to a Party of Mass Action'.¹⁸ The basic idea of this resolution was that the SWP was to act as a sort of *small mass party*. It was to play a role in the leadership of the broad masses of workers in concrete struggles. Of course, the party was able to do this to some extent in the 1946-47 period because of the generally more radical objective situation. Such work, in addition to long-term propaganda and work in mass organizations, is always essential to a revolutionary formation, however small.

There was, however, another side to this kind of outlook. There was a tendency to feel that the SWP, as it was at that moment in 1946, was capable of being catapulted into the leadership of the revolution if only it could show the workers its ability to lead them in this or that mass action. Thus the party tended to minimise two important obstacles to its leadership of the masses—the Communist Party and the trade union bureaucracy.

The Communist Party emerged from the war as no small formation, with around 100,000 members as compared to the Socialist Workers Party's 2,000 or so. It had a periphery of a good half-million and solid bases in a whole number of CIO unions. While a good section of its membership were petty-bourgeois it also had many, many thousands of trade unionists, many of whom were motivated by genuine radical sentiments. The SWP in 1946 had a responsibility to both reach those in the CP it could reach and to deepen the internal crisis in the CP, so as to remove it as an obstacle from its path. The CP was in deep crisis, for this was the period when Foster ousted

Browder and then turned around and ousted his own left wing. It was also a period when the developing cold war was forcing the Communist Party to break its relations with its war-time liberal allies and to take more militant stands.

While the above-mentioned resolution noted the crisis in the CP the party did little to intervene in that crisis. Trotsky had urged a special orientation towards the Stalinist workers in 1940 when the turn to the left of the Stalinists was far more unstable and temporary and there was no sign of any deep internal crisis within the Stalinist ranks. In this period the Progressive Citizens of America, the Stalinist-led liberal coalition, broke up and the Stalinists began their drive which led to the formation of the Progressive Party. This was an extremely opportune time for our movement to intervene directly in that crisis, urging the Stalinist workers to break definitively from popular frontism, and to run a national electoral campaign on a *class* basis, rather than on the phoney and suicidal 'progressive' basis it was run. The SWP should have offered as early as 1947 to give critical support to such a campaign and to withdraw its own candidates if the Stalinists ran on a class line.

The challenge to the party in the trade union movement was even greater than from the CP. This was a period when the 'progressive' caucuses, which had fought the Stalinists during the latter part of the war essentially on sound trade union lines, were now settling down to their bureaucratic control of the unions and establishing their relations with the capitalist government and its cold war drive. Faced with this situation the SWP trade unionists were in a very difficult situation. They could not support their allies of the previous period, they were wary of seeking any relationship with the Stalinist workers who were being witch-hunted in the unions, and they did not have the strength to throw up independent third trade union caucuses. Their inability to so function was itself a sign of the unreality of the SWP's proclaiming itself to be a small mass party to vie with the Stalinists and the reformist bureaucrats for leadership of the American working class.

The real relations of the party in the trade unions are shown clearly in the automobile industry. The auto fraction was the party's strongest trade union fraction and the UAW was one of the

18. 'From a Propaganda Group to a Party of Mass Action', *Fourth International* (New York, January, 1947).

most important unions in the United States. The party auto fraction had supported the Reuther caucus against the Stalinist-backed Thomas-Addes caucus in the closing days of the war when Reuther favoured a more militant trade union policy than did the Stalinists. This relationship with the Reuther group continued into 1946 and early 1947, when it was becoming increasingly apparent that the Reuther formation was becoming more conservative and was engaging in the most virulent forms of red-baiting against the Thomas-Addes caucus. In 1947 there developed serious differences within the party leadership over whether or not to switch support to Thomas-Addes. Swabeck and Dunne (with Cannon's backing, Cochran insisted later) favoured continuing support for Reuther, while Cochran and the auto fraction pushed for a turn to Thomas-Addes. *Neither* side considered a third formation realistic. The auto fraction finally supported Thomas-Addes but at a time when the Stalinists were losing control of the caucus. This support did not lead to any significant contact or work with the Stalinist workers, something Cannon was later to see as a virtue.¹⁹

While on the surface it would appear that Cannon's 'American Theses' would lead to a real break of the party's trade unionists from progressive caucuses of one sort or another and a development of an independent course in the unions, this did not happen, as such a course was clearly unrealistic. In actual fact the evolution of the party's trade union work had the following pattern to it. In the late '30s the party formed an alliance with Rooseveltian progressives in the unions against the Stalinists on the basis of trade union militancy. The early war period brought a deep isolation to the party's trade unionists, who could not really function with either the Rooseveltians or the Stalinists. These two forces had joined hands to subordinate the trade unions to the capitalist war drive. There was also no real basis for an independent opposition in the unions. Consequently, little caucus work as such was done in the unions. In 1944 and 1945 the party slowly began to form an alliance once again with the Rooseveltian elements and dissident Stalinists who displayed greater independence from the bourgeois state than did the Stalinists. So a partial alliance was once again established with the same kind of progressive elements that Trotsky speaks of in 1940. This alliance soon petered out as the liberals in the unions turned to witch-hunting and the cold war, and turned against all radicals including the SWP. The Stalinists were now in

opposition but being Stalinists their opposition was very weak and spineless. However, the party was unable to make a clean break with the progressives and to turn towards these Stalinist workers, urging upon them a more militant opposition. By 1948 trade union work began to take on once more the character of a retrenchment as the party participated in few caucuses and prepared to 'sit out' the unfavourable domestic climate for the next decade and a half.

