

# LABOUR REVIEW

EDITORS: TOM KEMP, CLIFF SLAUGHTER  
186A Clapham High Street, London S.W. 4

VOLUME 7  
Number

1

Spring 1962

# France



# Cuba



# Lenin

TWO SHILLINGS



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# 1) France: the Permanent Crisis

OVER the past 30 years France has reflected in extreme form all the problems of capitalist decay. In no country has the question of power been posed so openly and so often, with a ruling class, on many occasions, divided and discredited. In no country have the betrayals of Social Democracy and Stalinism been so blatant and caused so much weakening and division in the working class. Indeed, but for these betrayals, the Algerian people would not have had to suffer its seven-year agony and de Gaulle would not have come to power.

Because the working class has not been permitted to seize its historic opportunities, the bourgeoisie has been able to cope with some of its more pressing problems. The decrepit and archaic structure of French capitalism, further crippled by the war, has been refurbished over the past decade and has experienced a phase of feverish growth. Expansion has not been even; it has been accompanied by severe strains, and deep fissures have appeared within the ranks of the propertied classes. Parliamentary government became increasingly unable to reconcile these conflicting interests and ward off the threat from the working class. The appeal to the strong man and the strong state inevitably followed.

The downfall of the Fourth Republic, though precipitated by the crisis of colonial rule in Algeria, thus had wider and deeper causes. Indeed, the settlement of the Algerian question in a manner favourable to French capital was only one of de Gaulle's tasks. He also had to provide capitalism in France with a strong and stable administrative framework and re-establish unity within the bureaucracy and officer corps. He was well adapted by personality and background for this task. Indeed,

for over a decade he had presented the bourgeoisie with an alternative to parliamentary democracy. He was only called in when every other formula was exhausted; the resort to bonapartism revealed in itself the depth of the crisis of confidence within the ruling class.

Since his investiture in June 1958, de Gaulle has balanced between the various distinct forces, and attempted, in his own way, to provide a firm political and social basis for the main sections of French monopoly capital. He has ruled with the help of faceless political executives, dependent on the police and army, and through the referendum, the press conference and the television speech. His strength has rested in his aloofness. While not needing to crush the working-class movement, or abandon the forms of legality, he has concentrated decision-making in his own hands no less than any other dictator. Nonetheless his success has been limited. The differences within the bourgeoisie were too sharp to be exorcised by his methods alone. He has had to face a series of threats from the extreme right based on the very forces in Algeria which brought him to power. The army, police and administration have been riddled with bitter opponents of his policy or mere time-servers. Indeed he could not have continued to rule without the passivity of the working class, ensured by the treachery and impotence of its leaders, who have made themselves scarcely disguised supports of his regime.

The settlement in Algeria represents the first real fruit of de Gaulle's policy. Here again a compromise has been necessary. He sought first to defeat the nationalist army militarily. Then he looked in vain for uncommitted Muslim leaders with

whom he could establish a puppet Algerian state. Finally, after protracted negotiations, he has played on the military and social weaknesses of the FLN leaders, securing important concessions for French capital while conceding the forms of independence. The deal represents a sell-out by the FLN more abject than any similar arrangement made by a bourgeois nationalist movement. It ties the new state to French purse-strings and makes impossible



**De Gaulle:**  
Bonapartist resort of  
the French ruling  
class.

the carrying out of agrarian reform and expropriation of colonialist property, without which the material needs of the impoverished Algerian masses cannot be met. At the same time, concessions have had to be made which undermine the privileged status of the European petty bourgeoisie and working class in Algeria. Manipulated by de Gaulle, the army and the extreme right opponents of the regime, this million-strong poor white mass, shot through with racist hatred, embittered and enraged, has gone over unequivocally to the OAS. Clearly de Gaulle cannot permit this challenge to go unanswered. He will have to go through with the settlement or re-open the struggle with the nationalist movement. To go through with the settlement means to defeat the OAS. Yet the OAS, led by the army dissidents, backed by some die-hard sections of French business and enjoying the sympathy, if not open support, of many right-wing politicians, differs from de Gaulle about methods, not about aims. Its members have shown their ability as strong-arm men: just the material for the praetorian guard of a future fascist movement—indeed, their co-operation may be sought by de Gaulle himself if the class struggle sharpens in France.

For there can be no mistake. The main struggle in these years has not been to win peace in Algeria, nor has it been a struggle in which all 'good Frenchmen'—bosses and workers together—lined up against the fascist menace now represented by the OAS. That is the cry of the Stalinists, repeated by the other 'lefts' who yearn for the small comforts of 'Popular Frontism' and fear an open struggle involving the intervention of the working class, with the issue of power squarely posed. The threat from the OAS is bound up with the existence of the

bonapartist regime; it cannot be met by shamefaced support for de Gaulle.

Through the years since May 1958 the French working class has been suffering from a past heavy with betrayal and with the burden of Stalinist misleadership, with its deliberate confusion of the main issue. Yet the working class has shown great resilience and immense reserves of solidarity and combativity. Its actions have shown that it would respond, at the right time, to correct policies and leadership. The spontaneous rallying to the funeral of the victims of police brutality in the demonstration of February 13, 1962, gave new signs of strength and purpose. In the subsequent weeks the Communist Party bent all its efforts to holding these forces in leash and preventing them from leading on to an open collision with Gaullism. It held the ring clear so that de Gaulle could make his deal with the FLN and begin to settle accounts, in his own way, with the OAS. While it was rendering bonapartism these inestimable services it took steps, in the true Stalinist tradition, to prevent any section of the industrial proletariat from rallying around an alternative leadership. In a number of Paris factories a slanderous attack was launched upon well-known Trotskyist militants and efforts were made, by organized physical attacks, to prevent the distribution of literature which explained to the workers the treacherous role which the Stalinist leaders were playing. These events, small as their scale may have been, show the sensitivity of the Communist Party to any attempt to build an alternative leadership in the factories, because it is



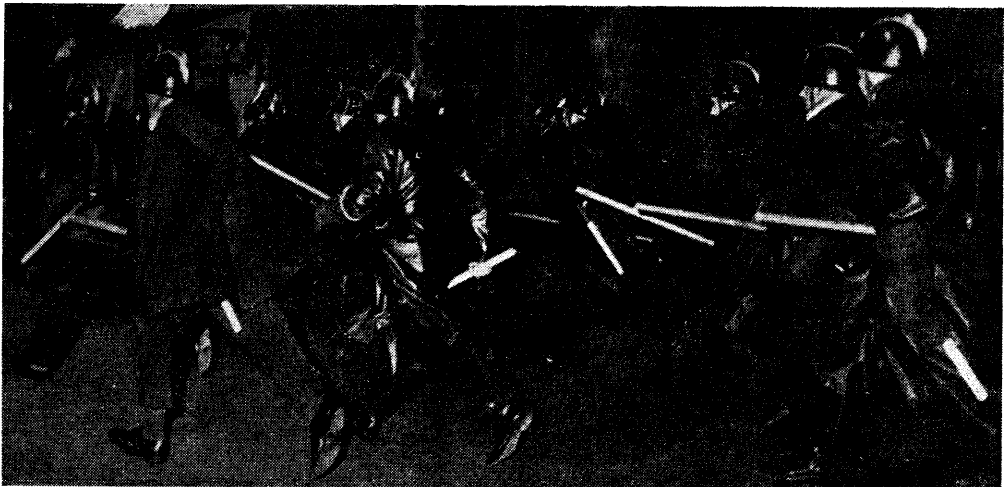
**French workers have shown immense reserves of solidarity and combativity.**

clear that many militant workers are beginning to see through Stalinist methods and are seeking a new way forward.