Thus no sharp political break with progressive liberal trade union circles ever took place. Rather when collaboration was impossible the party's trade unionists simply pulled into their shells and awaited a time when alliances could once more be formed. The trade unionists who entered the dark period of the 1950s entered in pretty much the same shape they entered the war period. They were not much different from the trade unionists Trotsky criticised in 1940. This was to become crystal clear when the next great crisis shook the party.

One other important aspect of the party work on the American scene in the post-war period deserves mention—the Negro struggle. In the 1944-46 period a number of highly valuable Negro militants came into the party, partly out of trade union work and partly out of the party's direct participation in Negro struggles. This was an important advance for the party and showed that it had attempted to alter the serious situation in relation to the Negro worker that Trotsky pointed out in 1939. In the 1947-48 period, with the receding of the mass movement, the party lost a large part of these valuable cadres. As Johnson reported to the 1948 Convention: 'Now the fact remains that a great number of Negroes who came into the party left.'²⁰ Most of those remaining in the party by 1948 were to leave in the next couple of years. The party had been unable to assimilate the bulk of these militant Negro workers and hold them in a period when mass action was no longer really possible for the party except in isolated cases. This failure is understandable considering the short duration of the party's direct experience in Negro work and considering that the overwhelming majority of the party came from a more privileged layer of the working class who in their

19. Cannon, James P. 'Some Facts About Party History—and the Reasons for its Falsification', *Internal Bulletin*, Vol. 15, No. 19 (Socialist Workers Party, 1953), page 11 ff.

20. Meyer, J. (J. R. Johnson) 'The Revolutionary Answer to the Negro Problem in the United States', *Bulletin of Marxist Studies No. 4, op. cit.*, page 32.

daily lives had little contact with Negroes. Interesting in this regard is the fact that the bulk of the Negroes who stayed with the party at least into 1948 were Negroes integrated into trade union fractions of the party.

An important theoretical gain was made by the party in the 1948-50 period. In this period, J. R. Johnson, a Negro intellectual of West Indian origin, made a substantial contribution to the party's theoretical understanding of the Negro question in the resolution, 'Negro Liberation Through Revolutionary Socialism'.²¹ Johnson was an extremely erratic intellectual capable of the most inconsistent and oppositional theoretical notions, and highly unstable. However, he did develop a very sound understanding of the American Negro movement under Trotsky's tutelage in the late 1930s, and he was able to enlarge on this through the party's experience in the middle forties. It is interesting that this contribution—the only really original contribution to the understanding of an American, not to mention an international question the party was to produce—was to come from a strange individual with no real roots in the party, someone who was to spend only two years in the party.

Along with the Negro militants a greater number of young white workers were recruited to the party in the 1945-46 period. These white workers also found it difficult to stay in the party as the mass movement receded. The great bulk of the 1,000 new recruits reported at the 1945 Convention were no longer in the party by the 1948 Convention. No attempt was made to reach the radicalised students and intellectuals, some of whom went to the Shachtmanites but the bulk of whom were recruited into the CP. The 1940 experience had simply soured the party on any work among students and intellectuals. What intellectuals there were in the party were left from the 1930s, like John G. Wright and William F. Warde. The party which entered the 1950s was very much like the party which entered the war period—except that its leading cadres were older, and more precious time had slipped by without any appreciable qualitative theoretical development of the movement.

By 1948 the unreality of the predictions and perspectives of the 'Theses on the American Revolution' were clear to all in the party. The party's membership was on the decline, its ability to manoeuvre in the trade unions was narrowing, the Negro struggle had lost much of the steam it had had two years earlier, the Stalinists had thrown off the super-Fosterites and were deep in

their non-working class 'progressive' campaign.

So the SWP turned once again to general socialist propaganda. This time it took the form of the 1948 presidential election campaign. This campaign ignored the Stalinists and other concrete problems facing the party and addressed itself in the most general terms to the broad masses of the population. Once again the party had no real concrete assessment of the situation in the United States and no real strategy for the building of the party under what were to become increasingly difficult conditions.

ONCE AGAIN WITH SHACHTMAN

Considering the depth of the struggle in 1940 it does appear strange that five years later the Shachtman group (Workers Party) and the SWP should be engaged in unity negotiations. What makes this even stranger was that the political evolution of the Shachtmanites since the 1940 split had been further and further away from Trotskyism. But this is what happened. Even more, groups developed within each formation which ended up joining the other. One could only conclude from this that the 1940 split was not as definitive as it appeared to be at the time. Cannon himself admits this when he states that the 1940 split 'was by no means as definitive and final as is the split today'.²² He was referring to the split with the Pabloites, which proved to be anything but 'definitive and final'.

The question we must seek to answer is, why was not the split in 1940 as definitive as it, in our opinion, should have been? We must first look at the evolution of the Shachtman group since 1940. During the 1940 struggle the minority had no clear position on the Russian question. While Burnham's bureaucratic collectivism set the tone for the group, Shachtman remained non-committal on the question and Abern upheld a degenerated workers' state theory. Soon after the split Burnham resigned from the WP but Shachtman then picked up Burnham's thesis and declared in December 1940 that Russia was a bureaucratic collectivist state.

He picked up Burnham's thesis rather gingerly and saw bureaucratic collectivism as a sort of mutation or aberration in just one country on earth rather than as a whole stage in the development of mankind. The 1941 resolution of the

21. *Ibid.*, pp. 35 ff.

22. Cannon, James P. 'Factional Struggle and Party Leadership', *Fourth International* (New York, Nov.-Dec. 1953), page 116.

WP on the question stated: 'Bureaucratic collectivism is a nationally-limited phenomenon, appearing in history in the course of a singular conjuncture of circumstances.'²³ By 1946, however, the world situation had changed and Stalinism expanded its control over the areas which made up a buffer to the East and West against the capitalists. This defensive expansionism of the Stalinists was seen as evidence of Stalinism as an expanding imperialist force supplanting the role of the working class in replacing capitalism. In 1946 the Shachtmanites stated: 'It is this fact that gives to the emergence of the new Russian empire a significance much more fundamental than merely a recrudescence of *Russian* power. Bureaucratic collectivism is the source of the new Russian imperialist power as early capitalism was the source of British imperialist power.'²⁴

During the war the WP had done a good deal of trade union work. It accomplished this by sending its young petty-bourgeois youth into the trade unions. But it was unable to root them there, and by 1946 the party was once again predominantly petty-bourgeois in social composition. Ernest Erber, a WP leader, frankly describes the situation thus:

We were a party with a predominantly petty-bourgeois membership. The war gave us the opportunity to place our petty-bourgeois membership in industry. Their presence there had a time limit on it—'for the duration'. We had to make use of this time to recruit and hold enough industrial workers to change the character of our party. We failed in this. The end of the war dumped our petty-bourgeois members out of industry. This is the root of the problem. This is the long and short of it.²⁵

Essentially then the WP in 1946 was an organisation which had developed systematically all its methodological errors of 1940 and further had failed to root itself in the class. Its development was clearly and profoundly to the *right*.

During the war period there developed a small minority inside the SWP which began to move more and more in the direction of the WP politically. This minority was led by Felix Morrow, and, interestingly enough, Albert Goldman, who had been the lawyer in the Minneapolis Trial. Warde in 1946 describes the background of Morrow and Goldman in the 1940 fight in the following terms:

Both opposed and fought Shachtman's political positions, including his unprincipled bloc with Burnham. But at the same time they believed with Shachtman that Trotsky had arbitrarily and un-

justifiably injected the question of philosophical method into what should have remained a purely political dispute.' They shared Shachtman's view from somewhat different standpoints. Goldman was more or less indifferent toward the philosophical foundations of Marxism; Morrow was at odds with them.²⁶

The evolution of the Goldman-Morrow group was another warning to the SWP leadership on the critical importance of the understanding of the Marxist method. There is, however, little indication that they took this warning any more to heart than they had taken the last one.

Flowing from their political position of growing sympathy with the views of the WP, growing dissatisfaction with the Cannon 'regime', and complete lack of concern as to the critical importance of the Russian question and of the question of method, the Goldman-Morrow group quite naturally began a campaign for reunification with the Shachtmanites. The Shachtmanites naturally enough supported this campaign, seeing it as a way to win over the Goldman-Morrow group. The SWP leadership, also naturally enough, reacted with extreme coolness to these advances seeing in them only manoeuvres to split the party. After considerable manoeuvring and a number of exchanges of letters the SWP finally formulated its position by insisting that a discussion of 11 key points *precede* any actual reunification.²⁷ These points began with an evaluation of the 1940 split and included such critical questions as Marxist method, the Russian question, etc. The WP rejected this approach, seeing such a proposal as simply an evasion of unity. Finally the SWP prepared its own answer to the 11 points in a statement, written by Cochran, entitled 'Revolutionary Marxism or Petty-Bourgeois Revisionism?'²⁸ Goldman soon split from the SWP and joined the WP, Morrow was expelled and the *first* stage of

23. 'The Russian Question', *New International* (New York, October 1941).

24. *New International* (New York, April 1946).

25. Erber, Ernest. *City Committee Bulletin* (Workers Party, New York, 1945).

26. Warde, Wm. F. 'A Note on the Ideological Degeneration of Goldman, Morrow and Logan', *Internal Bulletin*, Vol. VIII, No. 11 (Socialist Workers Party, 1946), page 12.

27. Goldman, Albert. *The Question of Unity* (Workers Party, New York, 1947) Appendix D, E, F, G.

28. 'Revolutionary Marxism or Petty-Bourgeois Revisionism?', *Internal Bulletin*, Vol. VIII, No. 10 (Socialist Workers Party, August 1946).

WP-SWP unity negotiations came to an ignominious conclusion.

In our opinion the basic approach of the SWP to the question of unity was correct. Given the character of the WP—that is its nature as a rightward moving centrist formation—it would be incorrect to simply proceed to unification on the basis of some organisational formula. Rather it was essential to first probe the possibilities of a political basis for unity and then proceed to organisational points.

The SWP document 'Revolutionary Marxism or Petty-Bourgeois Revisionism?' deserves some attention. Basically it was a very good and solid statement and what it has to state about the Shachtmanites was correct. It had, however, one interesting weakness. It was essentially a statement of the differences the two organisations had on a series of concrete political questions. The titles to the sections of the resolution itself give an indication of this. They refer to divergent 'positions', 'evaluations', 'tactics', 'concepts', 'attitudes'. What is missing is the essential difference—the difference in Marxist method. All these important political and even theoretical divergences were produced by a basic divergence in method. The Shachtmanites proceeded with the method of empiricism, and political views were but an empirical reflection of surface reality around it. The SWP positions were essentially positions they had inherited from Trotsky. Trotsky had produced them by applying the method of Marxism to the reality around him.