Great class battles lie ahead in France. Nothing fundamental has been solved by the Algerian settlement, which, in any case, may not endure very long. The situation in a number of the now 'independent' former colonies which are still preserves of French capital could blow up at any time. The benign dictatorship of de Gaulle hinges on the life of the ageing and tired denizen of the Elysée palace. No reliable successor is in sight. Nor has de Gaulle yet fulfilled all the tasks imposed by the crisis of French society. Violence and open civil war are inherent in the situation. Rapid growth has not solved the problems of French capitalism. Workers are increasingly feeling the pressure in speed-up, attacks on workshop practice and pressures on real wages.

The full force of the Common Market has still to be felt: French industry, in many fields, will have to face competition which it has never known before. Attempts to domesticate the trade unions are being stepped up. The resort to fascism can by no means be excluded. The Fifth Republic offers every scope for transformation into naked dictatorship which will crush out working-class and democratic liberties, now still tenuously maintained. Those on the left who are trying to live with its institutions are in for a rude awakening. Between the bourgeoisie and the working class there lies no third way. French history has taught that lesson time and again. The bourgeoisie has also learned; it has learned that next time, if there is to be an open showdown, it must defeat the working-class movement thoroughly. It is in that perspective that the new leadership in France must be constructed.

**Between the  
bourgeoisie  
and the  
workers, no  
third way:  
A rude  
awakening for  
accommodationists.**



## 2) A Caricature of Marxism

THE most important question posed by the Socialist Labour League's Resolution on International Prospects (printed in our last issue) was that of the construction of independent revolutionary parties based on the theories of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. The resolution opens a discussion on those trends in the world labour movement which claim to represent Marxism. Stalinism is in an insoluble crisis; out of the discussion provoked by this crisis will come many of the forces for building a new leadership. But the greatest and most direct responsibility rests upon those who have already broken with Stalinism and formed parties or groups based on the Fourth International, founded by Trotsky and his followers. Unless the Fourth International can develop Marxist theory and show itself capable of real leadership of the revolutionary forces, reaction can be consolidated for a long period, despite the strength of the mass movement in many parts of the world, particularly in the countries dominated by American and European imperialism.

The English edition of the journal *Fourth International* (Winter 1961-62 issue) should be carefully studied as an example of how to *abdicate* these responsibilities instead of grasping them. (This journal is circulated by a group called the International Secretariat of the Fourth International, under the leadership of Michael Pablo. LABOUR REVIEW has previously explained its long-standing opposition to the revisionism of this grouping.)

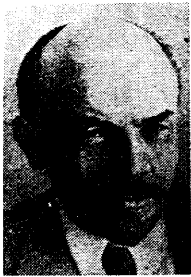
In the current issue Michael Pablo addresses two open letters from prison in Amsterdam (he was jailed for collaborating with the FLN [Liberation Front] in Algeria)—one to Fidel Castro, the other to the FLN. Now a move to the left in the class struggle, a great participation by the masses in

revolutionary struggles, such as we have seen in Africa, Asia and now Latin America since the Second World War, can produce opposite results among Marxists. Above all it is necessary to give this initiative of the masses its independent leadership; to give it theory and consciousness of the role of the masses. This means the creation of revolutionary parties based on the *working class* as the only consistently revolutionary force, able to weld together with it the peasants and lower middle class into a massive army to overthrow imperialism, Marxist parties, steeled in long years of independent struggle and developing Marxist theory, as Lenin did, in their own conditions but as part of an international Marxist leadership, are the only force capable of carrying through the necessary struggle.

The alternative to this revolutionary perspective is *opportunism*. So long as the theoretical questions are not clarified and there is no struggle against the existing petty bourgeois ideologists and leaders of national movements then these leaders are helped in retaining the confidence of the masses and are allowed to consolidate their strength for the day when they turn *against* the workers and peasants. Support for the struggle of colonial peoples against imperialism has always been made the excuse for sacrificing the independence of the working class, and of the revolutionary party, to 'unity' and support for leaders who are 'national' figures but in fact represent alien classes, classes which want to halt the revolution at a stage when they have their own interests satisfied. This has been a consistent pattern in the 'newly independent nations'.

Marxists have always insisted upon support for national-revolutionary struggles against imperialism, as earlier against feudalism and its remnants. Insofar

as other classes, including the national bourgeoisie, conduct a struggle against the enemy, then they receive unconditional support. Particularly in the metropolitan countries such as Britain and France it is the first task of revolutionaries to mobilize working-class action in support of the national revolution in colonial countries. But it has always been a principle of Marxist strategy and tactics that the non-proletarian classes must inevitably stop half way. Once their own class aims are satisfied, and no more can be achieved without releasing a storm of worker and peasant struggle which threatens to go forward to attacks on bourgeois property, they turn against the lower classes. Marx's 'Address of the Central Council to the Communist League' drew from this the conclusion that above all the working class must organize *its own* organs of power and armed forces. So far as the middle classes were concerned, the workers must 'March separately, strike together'. Lenin is said to have known this 'Address' by heart, and it informed his whole leadership in 1917. Trotsky's theory of Permanent



**Lenin:**  
Knew Marx' 'Address' to the  
Communist League by heart.

Revolution expands this idea first for Tsarist Russia, then for China and the backward countries of modern imperialism. The viability of independent bourgeois states in countries dominated by imperialism grows smaller and smaller. On the one hand the power and concentration of modern finance-capital, and on the other the intensity of the mass struggle against imperialism, throw these middle strata all the more quickly into the arms of imperialism. Imperialist politicians and international capital have recognized the need to work through such leaders, whose special qualification is their ability to represent themselves as national revolutionaries.