The document did, of course, have a small subsection entitled 'Marxist Principles and Methodology'. This section was short and in no sense posed the question of method as essential to all the divergences that existed between the two parties. Furthermore, it saw Marxist methodology in a very narrow way. It referred to 'the Marxist methodology, i.e., the class criterion'.²⁹ It is true that Shachtman's approach to the Finnish events can be considered an abandonment of a class analysis. But at the same time this was not true of Burnham. Burnham applied a class criterion to these events but it was the wrong one—he saw Russia's role as the imperialist intervention of a new bureaucratic collectivist class. The essential methodological point in dispute in 1940 was the importance of the dialectic itself. But this receives only the attention of a passing reference to an abandonment of 'dialectical materialism' in another section.³⁰

In 1940 Trotsky stressed this question to such an extent that he was forced to resort to an

elementary exposition of the dialectic in the course of his polemics. In 1941 the party reacted empirically to the negative moods of the class with disorienting effects. In 1946 the party reacted empirically to the positive moods of the class. Again the effects were disorienting and the cadre did not really develop qualitatively. In 1946 when faced again with the problem of Shachtmanism the party was to see it essentially in empirical terms as a series of divergent positions on a series of political questions. It missed entirely the central cause of this divergence—a divergence in method. It little realised that its own positions were positions developed by Trotsky with a different method from those who were now defending those positions. Such a contradiction must in time break through.

Hardly had the ink dried on Cochran's denunciation of the Shachtmanites as petty-bourgeois revisionists than new manoeuvres were to begin. This time the boot was on the other foot—a minority had emerged inside the WP sympathetic to the SWP. This minority, the Johnson-Forrest group, had no common methodological or theoretical basis for its pro-SWP evolution. It upheld a state capitalist theory of the USSR and utilised a method as crassly empirical as was Shachtman's. It did share with the SWP a similar assessment, empirically arrived at, of the American scene. It also was more proletarian in its composition and was quite restless in the petty-bourgeois atmosphere of the WP.

Largely because of this minority the SWP entered once more into negotiations for unity with the WP. This time it conveniently forgot its insistence on a political discussion to precede unification and proposed an organisational solution whereby the WP would be allowed to enter the SWP as an organised faction without any preceding discussion. Much to everybody's surprise the Shachtmanites accepted the proposal, and in February of 1947 both the *Militant* and *Labor Action* published the joint statement on unification. The difficulty with organisational manoeuvres which lack a firm political basis is that someone might take them seriously. So was the situation both the SWP and WP leadership faced until a slip occurred. Cannon wrote an internal letter referring to the agreement as a 'capitulation on the Shachtmanites' part'. It was leaked to Shachtman and Shachtman factionally denounced the Cannonites. The Cannonites in turn denounced the

29. *Ibid.*, page 3.

30., *Ibid.*, page 4.

Shachtmanites and unity was off, to everyone's relief.³¹ Soon thereafter Johnson simply announced to change in party affiliation of his faction and went over to the SWP with little fanfare.

The Johnson entry, as much as the proposed WP entry, was not prepared politically by serious discussion nor was it followed by much theoretical effort to win over the group. It was empirically based on a momentary common coming together of the two groups on American perspectives, and the Johnson group was soon to split when the turn in the international situation around Korea brought the defence of the Soviet bloc countries once again strongly to the fore.

There is an important general lesson to be gained from this whole series of almost farcical developments. Unifications empirically arrived at, unless followed by a deepening of methodological agreement, cannot last, and splits empirically arrived at, unless also followed by a deepening of an understanding of the methodological roots of the split, are not permanent. In this respect history was shortly to repeat itself.

THE INTERNATIONAL BLOC

We have seen that the SWP gave no real leadership to the Fourth International during the war period. Of course, it saw itself as a *part* of the Fourth International politically, despite the Voorhis Act, but it did not see itself in any sense as the real leadership of the Fourth International. In any event the war period was a difficult one for an international movement and the party was cut off from most of its international co-thinkers. It would thus be in the immediate post-war period that the real challenge to the SWP would arise.

There is no doubt that the SWP emerged from the war as the most solid, most stable Trotskyist formation in the world, with a very considerable proletarian base. In addition the SWP leadership had collaborated extremely closely with Trotsky during the last five years of his life. This collaboration was deepened by a common struggle against revisionism in 1940, the most important internal struggle in the history of the whole world movement. The SWP in 1946 was therefore the natural party to assume an important and direct responsibility for the *political* leadership of the International.

The need for such leadership was very great, and there was really no other stable formation in the International which could supply it. The British and French sections, the largest in Europe, were led by extremely unstable and politically unreliable petty-bourgeois elements. Neither group had yet

really developed into a stable revolutionary communist formation. The Ceylonese LSSP was in Asia and quite distant from the important European political centres. More important, it had always been a quite provincial party, wrapped up in its own affairs in Ceylon, and never did very much to give leadership to the Trotskyist movement even in Asia.

The SWP, however, saw its relationship to the International in a very different light. It was almost totally preoccupied with the American scene, where it hoped it would soon emerge in the leadership of the revolutionary struggle and in this way contribute to the International. Outside of this it saw its role as a *supporting* one. It would assist materially the International leadership and lend its advice here, or there where needed—especially on practical problems of strategy and tactics in party building. To *support* and *assist*—that was the role the SWP cut out for itself.

So in 1946 the SWP turned over the international leadership to a group of talented intellectuals who had never had much experience in practical work in a healthy movement. The most prominent of these were Michel Pablo and Ernest Germain. Having turned things over to these men the SWP sat back and waited for this new group of young leaders to supply it with a political line much as Trotsky once had done.

In this manner the international bloc which was to dominate the Fourth International until 1953 was established. The SWP offered its moral and material support to this new leadership and in return expected the new leadership to 'handle' international questions and supply the world movement with a political line. Thus the identical pattern was established with Germain and Pablo that the party had established with Trotsky. The problem however was not simply that Germain and Pablo were not Trotsky, but that the *old* relationship itself had broken down in the 1940 fight. Precisely because the SWP leadership had not developed theoretically in the 1930s it lost nearly 50 per cent of its membership. Further, those members it retained were largely saved by Trotsky's intervention in the 1940 fight, during which Trotsky was forced to supplant the Cannon leadership as the real leadership of the SWP. In the six years since these events the SWP had not yet learned the critical importance of its own theoretical development. Once again it looked

31. See: 'Speeches on Unity Question by Two SWP Leaders', *Bulletin*, Vol. II, No. 4 (Workers Party, May 27, 1947), page 24 ff.

for a crutch—and this time it found a very weak crutch at that.

No sooner had an international leadership established itself, than it was faced with a theoretical challenge of the most serious nature. The USSR emerged from the war in military control of the whole East European region. In addition, a Stalinist-led movement controlled a huge section of China on its Eastern buffer. As the brief post-war honeymoon between the USSR and the imperialists broke down Stalin began to structurally transform these regions in order to secure a safe buffer between the USSR and the capitalist world. As long as capitalism existed in these regions they could easily become bases for imperialist attacks on the USSR. Thus Stalin began a highly contradictory social transformation of these countries from on top. This process raised the most difficult of theoretical challenges to the Trotskyist movement. If not properly understood this defensive expansionism of Stalinism could be seen either as proof of the Shachtmanite thesis, that Stalinism was a new imperialist ruling class, or lead to pro-Stalinist illusions about the 'revolutionary' role of Stalinism in a changed world situation.

Germain began to tackle this theoretical challenge in 1946, and his early work was quite solid.³² Noting that these areas remained at the time still capitalist countries he also took into consideration a tendency towards their structural assimilation into the USSR. In this latter respect he based himself on Trotsky's work on Finland and Poland in 1940. This remained the theoretical assessment of East European developments through the Second World Congress in 1948.³³ The SWP, of course, supported this assessment though it contributed nothing to its development.

In 1949 developments had reached a point in Eastern Europe where a serious deepening of the theoretical understanding of the world movement was demanded. Contrary to Germain's predictions the bulk of the buffer was being transformed into workers' states, but these states were not being formally incorporated into the USSR. In addition, one of these states, Yugoslavia (which had been the earliest to be socially transformed), broke with the Kremlin and began to move to the left.

At this point a dispute of great importance broke out in the European leadership of the FI. Germain continued to try to apply in a mechanical way the basic analysis which Trotsky had applied to Finland and Poland in 1939-40, and thus insisted that these states were still capitalist states because they had not been formally incorporated

in the USSR.³⁴ Pablo threw all this to the wind and struck out in a new direction. Workers' states were seen arising everywhere under the leadership of Stalinists. This Stalinist leadership, while capable of bringing the workers to power by establishing a workers' state, would however deform or distort the resultant state. Thus he foresaw 'centuries of deformed workers' states' created by Stalinist parties under the pressure of the masses. This left no role for the Fourth International; and so, consistently, he began to urge the Trotskyist movement to enter the Stalinist parties in the hopes that we too would be swept to power through this means.³⁵

Having abandoned a Marxist method in analysing the workers' states, Pablo had ended up with a thesis which meant the very *liquidation* of our movement. All this was quite clearly expressed by 1950. Germain on the other hand sought to resist Pablo's liquidationism through a *narrow orthodoxy*. That is, he sought to apply Trotsky's early analysis in a mechanical way to these post-war events and thus came right up against events he could not really explain. This weakness of Germain soon led to his capitulation to Pablo.³⁶

How did the SWP relate to this whole theoretical crisis which dominated the International in 1949 and 1950? Needless to say it was not in a position to offer any independent theoretical solution to the dilemma. Its whole failure in the previous two decades to develop itself theoretically prevented it from so doing. Rather it sat on the sidelines and commented on the discussion as it evolved, supporting this position of Pablo's and that of Germain's. Cochran and Hansen emerged on the Political Committee as supporters of Pablo's whole line, while Cannon, Stein and John G. Wright tended to sympathise with Germain. The result was a completely confusing theoretical situation in the top leadership of the party.

The complete theoretical paralysis which had

32. See: Ernest Germain, 'The Soviet Union After the War', *International Information Bulletin*, Vol. I, No. 2 (Socialist Workers Party, 1947).

33. 'USSR and Stalinism—Theses adopted by the Second World Congress', *Fourth International* (New York, June 1948).

34. Germain, Ernest, 'The Yugoslav Question, The Question of the Soviet Buffer Zone, and Their Implications for Marxist Theory', *International Information Bulletin* (Socialist Workers Party, May 1950).

35. Pablo, Michel, 'Yugoslavia and the Rest of the Buffer Zone', *International Information Bulletin* (Socialist Workers Party, 1950).

36. This occurred at the Third World Congress.

seized the party was shown clearly in the party's initial response to the Korean war. The Korean war was the most important contest between the workers' states and the imperialists in the whole post-war period. There was an extreme need for revolutionaries to understand it and to defend unconditionally North Korea and China against the imperialists.