Pablo's letters to Castro and the FLN fall into the category of *sacrifice* of the revolutionary party, of revolutionary theory, and thereby of the political independence of the working class, to the petty bourgeois leaderships of the national movement. These letters are at best appeals to Castro and the FLN leaders to 'make a choice' between socialism and falling back into the grip of imperialism. Historical materialism has been forgotten: no trace is here of the need for definite *classes* to forge their

own political theory and organization. A change of mind by those in power can change the course of history. Pablo even gives this some 'theoretical' backing. Discussing the 'pan-African' consequences of Algerian independence, he says:

'In Black Africa, in particular, we are dealing with a primitive peasant society [?], still profoundly marked by tribal economy and customs, yet revolutionised [?] by the penetration of imperialist merchant capital [?!]. The native peasant and bourgeois merchant strata are generally limited and much less important than the analogous strata of the Middle East, Tunisia and Morocco. In these countries which have secured their independence, the state apparatus is in many cases still embryonic, and their social destiny [?] remains undetermined. *Everything still depends on the use to which these politically limited élites will put the state power.* (My emphasis.—Ed.) Their social basis, plus the revolutionary impulses from the present international context impel these élites towards a nationalised, planned, socialist economy. On the other hand, the native bourgeois or potentially bourgeois elements plus imperialism impel them towards a comprador capitalist regime in the image of the evolution of the Latin American nations since their independence.'

Insofar as any meaning can be extracted from this passage, it lays historical responsibility upon the élite which has state power. So with Pablo's remarks to the FLN leadership and Castro. He does not call for the Algerian workers and peasants to build their own workers' parties and organs of power. These classes 'have realised their consciousness in a profoundly agitated and revolutionary national and international context'. So it is *the FLN* who is asked 'What are you intending to make of the victory of the Revolution?' The FLN is *recommended* to turn itself into a party: 'It is *high time* that the FLN *transformed itself* effectively into a party political structure with a *better* articulated and *more clearly defined* political and social programme.' (My emphasis.—Ed.) This will be a simple business, requiring only a proclamation *à la* Castro. After all, the FLN is already 'a formidable politico-military organization of the masses, with international connections'.

Pablo 'warns' against the compromising type of national leadership that has won out in Tunisia, and asks the FLN leaders 'Will you be tempted to fall into such a trap?' It is only a question of making up their minds *not* to, you see!

Despite these warnings, however, the actual 'advice' given to the FLN for a settlement with France is the most extreme example of Pablo's descent into opportunism. Briefly, he asks them to

accept the idea of collaboration with French monopoly capitalism. Any other course would lead to 'social tensions'. This 'aid' from French capitalism would of course 'exclude political ties, misdirected investment and scandalous profits' and in addition it would 'guarantee full employment to the workers of the ex-metropolitan countries!' How far Pablo has gone! 'The Algerian state should promote the exploitation of the Sahara with the nearby African states and also with French capital under a specific form which would preserve Algerian sovereignty in the Algerian Sahara and the preponderant control of the Algerian state.' French capital will offer long term loans to help Algerian development. '*This is a possible formula of association, reciprocally advantageous between ex-metropolitan and liberated countries.*' (My emphasis.—Ed.) We need only add: this is precisely the 'formula of association' with bourgeois national leaders which the imperialists desire!

Elsewhere in this issue of LABOUR REVIEW there appears an analysis of the revolution in Cuba. The situation there is changing so rapidly that theories and attitudes are quickly put to the test of practice. For Algeria, Pablo abandoned completely the perspective of Permanent Revolution. For Cuba, he talks about it already being confirmed, saying that he and his organization 'welcome each successive stage of the Cuban permanent socialist revolution'.

For an analysis of the needs of the working class to win power itself under the leadership of a Marxist Party, Pablo substitutes adulation of Castro, to whom he writes, 'I am convinced we are in the presence of a revolutionary socialist leadership of a high intellectual and practical quality . . . you belong in fact to the line of great revolutionaries who have known how to discover, assimilate, interpret and develop Marxism in a creative and profoundly revolutionary manner, such as Rosa Luxembourg, Lenin, Leon Trotsky, and in certain fields, the revolutionary Yugoslavs and Chinese.' All sense of proportion, let alone Marxist analysis, is thrown aside. The same basic revisions occur here as in the letter to the FLN. As for the future in Cuba, 'now it is a question of codifying in some sense (?) the structure of the new apparatus of the revolutionary state'. For this a party will be necessary. 'It seems that you are already engaged in the creation of a Single Party whose framework is naturally founded upon the historic movement of the 26th July and the Revolutionary Army which has achieved victory.' The reader is referred to the 'Postscript' of the article on Cuba in this issue for information on the true character of this 'Single Party of the Revolution'.

Since this postscript was written internal differences

have revealed themselves. Castro has attacked Escalante, old Communist Party leader in charge of organizing the new party, for flooding the whole State apparatus with Communist Party nominees regardless of their ability and without consulting the members of the various bodies and organizations. Bureaucratic methods have led to rigidity and abuses, according to Castro. Castro has also spoken out



**Escalante:**

In trouble with Castro and Moscow.

against the falsification of Cuban history by some officials in the new regime. Perhaps Pablo will see this as confirmation of his faith in Castro, and since *Pravda* has now supported Castro's attack (*The Guardian*, April 12, 1962) we can no doubt expect a new 'open letter', this time to Khrushchev. What the outcome of the internal differences will be nobody knows, but what is certain is this: if the problems of bureaucracy faced in an isolated and backward country are not solved by the working class itself, led by a Marxist party, and in conjunction with the spread of the revolution to other countries, the revolution is in grave danger.

Pablo says of course that this Party will only consolidate the revolution if it conforms to some norm of a democratic Marxist party. All sorts of dangers will flow from any bureaucratization. But these warnings make no sense: they are addressed entirely to Castro, to the existing leadership in the State (the 'élite'). If Castro takes Pablo's advice then 'the Party will not involve itself with a bureaucratically deformed state'. As for the economic future, Pablo's forecasts look a little sick in view of recent events. He commends Castro's policy of steadily advancing living standards 'in place of sacrificing the present active generation to a future generation' and dilates upon the prospect of 'harmonious relations between heavy industry, light industry, and agriculture', and tells Castro: 'The fact that you seem to have understood completely (full marks again!) the importance of such an economic development for Cuba, can prove . . . of vital importance . . .'

The introduction of stringent rationing, and the serious consequences of a poor sugar crop, since Pablo wrote his letter, have exposed the flimsiness of his analysis. Rodriguez, Stalinist boss of the



Agricultural Reform Institute, has warned the Cuban people that for a time they must face hardships similar to the more backward countries of Latin America, and that those who expected Russia and the 'socialist' countries to keep Cuba going were living in a dream world. It is clear that the classic problems of 'Socialism in One Country' are faced by the working class of Cuba, and the *independent* political organization of the working class, together with a revolutionary turn to the masses in Latin America and the workers of the advanced countries, is the only correct general line.

We cannot dwell on the comic passages in Pablo's letter. Some of them are almost unbelievable. For example, he predicts great social reforms, including 'improving even the quality of the human material by an intelligent eugenics\* more and more voluntarily accepted'. (And before the voluntary type? !)

Pablo does not forget to tell us that he kept up revolutionary traditions by using his stay in prison to read books. 'I have been personally struck by the Constitution of Athens by Aristotle which I read in prison and which bears many profoundly democratic traits . . . Certainly this democracy was based on slavery and was limited to a number of free citizens. But what is important is that it functioned for this number . . . Particularly distinctive in this arrangement was the institution of the People's Assembly, the very large number of citizens participating in the City Council and the Tribunals, and the allocation of most of the administrative functions among the citizens by the drawing of lots [!]'. Is comment necessary? As an example of the Marxist method and its polar opposition to this type of analogy, the early chapters of Lenin's book *State and Revolution* are sufficient.