This is the way the Cochranites were later to assess the party's initial reaction to the Korean war: 'The first reaction of the weekly paper, operating under the immediate direction of the Political Committee, to the Korean war was a Third Camp position calling down a plague on both houses, the Kremlin and American imperialism. Our position was not dissimilar from that of the POUM and the Yugoslav CP, and not too far from that of the Shachtmanites.'³⁷ Cannon denied that the *Militant* took a 'third camp' position, but he did this by stating that a Third Camp position meant 'support for the imperialist camp', and the *Militant* clearly denounced imperialism. He did not deny that while denouncing imperialism the *Militant* for several weeks did not clearly defend North Korea. In fact he reports that he himself was so upset about the *Militant* that he urged an immediate Plenum to settle the question, and ended up flying in from Los Angeles for the sole purpose of discussing this question.³⁸

Art Preis, who was in New York at the time, furnishes some more information on these events. He claims that 'six Political Committee members—Stein, Breitman, Wright, Hansen, Bartell, and Clarke—acting hastily and without waiting for adequate information, took a wrong position on North Korea, although sound on American imperialism, South Korea, and the Kremlin'.³⁹ He insists that this position, which we can only surmise was a 'plague on both your houses position', never actually got expressed in the *Militant*. However, he documents that a number of Political Committee members were so confused that they insisted that the *Militant* say nothing which would indicate actual defence of North Korea for a few weeks while they tried to straighten out their thinking.

The picture this whole process gives us is not simply that this or that member of the Political Committee was a 'Stalinophobe'. Clearly leading Cochranites were found among the confused, and Cannon's intervention seems wholly on the proper side. Rather what comes out is a picture of a national leadership almost totally confused in its theoretical development, and thus paralysed in coming out with a clear-cut political position when

a new event of great importance took place. This theoretical confusion is further documented by the formal position the SWP National Committee took on the theoretical struggle then taking place between Germain and Pablo. The majority of the National Committee came down firmly in support of—both sides. The SWP was able to accomplish this by insisting on a separation of two questions—the nature of the buffer excluding Yugoslavia and the nature of Yugoslavia. It held a special plenum on the former question in February of 1950 in which Morris Stein reported for the majority of the Political Committee. Stein's presentation was essentially a very good summary of Germain's views.⁴⁰ Another plenum was held in December of 1950 on the Yugoslav question. This time Murry Weiss was the reporter for the Political Committee and the whole position of Pablo on Yugoslavia was endorsed.⁴¹

But the two positions adopted by the SWP were completely antithetical to each other. The Germain position, while incorrect, was at least an attempt to deny to Stalinism a revolutionary role. It was understood in this light by the world movement and it was because of this that the party leadership was attracted to it. The Pablo analysis of Yugoslavia was more than an analysis of Yugoslavia. It was a defence of the thesis that a Stalinist party, under the pressure of the masses, could come to power and establish a workers' state. This position was the very heart of Pablo's 'centuries of deformed workers' states' thesis. It undermined completely the whole approach taken at the February plenum on the rest of the Buffer.

The SWP's participation in this critical discussion shows very clearly the method of the SWP in this period. In the first place it had nothing original to offer to the theoretical discussion. At best all it could do was pick and choose at a table laid by others. Secondly, it did its picking and choosing *empirically*. It gave Stalinism one

37. Andrews, J. *et. al.* 'The Roots of the Party Crisis—Its Causes and Solution', *Internal Bulletin*, Vol. 15, No. 8 (Socialist Workers Party, April 1953), page 16.

38. Cannon, James P. 'Some Facts . . .', *op. cit.*, page 14.

39. Preis, Art. 'The "Proof" of Our "Stalinophobia"', *Internal Bulletin*, Vol. 15, No. 9 (Socialist Workers Party, April 1953), page 13.

40. Stein, M. 'The Class Nature of the Buffer Countries in Eastern Europe', *Discussion Bulletin No. 3* (Socialist Workers Party, June 1950).

41. Weiss, Murry. 'Report on Yugoslavia', *Discussion Bulletin No. 6* (Socialist Workers Party, January 1951).

character in Eastern Europe as a whole, but when it crossed the border into Yugoslavia Stalinism suddenly acquired another character. Such a glaring inconsistency is itself an expression of an empirical method which compartmentalises theoretical work. One theory is empirically arrived at for this area, and another for that area, and the connection, the unity of the developments is lost. Here we have another example of the method which could project a revolutionary course for the United States despite the consolidation of capitalism as an international system.

There can be no doubt that the SWP had the best of intentions in all this. It had a deep feeling of the essential need for a revolutionary party. It had the greatest respect for the views of Trotsky and considered itself, above all others, to be an orthodox Trotskyist formation. When a piece of orthodoxy was laid on the table by the international leadership it quickly and hungrily grabbed for it. This explains its warmth towards Germain in this whole struggle.

However, when the party faced a real revisionist trend it was prostrated before it; it was incapable

of countering it. Pablo, as much as Burnham and Shachtman, had abandoned the very method of Marxism. Pablo, as much as Burnham and Shachtman, had developed a theoretical position which meant the very liquidation of our movement unless countered. But Pablo's revisionism was based on an assessment of new events which could not be handled simply by repetition of old Trotskyist orthodoxies. This Germain had attempted to do and failed. What was needed was the application of the basic method of Trotsky to a new process which emerged in the post-war period. This the SWP was incapable of doing. Trotsky was not around to do it for the SWP leadership.