Instead of concrete analysis, abstract comparison. Instead of strategy, crass optimism ('The achievements so far of the Cuban Revolution, the quality and critical spirit of its leadership permit a more than reasonable optimism on the plane of the struggle against bureaucracy and bureaucratisation.') Instead of a perspective of work by revolutionaries among the working class, the abdication of responsibility to those leaders who receive the spontaneous support of the masses at the first stage of the national revolt, e.g., to Castro: 'It is in this also that your supreme responsibility lies before history.' 'Upon the leadership of this revolution rests the immense historical task of making the wisest use of these opportunities, for the benefit of the Cuban and the world masses.'

For all the talk about struggle against bureaucracy, we have here the bureaucratic mentality par excellence. Instead of the day-to-day struggle of the working class to build its own leadership, enabling the masses to determine consciously the course of history, we have calls on Castro and others to 'make the wisest use' of opportunities 'for the benefit' of the masses.

Pablo's letters are not the letters of a Trotskyist as we understand it *in any sense*. They are nothing but a comically unsuccessful attempt to cover up a theoretical and practical capitulation to the existing leadership of the national movements. This surrender has its counterpart in the Pabloites' attitude to the Social Democratic and Stalinist bureaucrats in the other parts of the world. We hope that Marxists everywhere will participate in discussion on these vital questions. The columns of *LABOUR REVIEW* are open for this purpose, as part of the discussion on 'The World Prospect for Socialism', published in our last issue.

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\*Eugenics: Science of the production of fine offspring.  
(Concise Oxford Dictionary)

## Revolution in Latin America

# CUBA

## The First Stage

By F. Rodriguez

This article is translated from the Autumn 1961 issue of *La Vérité*, a French Trotskyist magazine. Even though it was written in April 1961, with a brief postscript added in December, we think it will provide readers of LABOUR REVIEW with important background material and an original analysis of events in Cuba. Discussion is invited.

LATIN America has ceased, for the European petty bourgeois, to be the exotic stage on which the 'pronunciamientos' of comic opera colonels follow one after the other. With Cuba, it has entered the framework of world politics. From *L'Express* to *Le Figaro* are found comments on the deeds and gestures of these 'bearded ones'; some go into ecstasies over the enthusiasm of these people in sombreros who gesticulate in a country where it is so hot, others become indignant about these thoughtless, excitable people who unloose 'communism' in a continent hitherto so well protected. Europe, through television, the cinema and the press, does not lack pictures of Cuba, but it is terribly lacking in ideas. The 'left' press shrinks neither from pompous articles nor discreet advice. However, militant workers need to know what is going on in Cuba. What is the prize in the struggle which makes this little country one of the centres of interest of



world politics? What is it all about? Where have we got to? These are the questions which, with the information at our disposal, we will try to answer, though not confining ourselves within the borders of Cuba only. For, quite definitely, it concerns the whole of Latin America.

### LATIN AMERICA, A SEMI-COLONIAL CONTINENT

Formerly Spanish and Portuguese colonies, these South American nations gained their formal political independence in the 19th century, only to fall under the domination of European imperialism; then, between 1914 and 1930, under North American imperialism, which made men curse the name 'Yankee' from the Tropic of Cancer to Tierra del Fuego.

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In all these different countries, it is large North American companies which hold the sources of power, of raw materials and foodstuffs, which today provide 35 per cent of the value of United States imports. Moreover, the rule, in Latin America, is the exploitation of one single resource in each country; it is no distortion of the truth to state that Venezuela is the country of oil, Bolivia of tin, Costa Rica of coffee, and Cuba of sugar. The continent also serves as a market for the manufactured goods of North American industry; exports to Latin America make up 27 per cent of the US total. Imperialism has been able, behind the screen of the Monroe Doctrine, to keep this special preserve for itself. The slogan 'America for the Americans' has had, for half a century, a very precise meaning: 'America for the Yankees'. No foreign firm is able to compete with the American monopoly; in the plantation countries, American firms have even gone as far as to buy or have assigned to them all the best land, even leaving it uncultivated, in order to control production and prevent a fall in prices.

North American imperialism has achieved this exclusive domination without much difficulty because of its weight in the economy of each country. In Cuba, 49 per cent of the sugar-cane plantations used to belong to Yankee firms; in Guatemala, the United Fruit Company, Frutera, has for a long time been the sole owner; with its plantations and its uncultivated land, its railways, its roads and its ports, not to mention its own administration and police. It is not surprising if, in these circumstances, such powerful firms take on the appearance of giants beside the feeble Latin American states such as have developed from the profound social crisis unleashed on the continent by imperialist penetration.

### THE SOCIAL CRISIS PRODUCED BY THE PENETRATION OF IMPERIALISM

With the exception of Argentina, the River Plate countries and the south of Brazil, the Latin American countries at the beginning of the 19th century presented the aspect of old colonial structures: the peasant mass, almost exclusively made up of Indians, reduced to a semi-servile state, was under the domination of a feudal class of Spanish and Portuguese conquerors. Then, while overthrowing the equilibrium of traditional society by its conquest of markets, imperialist penetration strengthened the dominant classes of the old social structure. Faced with a pauperised peasantry capable of impressive revolts, imperialism chose to support the feudal classes by sharing its profits with them to keep them in their role of policemen for the defence of its own interests. It is significant that

Mexico, when it was invaded by foreign capital, experienced a rebirth of agrarian feudalism, with large estates to which the peasants found themselves attached like serfs. There were, at that time, 300 haciendas of more than 10,000 hectares, 11 of more than 100,000 and seven of more than 250,000.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, as in all other semi-colonial countries, imperialist penetration brought about in Latin America a development opposite to that resulting from the growth of capitalism in Europe. Not only were the feudalists and moneylenders its only serious political allies, kept in place by imperialism which made them its 'local agents', but at the same time the ruin of the artisans in the towns and villages through competition from the products of US large-scale industry, forced the mass of the native population to turn to the land for subsistence. With the exodus of the rural population to the towns experienced in Western Europe in the same period, we find contrasted the 'return to the land' in the colonies and semi-colonies,<sup>2</sup> a return to the land which obviously meant increasing misery for those already there and for the newcomers.

In other words, imperialist penetration, far from creating the conditions for industrialisation, made it extremely difficult. On the one hand, the maintenance of high rates of interest and profit from exploitation of land deflected native capital from all other forms of investment, notably industrial. On the other hand, the lowering of the standard of living brought about by the destruction of the traditional supplementary means of livelihood, hindered the formation of a real market which could absorb the products of a native industry. There was no need at all for a 'colonial pact' to prevent industrialisation: for 190 million inhabitants there were in 1955 less than 6 million radio sets, and a little more than 4 million cinema seats. Brazil, which every year produces a quarter as many pairs of shoes as it has inhabitants, is desperately seeking a market in which to dispose of them.