So the game went on as usual. The SWP continued to give Pablo and company material and moral aid. It even endorsed his views (as well as those of his opponent). The leading cadre was uncomfortable, unhappy, but as long as Pablo left the United States to Cannon, Cannon was more than willing to leave the rest of the world to Pablo. So things stood up to the time that George Clarke returned from the Third World Congress in 1951.

(To be continued)

Black-eye bean

A dry bean, roughly
 The width of a finger nail.
 Its skin is tight, grained with crinkles tightly
 drawn towards its belly.
 And round some of them, split slightly.
 Its underside is almost flat
 And on this, a black oval eye
 Unites the skin's seam; its centre
 Is a white, blind eyeball
 Dry and ridged, like a tumour.
 It is a complete object.
 For the curious, curious; and for the hungry
 Many must be boiled
 To placate the angry, or diffident human belly.
 Its strength strengthens.
 It remains dry, even when cooked
 Or ground up, and retains
 Its certain quality.

A feeder, not for itself only,
 Although some must be left
 For the plant to continue its yield
 Dry, and with little taste.
 Drier, much drier, or dried
 Than the burned flesh of the family
 Their flesh dried by burning
 From the bomb that severely burns the flesh
 That moistens the bean, in the mouth,
 And in the stomach;
 Slowly, with passion,
 Until it is too ill
 To eat the bean's flesh.
 Some survive. The bean survives
 In the flesh. The dead
 Strengthen the living tissue
 Every way that can be thought of.

Jon Silkin.

Cuban Revolution in Danger

FIDEL CASTRO, speaking before the assembled delegates of the Havana 'Tricontinental Conference' at its closing session on January 15, made a vicious attack on the Fourth International. This attack, made in the worst tradition of Stalinist vilification, was delivered without any possibility of discussion or debate.

Its purpose was quite different: the attack represented a carefully directed blow at the left, carried out on behalf of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Kremlin and its counter-revolutionary collaboration with the US imperialists.

A condition of the success of the Stalinists' policy is the defeat of any attempt at the construction of an international revolutionary leadership of the working class. Fidel Castro carried out this service for the Kremlin bureaucracy, who have become his political masters at this stage.

The conditions for the defence and development of the Cuban revolution, on the other hand, are the intensification of the revolutionary struggle against imperialism everywhere, especially in the remainder of Latin America, the building of working class parties to lead this struggle,

and the replacement of the Cuban bureaucratic state machine by workers' councils.

Revisionists in the camp of Marxism who fostered illusions that these steps would be taken by Castro himself, and the Cuban Communist Party which he leads, are now dumbfounded by Castro's denunciation of Trotskyism. They appeal to him to rectify his errors.

We do no such thing. The International Committee of the Fourth International warns the international working-class movement that these attacks represent the most serious warning, that Castro has taken the road of liquidation of the Cuban Revolution.

His dependence on the Soviet bureaucracy is the mechanism for his capitulation to the American imperialists. This is the meaning also of his bitter public attacks, before and after the Havana Conference, against the government of China.

Castro particularly accuses the Fourth International of subverting the revolutionary guerrilla movement in Guatemala, and working on behalf of US imperialism. Castro said:

'Yankee imperialism used one of its most subtle tactics in order to liquidate a revolutionary movement, a tactic which consisted of infiltrating into the movement agents of the Fourth International, who—because of the ignorance, the political ignorance, of the main leader of the movement (Yon Sosa)—got the movement to adopt nothing less than that discredited thing, that anti-historical thing, that fraudu-

lent thing emanating from elements notoriously in the service of Yankee imperialism, the programme of the Fourth International.'

and further:

'Through the intermediary of an individual, a businessman, placed in charge of the political side of the movement, the Fourth International arranged it so that the leader (Yon Sosa), ignorant as he was of politics and of the history of revolutionary thought, permitted this agent of Trotskyism—which for all of us is, without the slightest doubt, an agent of imperialism—to edit a journal which copied word for word the programme of the Fourth International. The Fourth International has committed a veritable crime against the revolutionary movement by isolating it from the people and from the masses, by contaminating it with stupidities, in bringing upon it the discredit connected with the repugnant and nauseating thing which Trotskyism represents in the political world today. (Applause.) Because if, at a certain period, Trotskyism represented a position, certainly a wrong position, but all the same a position coming into the domain of political ideas, Trotskyism later became a vulgar instrument of imperialism and reaction.'

As always, the attack on Trotskyism is to cover up capitulation, just as Stalin used it.

The hand-picked delegations to Havana were encouraged to return to their countries and

return to a Stalinist witch-hunt of truly revolutionary elements in the liberation movements, and particularly Trotskyists, in the best Stalinist style.

Inside Cuba, any working-class opposition will receive the same treatment, facilitated by the disarming of the militias last year and the concentration of the forces of repression.

Castro's attack on China, and his references to 'internal subversion' by the Chinese, have the same purpose.

Thus the London 'Times' commented that latin America 'can now breathe more freely'. Castro has signalled to the imperialists that he accepts the anti-revolutionary strategy of the Stalinist bureaucracy with all its implications for a renewal of relations with US imperialism. Thus he must strike out against the left.

Castro's distortions, quoting as he does from isolated individuals and insignificant groupings whom he chooses to call Trotskyist, are not a result of any misunderstandings, but are part of the classical Stalinist method.

All those who have welcomed Castro as a 'natural Marxist' and even as the successor to Lenin and Trotsky (!), have now shown the counter-revolutionary implications of their revisionism.