Further, in Latin America, there will be no industrialization except in certain definite circumstances. In order to exploit their riches more efficiently, the imperialists sometimes themselves create the necessary industries: thus in Cuba the American Sugar Co. used to control 60 per cent of the refineries. The two world wars, upsetting the pattern of trade and creating favourable conditions, have made possible a real wave of industrialization, leaving intact, however, the general characteristics and relations between the main economic activities.

1. Victor Alba: *Le mouvement ouvrier en Amerique Latine*. (1 hectare equals 2½ acres.)

2. Recalling the remark of an English governor, quoted by Marx, 'The bones of the weavers whiten the plains of India,' Fritz Sternberg in *Le Conflit du Siècle*, gives a detailed study of this type of evolution.

## SOCIAL CLASSES

The social structure of semi-colonial countries is, then, very different from that which has grown up in the advanced countries. It is difficult to distinguish in this structure a genuine bourgeoisie. The dominant class has nothing in common with the entrepreneur class which in England, France and Germany launched the attack on the old world. It has arisen simultaneously from the old feudal ruling classes and imperialism. A thousand family and personal ties unite the group of men who hold at the same time vast estates and mining shares, petroleum shares, ranches and plantations; their incomes are derived as much from the surplus value produced by the proletariat as from the super-exploitation of the peasantry or the interest on loans at high interest. This oligarchy bears different names according to the country, but everywhere it shows this fundamental characteristic of the intertwined interests of landlordism and imperialism. While the European bourgeoisie strove to shatter the feudal state structure, the Latin American oligarchy cannot take even a single step towards agrarian reform, preparatory to establishing a market, without undermining one of the pillars of its own power, its landed property.

## THE PEASANTS

The great mass of the population lives on the land. In Cuba, the census of 1953 showed that, out of a population of 1,972,266 persons, 221,939 (i.e., about 11 per cent) were owners or occupiers of some sort, and 568,799 (i.e., 28.8 per cent) were agricultural workers. The great majority of the 100,000 owners were very small, hardly managing to scrape a living from their land: owners of less than 100 hectares constituted 92 per cent of the total number, and occupied only 30 per cent of the acreage. As for the various tenants, they are made up of 46,000 genuine tenants enjoying written or oral leases, 7,000 sub-tenants with a still less secure legal position, 33,000 sharecroppers and 13,700 'precarious ones', 'taxable and subject to labour at will' (legal description of the mediaeval serf), since they enjoy no right to security of tenure and are compelled to make the payments demanded by the all-powerful owner . . . If one adds that the Cuban farm worker was unemployed on the average 185 days per year, one can better grasp the reasons for the poverty in Cuba, that wonderful island where, in 1953, 9.1 per cent of rural houses had electricity, and 2.3 per cent running water indoors, 54 per cent having no sort of w.c. and 85 per cent no water supply, neither tap, nor tank, nor well.

UNO statistics also give very significant examples

of what the bourgeois economists call the 'under-development' of the Latin American countries. The consumption of milk and meat is from 6 to 10 times less than in the US. Bolivia, with its 1,200 calories per day per person, compared with the vital minimum of 2,800, is the most tragic example of undernourishment, permanent and general. For the continent as a whole the expectation of life is 30 years, comparable to that of India, while that of France is over 60 years. Tuberculosis is responsible for a third of all deaths, 75 per cent are illiterate, and there are 180 teachers to 100,000 inhabitants; according to the country, 20 to 25 per cent of the children of school age attend school, 25 to 30 per cent of the inhabitants normally go barefoot, and 30 per cent wear home-made clothes. A calculation based on the 'average annual income' shows that 20 to 30 days work are necessary to buy a garment which in the US would need two and a half days' wages.

## THE WORKERS

The number of wage-workers has continuously increased, both absolutely and relatively. The working class today comprises from 10 to 25 per cent of the total population in the different countries. It is far from being homogeneous: its lower strata remain closely linked to the peasantry. The unemployed worker returns to the land. The manual worker moves from the mine or the factory to the plantation and back again. But if the regimented serfs in the latifundia have no reason to envy the miserable slaves of the tin mines, the oil and metal workers, with the social advantages which they have conquered, eight-hour day, holidays, social security, appear as a privileged layer with a standard of living far above that of the poverty-stricken masses. It has taken years of savage political struggle for the Bolivian miners to stop fighting the other workers' unions, to build a united front between them and the starving mass of Indians, a 'reserve army of labour' and potential strike-breakers.

The problem of the unity of workers and peasants against the oligarchy which exploits them is the number one problem. It is sometimes made easier by local circumstances; in Cuba, the 47,000 workers in the sugar refining industry are distributed through a number of ultra-modern factories, each in contact with the agricultural workers on sugar plantations who have, more than once, learned from them proletarian methods of organization and struggle.

## THE MIDDLE CLASSES

Imperialist penetration has destroyed the new-born rural and urban petty bourgeoisie, but it has at

the same time created new middle layers, small traders, technicians, clerks, functionaries, and professional men. This 'middle class by training', with the students as its nursery, constitutes the most unstable element in this society both in its actions and political attitudes. Like the essentially bourgeois layers to which they are linked, the members of this class are strictly dependent on the oligarchy, having in common with the manufacturers and big traders a social position which prevents them from getting to the top of the social pyramid, monopolized by the oligarchy, while they frequently know themselves to be superior in ability and 'merit'. They try to get more money for their services, and particularly for the part they play in the exploitation of the workers. It is usually the army which provides them with the instrument to gain a political fortune, and also a fortune in the ordinary sense.

But in recent decades, their aspirations have been expressed through 'mass' parties of a new type: the Venezuelan Democratic Action of Betancourt, the Bolivian National Revolutionary Movement of Paz Estensoro, the Argentine Justicialist Party of Juan Peron. In the struggle to obtain from imperialism a fair share of the profits, they are forced to rally the workers and peasants behind them, and they have succeeded on various occasions. Peron was the hero of the *peons*, agricultural workers for whom he won the right to wages, and the leader of the *descamisados* (urban poor), mostly of working-class origin. Paz Estensoro is today in the course of reconstructing the Bolivian bourgeois state, thanks to the support of the labour bureaucracy, around the trade union central committee led by the miners' leader, Juan Lechin. Individually, a number of people of middle-class origin have turned towards the urban or rural proletariat without trying to make use of them for their class interests. In the most backward sections, it is often the intellectuals who have become militants who have organized trade unions in a 'professional' manner and founded the first socialist groups. More frequently, recently, it is student demonstrations which have been the signals for revolutions and for the entry of the workers and peasants into the struggle.

## THE STATE

For Latin America, like the rest of the world, has entered the era of revolutions: that of 'pronunciamientos' is largely over. The different clans of the oligarchy had for a long time been able to settle accounts with each other by recourse to military coups d'etat or by faked elections. But with the awakening of the workers' movement and the appearance of peasants' movements, the 'colonels'

have been compelled to be more prudent if they are to avoid playing the part of the sorcerer's apprentice. Several experiences have effectively shown that the workers can seize the opportunity of an armed struggle between their class enemies to intervene on their own account. Also there has in the recent period been a tendency to the stiffening of repression with the ferocious dictatorships of Trujillo and Batista, supported by the dollar. The brutality of such regimes is the measure of their social parasitism, of their congenital feebleness and the fear which the masses inspire in them. It took the Cuban revolution to make known in Europe the police methods of Batista, the torture, mutilations and castrations. Such methods, small change in these countries, constitute the last defence of these oligarchic regimes threatened by the revolution.

## THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION

It was Mexico which experienced the first real Latin American revolution. The organized workers' movement appeared under the influence of immigrants in the last quarter of the 19th century; the original 'Workers' Congress' was replaced by secret revolutionary unions, inspired by the example of the American IWW.<sup>3</sup> It was not until 1912, after years of bitter struggle, that the first Mexican workers' centre, the Casa del Obrero Mundial, was formed.

In the year 1910, a part of the army rose, with the support of a section of the middle class and the national bourgeoisie, against the dictatorship of the oligarch Porfirio Diaz. The peasant discontent which expressed itself in this war soon took revolutionary forms with the guerilla campaigns carried on in the north under Pancho Villa and in the south under Zapata. Villa and Zapata actually took over Mexico City in 1915. It is a remarkable fact that these rough peasants who had destroyed the fortified chateaux of the landowners, massacred the proprietors in a merciless struggle and collectively worked the land which they had seized, respected out of discipline a capital which any other army would have pillaged. This did not, however, prevent the Casa del Obrero Mundial from signing what amounted to a treaty of alliance with the liberal nationalist general Carranza; the 'red battalions' controlled by the workers' leaders fought alongside the army against Zapata's guerrillas.

Thus the workers' movement allied itself with the growing bourgeoisie and the oligarchy, who put aside their internal struggles, making common cause to crush the peasants' revolution. Its leaders hoped

3. Industrial Workers of the World, a mass syndicalist organization.



Seated: Generals Urbina, Villa, Zapata and Fierro at the presidential palace, Mexico City, during the civil war.

to get this policy accepted by their followers, they made use of the genuine distrust of the developed worker for the rural savage, the hostility of the anti-clerical town-dweller toward the local priests who played so great a role in the ranks of Zapata's army. It required, however, many years and much cunning to defeat the peasants' revolt. It was not until 1919 that Zapata was killed, and then by treachery. In 1923 Villa was assassinated, after having kept in suspense the American troops commanded by General Pershing. On the morrow of victory, the working-class ally was put in his place: the 'red battalions' were dissolved.

But the revolution had shaken Mexico too deeply and for too long a time for a pure and simple restoration to be possible. In the south, Zapata's men had destroyed the great feudal holdings. The oligarchy had to make concessions, to pay the price necessary to prevent the alliance between the workers and peasants. Education was secularized. The workers obtained equal pay between Mexicans and foreigners (their oldest demand), the eight-hour day, the right of association and the right to strike. The Constitution of 1917 outlined an agrarian reform, the first on the continent. It envisaged the expropriation and distribution of large estates over 500 hectares. However, once arms had been laid down, this reform was realised only very slowly. Out of 196 million hectares, 3 millions, that is, 1.8 per cent, were distributed to 300,000 families by 1926; 9 million, that is, 5.4 per cent, to 900,000 families by 1934, 17 years after the Constitution. In 1940, at the end of Cardenas' government, 18 million hectares, that is, 11 per cent, had been distributed to 1,800,000 families.

Under the Presidency of General Lazaro Cardenas, Mexico was in fact profoundly transformed, pursuing in a way the revolution begun in 1910. The General, 100 per cent Indian, a remarkable politician, wished to 'modernise' Mexico. In realising this bourgeois-democratic revolution, he enjoyed the constant support of the Mexican working class movement, entirely controlled at this time by the

Communist Party. Utilising the Zapatist tradition, and to prevent the division of the land from ending in the rapid ruin of the small peasants receiving it, he pushed co-operatives—the *ejidos*, the name of the old peasant communities—enabling the common use of equipment and government credits.

The Cardenas government also undertook the struggle to bring under its law the great American firms. It encouraged and protected the formation of unions against the oil companies, which were real states within the state, with their own police and their own armies on their concessions, enabling them to refuse to submit to Mexican law on social and tax matters. The obstinacy of the big firms who would give way neither to strikes, even violent ones, nor to the decisions of the Mexican courts, finally forced Cardenas to decree, in 1938, the nationalization of 18 American and British firms belonging to the oil cartel. But it was only thanks to the world war that Mexico finally obtained recognition of this measure: the oil cartel, in the wider interests of capitalism, resigned itself to accepting the indemnity offered by the Mexican government, rather than risk keeping a dangerous revolutionary agitation on the southern borders of the US in war time. Besides, by the wish of the bourgeois leaders, the revolution stopped there: the Mexican bourgeoisie profited by the war to consolidate its conquests and to industrialise.

The Mexican revolution after 30 years of continuous but unequal development, has ended in a profound transformation: henceforth there exists a solid industrial and rural bourgeoisie. Mexican society in many ways recalls that of the developed countries. Foreign capital has to disguise itself as 'national capital'. The working class, organized in unions of a North American type, divested of all Stalinist influence, and tightly linked to the state apparatus, does not question the regime which it has helped to build. However, imperialism maintains firm positions, both economic and political, and conquers more of them; there exist in the north great estates of more than 200,000 hectares, and the poor peasant suffers from land hunger. After an interruption of 19 years, the agrarian reform was started again in 1959. Thus the Cuban Revolution awoke many echoes in the fatherland of the first Latin American peasant revolution. The Mexican possessing classes realised that the revolution had merely been interrupted: the essential problems remain.

## THE GUATEMALAN REVOLUTION

Guatemala, four times the size of Belgium, with 3½ million inhabitants, is at the other end of the scale of development of Latin American states. In 1900

an official Chilean mission searched in vain for a single school. In fact, this country was one great estate, the Frutera. Up to 1943, under successive dictators, Guatemala did not even have law: its courts knew only the death penalty, applied equally to oppositionists and robbers. It was with a student demonstration, turned into an insurrection by the intervention of some of the military, that, in 1944, the Guatemalan revolution began. For 10 years, under President Arevalo, this little country experienced the strongest revolutionary wave in Latin America since the time of Zapata. The workers organized, fought, won their demands. The peasants formed unions, the agricultural workers fought for their wages. Uncultivated land was occupied and cultivated, great estates threatened and attacked. Arevalo's successor, Colonel Arbenz, promulgated an agrarian reform. It envisaged the expropriation of uncultivated land—with compensation—and its redistribution among poor or landless peasants. But the domains of the United Fruit Co., adjudged to be of 'industrial use', were not touched. It was a matter, as Alba wrote, 'of a measure of sound capitalist economics, with the object of giving the land without hands to the hands without land.'