Castro has in fact carried out a special task, using his special place in the sympathies of revolutionaries in many countries, to carry out an attack on Trotskyism which the Stalinist bureaucracy itself would not have been able to do effectively.

Those who have distorted Marxism to create illusions in Castro have prepared the way for this division of labour between the Kremlin and Castro.

Silence on his real position today, pleas that he should come to his senses, constitute a betrayal of the present and future interests of the revolution in Cuba and Latin America.

Castro strikes out above all against the independent working-class character of the Fourth International. It is this above all which we defend and prize.

It is on the basis of this independence that the Trotskyists have been first in line in the defence of the Cuban revolution against imperialism, despite our independent line against the petty-bourgeois clique which prevents the accession of the workers themselves to power in Cuba.

This same defence requires an implacable struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy, which can be carried out only by Trotskyists. Thus the alliance of slanderers and liars which has been made.

Castro prepares a right-turn of enormous danger.

The repatriation of relatives of exiles to the United States, the disarming of the Militia [a decision which Castro has never explained publicly] and the virtual silence of the Cuban press and radio on the brutal imperialist intervention in Santo Domingo as well as the 'disappearance' of Ché Guevara—all these things show clearly, indubitably, the direction in which the Cuban national revolutionary movement is being steered.

As if to emphasise this trend and tacitly warn imperialism, Castro has utilised the cut in Chinese trade and assistance to sharply separate himself from China and identify himself with his Soviet masters.

Nationally and internation-

ally Castro is pursuing his right-wing policy—a policy aimed against the interests of the Cuban and international working class.

For this reason it is necessary to re-state our attitude on the activities of all those who, in the name of Marxism, consciously and deliberately evaded or covered up the bureaucratic, anti-socialist policy of Castro and his clique.

Foremost amongst these stands the United Secretariat and its principal defender, the Socialist Workers' Party of America.

For five years these people apologised for all the reactionary features of the Castro regime.

While defending the Cuban revolution from imperialism they exceeded all the traditional norms of Trotskyism in supporting Castro and accepted, without cavil or condition, the anti-Marxist ideas and practices of this Cuban petty-bourgeois dictator.

When supporters of the Posadas tendency were arrested by Castro's secret police and jailed for the crime of publishing Trotsky's works, these revisionists did not raise a protest. On the contrary, they kept silent and even alleged that the main task was not to exaggerate the jailings of left-wing oppositionists but to defend and amplify the concrete achievements of the Cuban revolution!

When these opponents were released—after signing capitulatory pledges to Castro—Hansen, by no means the most obnoxious of these apologists, attributed the release to 'the struggle . . . by the Fidelista leadership against bureaucratism', and that 'a miscarriage of justice in relation to the Posa-

das group was rectified'. The same method, it might be said, was employed by Khrushchev to 'explain' the excesses of the Stalin regime.

This kind of 'support', far from advancing the interests of the working class and poor peasants, in fact, as recent events prove, leads to the strengthening of bureaucracy and capitalism in Cuba.

If yesterday Hansen was unable to defend the Posadas group from victimisation, then today he is equally incapable of defending Ché Guevara. This is the best measure of the bankruptcy of the revisionist-apologists of the United Secretariat.

In the Socialist Workers' Party the same process of degeneration became so malignant that any criticism of Castro became automatically a cause for expulsion or disciplinary action.

In the Cuban missiles crisis of November 1962, Cannon, one-time leader of the SWP, completely endorsed the counter-revolutionary policy of the Kremlin with the statement: 'What else could Khrushchev do?'

Even the attack launched by Castro has failed to move or excite these philistines in the leadership of the Socialist Workers' Party.

The most important conclusion they draw from the Tri-

continental Conference is not the attack against Trotskyism, but the fact that all the delegates endorsed the idea of 'armed rebellion'.

Yes, alas, even the Emperor of Ethiopia who, periodically hangs en masse Somali peasants who trespass into Ethiopia, is not opposed to 'armed rebellion'. Nor is Gamal Nasser who imprisons Communists and tortures political opponents in the United Arab Republic.

Nor, for that matter, is General Nasution, butcher of half a million Indonesian workers and peasants. He too, believes in 'armed rebellion' in Malaysia—but not in Indonesia!

In the name of 'armed rebellion' all manner of crimes are being committed against the working class. But the greatest blow struck by the SWP and its mentor in Paris—is the abandonment of the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International and the repudiation of the idea of the Bolshevik party and the revolutionary international.

'Armed rebellion' which is not led by a Marxist working class party must lead inevitably (as Algeria has demonstrated already) to counter-revolutionary coups and severe repression of the trade union and labour movement. In fact the prospect for such struggles is

military-police dictatorship and not socialism. Either the dictatorship of the capitalist class or dictatorship of the working class. There is no middle path—nor will there ever be.

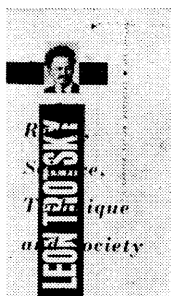
Revolutions and counter-revolutions mercilessly unmask every form of charlatanry in the workers' movement. The United Secretariat and the SWP cannot escape this inexorable law.

All those who mistakenly support these opportunist charlatans must take heed from this latest attack by Castro and turn decisively away from revisionism towards the International committee: the only leadership that fights imperialism and Stalinism uncompromisingly.

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International Committee of the Fourth International, February 13, 1966.



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