However, the imperialists became anxious. The words 'agrarian reform' are in themselves revolutionary. The victorious struggle of the workers and peasants overflowed the frontiers of Guatemala, and the contagion might be dangerous. The American ambassador, Patterson, uttered threats, and his successor, Peurifroy, organized armed counter-revolutionary action, with the practical support of the Dominican dictator Trujillo.

Against the intervention which was being openly prepared, Colonel Arbenz looked for arms. All the capitalist countries refused them. He bought them in Czechoslovakia: the USSR supported him, and in exchange he leant on the Guatemalan Communists whose party developed rapidly, gaining many key positions, notably at the head of bodies applying the agrarian reform. Workers and peasants rallied to defend their revolution, formed militias, demanded arms. Arbenz gave them none: to resist the mercenaries of imperialism he relied on the national army, increased the officers' pay, multiplied his reassuring declarations on the maintenance of order and defence of property. When the Washington-recruited commando of Colonel Castillo Armas, equipped with modern weapons including airplanes, crossed the frontier, the army cadres rallied to it.

Arbenz was deposed by the chief of staff whom he himself had just nominated. The disarmed workers' and peasants' militias were crushed, machine-gunned without being able to defend themselves. A ferocious repression descended on the country: the world Stalinist press produced a

barrage of protests against American intervention: even Jacques Soustelle, in France, joined in. But there was total silence on the ignominious conditions of the fall of the Arbenz regime. The world working-class movement identified the revolution with the president-colonel who had delivered it unarmed, with the complicity of the Communist Party, to the soldiers of imperialism. Only a vanguard minority in Latin America gave consideration to the lesson.

## FIDEL CASTRO

It was Cuba's turn to take over, with the movement inspired by the action of a young man, universally known today, Fidel Castro. Born in 1926, son of a large landowner, educated by the Jesuits, Fidel Castro Ruz studied law at the same time as carrying on a precocious political activity. His marriage made him the son-in-law and brother-in-law of ministers of the dictator Batista. President of the Havana law students, he first of all fought in the ranks of the petty-bourgeois democratic party, the Authentic Party. At this stage his only objective



Fidel Castro

was to obtain free elections in Cuba and to fight against the corruption of successive governments and of the administration. However, several electoral setbacks and Batista's preventive *coup d'etat* of 1952 convinced him that the cards were stacked against such methods and that violence was necessary. He then decided on a terrorist act in the tradition of the Russian Socialist-Revolutionaries. The attack on the Moncada barracks, July 26, carefully prepared for a year, led by a group of 200 students and intellectuals which he had won over and organized, would, he thought, procure him arms and radio transmitters with which to call all Cubans to rise against the dictatorship.

But the adventure ended badly: those who were not killed in the attack were captured and tortured



and beaten. Thanks both to the delay in his arrest and to the intervention of his family and the clergy, Fidel Castro was not tortured, but tried. A brilliant orator, and speaking simultaneously as accused and advocate, he reached an audience outside the walls of the court room. The Minister of the Interior had to declare that he was ill in order to prevent his having a public trial. Behind closed doors, in the presence of the judges, of six journalists sworn to secrecy, and of a hundred armed guards, he made his celebrated five-hour indictment in the guise of a defence: 'History will absolve me and condemn Batista.' On October 16, 1953, he was condemned to 16 years in prison. But from that day on he was known throughout Cuba.

He came out of the Pines prison 2 years later, amnestied with the others on May 15, 1955, having studied and reflected. After July he took refuge in Mexico; then, in the US, he made the rounds of the 'enlightened' capitalists and rich émigrés, collecting 50,000 dollars. He then prepared a new attack. Under the direction of Alberto Bayo, an ex-service officer of the Spanish war, 80 Cuban émigrés received guerrilla training. The most brilliant pupil was to become Fidel Castro's indispensable lieutenant: he was the Argentinian Ernesto 'Che' Guevara, a doctor, who had fled from the Peronist police, reached Guatemala, lived through the revolution and been present at its final defeat. On December 5, 1956, having announced from the rooftops the attack he was preparing, Castro disembarked in Cuba with 82 companions, lightly armed. Storm and bombardment had forced them to abandon their heavy arms, ammunition and food supplies. They set out to reach the mountains, but only 12 men reached the Sierra Maestra, 12 men armed with machine guns and with no contact with the local population, but who were soon to put to flight the 50,000 perfectly armed and equipped men of Batista.

## THE CONQUEST

Scarcely two years later the 12 men had carried it off: their army, the 'Rebel Army', entered the capital. These men, thenceforward known as the 'barbudos' (bearded ones), had leant much and changed quite a bit. Guevara witnesses: 'The men who arrived in Havana after two years of bitter struggle were not the same from an ideological point of view as those who took part in the first phase of the struggle. Their distrust of the peasant had been transformed into affection and respect for his qualities. Their complete ignorance of rural life had been transformed into a knowledge of the poor peasantry.'

Fidel Castro and his companions would have been

condemned to death if they had not been able to win over to themselves the peasants of the mountains, and then those of the entire Cuban countryside. They achieved this by struggling with them against their enemies, the great landowners, and the private and state police, offering them a programme of agrarian reform and a start in realising it in the 'liberated territories'. As Huberman and Sweezy wrote: 'At first the peasants merely hid the rebels: before many months had passed the peasants as a class supported the rebels: from passive assistants they developed into active participants.' The students, technicians, lawyers, doctors, teachers who fled from the towns, organized the mass of poor peasants and agricultural workers whose confidence had been won by the first rebels. It can be stated that the 'Rebel Army' was a genuine peasant army. Those who led it, certainly, like Castro himself, were sons of middle-class families or of members of the oligarchy, in general intellectuals or politicians. But one must note, with Theodore Draper, correspondent of the *Reporter*, that 'while the intellectuals and Bolshevik revolutionaries were closely linked politically and psychologically to the Russian working class, the intellectuals and revolutionary politicians who follow Castro identify themselves emotionally with the peasants (*guajiros*)'. Let us also note that it is the peasant detachments whose role the leaders praise most willingly. After the victory, Castro hailed them as 'the flower and the heart of the most effective and the most solid sections of our revolutionary army.'

The peasants supported the Rebel Army because they had confidence in it and in its programme. Other social groups, in the towns, supported it only because, very soon, its victory began to appear to them the quickest and most effective way of getting rid of Batista: here the programme was of less importance than the immediate effect. The workers took part in the resistance, in workshops, in print shops and in secret arsenals. The middle classes, the bourgeoisie and even some of the oligarchs financed the civil resistance of the Castro partisans, often from fear, certainly, but also from an opportunistic attitude to a growing movement, and because the Batista dictatorship, as it lost ground, became continuously more brutal, more ferocious. The Cuban Communist Party, almost alone, stood aside for many months. True, it no longer carried on a policy of support for Batista, but thought that 'to overthrow Batista, it is necessary to have a coalition which goes beyond the bounds of anti-imperialism and includes of necessity forces which are not anti-imperialist'.<sup>4</sup> Criticising Castro, who did not bring into the leadership of his movement the bourgeois

4. See Rodriguez, one of the leaders of the Communist Party, quoted by Julien, *La Revolution Cubaine*.

and oligarchs who provided money, the Communist Party took no part in the general strike called by Castro's rebels on April 9, 1958, but joined the movement some months later when it became obvious that the days of the Batista regime were numbered, and that no one but Castro was capable of taking power.

The last campaign, in the last months of 1958, was a triumphal march: Batista's army crumbled, the rats left the sinking ship, the more prudent rallied round with enthusiasm. One after the other the towns gave themselves up to the 'bearded ones'. By January 1, 1959, they were masters of the country.

### THE FIRST STAGE

For many observers, it was hardly necessary to expect any very new developments. Castro the victor, master of the state apparatus, proceeded to organize elections from which he emerged completely victorious to put into operation a few minor reforms, finally to make imperialism pay a price—a limited one—for its support of Batista. Fundamentally nothing was changed: Batista himself had begun his career with popular support. However, right from the beginning, the American press unleashed a violent campaign against the new regime on the question of the anti-Batista repression. Must one see in this, as many commentators have done, a sign of the complete hostility of imperialism, made apparent from the very beginning? This repression, which affected only the principal torturers and those responsible for them, displayed, to the eyes of imperialism, the disquieting characteristics of taking place in broad daylight, real mass meetings accompanying the sessions of the military tribunals: 20,000 people were present, and not in silence, at the televised trial of Commandant Sosa Blanco in the Palace of Sport in Havana. It seems, however, that the press campaign was above all intended to frighten the Cuban leaders and to recall them to a more correct idea of their state of dependence. At the same time, six great American firms extended to the new government a credit of 1½ million dollars: for its part, United Fruit, mistress of the 'green empire' which had just overthrown the Arbenz regime, advanced 500,000 dollars to that of Castro.<sup>5</sup>

In fact, the measures which followed the victory of the rebels were not in any way really revolutionary. Fidel, commandant of the Rebel Army, kept apart from the government. It was a moderate bourgeois, a judge with a reputation for integrity, Manuel Urrutia, who became the new president of the republic. Miro Cardona,<sup>6</sup> prime minister, and

Agramonte, Minister of Foreign Affairs, were liberal politicians, and the Minister of the Interior was the owner of a large daily. As Huberman and Sweezy wrote, 'The face which the Cuban Revolution first showed to the world was that of a quite respectable middle-class regime.'

Certainly, there were important measures. The army, some 50,000 officers, NCOs and men, was officially dissolved; this was certainly a powerful blow against the forces of the oligarchy which, in all Latin America countries, has always used the army as a sort of super-police for repressive purposes. A few days later the police force was dissolved, and this, too, was an important measure. It must, however, be emphasized that the new Cuban leaders hardly had any choice, and that the legislation only confirmed the actual state of affairs. Army and police had, in fact, been completely dissolved in the preceding weeks by the action of the masses: to make them rise from their ashes would have been an impossible task in view of the hatred of them which had grown up under the Batista regime. However, the navy, less involved in repressive tasks, and which at the last minute had rallied to Castro, was not touched. Besides, the new government immediately began to rebuild a police force with men enjoying the confidence of Castro: thus he created a specialised repressive body, on the bourgeois model like the preceding one, but benefiting from the 'revolutionary' prestige of those who led and composed it. In addition, the Castro army, which preserved officially its name of 'Rebel Army' was ostensibly used for peaceful tasks, public works, building of roads and houses. The barracks were changed into educational centres.

The rest of the state apparatus remained intact. High officials were naturally purged when they were too compromised with the dictatorship. But the structure of the administrative machine was preserved, although a closer supervision resulted in some prosecutions for corruption, which gave it a 'new look'. The wave of purification did not even touch the administration of justice, and an apologist for the Castro regime as zealous as George Soria is compelled to write: 'As for the judiciary, whose attitude during the black years had hardly been a model of courage, it was strangely enough completely spared: the magistrates who had given judgment under Batista continued to give it under Castro.'<sup>7</sup> The whole of the diplomatic personnel remained at its posts, which made counter-revolutionary activities much easier for quite a long time. Finally, the powerful newspapers, controlled by foreign enterprises and the oligarchy, continued to appear freely.

Consequently, there was nothing in the initial measures of the new regime, not even the 5 per cent

5. Julien, *op cit.*, p. 107.

6. Today he is one of the leaders of the Cuban exiles in the US.

7. G. Soria, *Cuba a l'heure Castro*, p. 178.

reduction in rents which contributed enormously to its popularity, which transgressed the framework of bourgeois democracy. Further, in April 1959, Fidel Castro went to the US in the hope of obtaining comprehensive support, and everywhere he made reassuring declarations. Thus, on April 25: 'We are against all forms of dictatorship . . . That is why we are against communism . . . The communist state with its totalitarian conception, sacrifices the rights of man . . . Our revolution applies democratic principles to carry out a humanist revolution.'

Was the Cuban revolution, thus begun under the banner of the petty-bourgeois, anti-capitalist and anti-communist ideology of the 'humanist revolution', blessed by the church (since the almoner of Catholic Action saw in it the victory of the 'Christian spirit' over 'pagan materialism') going to undertake a limited 'modernization', canalizing the masses and reassuring imperialism? Many still thought so. But very soon its rhythm was going to quicken. The first internal measures brought counterthrusts from imperialism, and each blow given by the US led to further acceleration. There can be no doubt as to the way in which the Cuban leaders were directed along this road, since in 1959 they did not conceal the moderate character of their programme. 'Che' Guevara, very honestly, acknowledges the empirical nature of the Castro policy, which allowed itself to be led by events and to abandon its earlier programme, when he writes: 'With the exception of our agrarian reform, which the people of Cuba wanted and set on foot themselves, all our revolutionary measures were a direct reaction against the aggression of the monopolists . . . US pressure on Cuba made necessary a radicalisation of the revolution.'

## AGRARIAN REFORM

Agrarian reform was definitely the first objective of the peasant army which had carried on the guerrilla war against Batista. The National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA), created to carry out the reform and to organise the powerful peasant movement which had developed in the course of the struggle, was, in fact, the child of the army, which already, without waiting for legal sanction, had started on 'reform' by attacking the large estates of the leaders and friends of the regime, as well as others, designated for the occasion 'properties badly acquired'.

The law itself was promulgated on May 17, 1959. One cannot but agree with the analysis of it made by René Dumont, who judged it 'lacking in all revolutionary character, often recalling the Italian laws of 1949/50, inspired by the Christian Demo-

crats'.<sup>8</sup> It provided for the expropriation of all estates of more than 400 hectares, allowing for the preservation of areas of 'progressive' cultivation up to 1,340 hectares, of sugar plantations and those whose yield was 50 per cent above the national average. All rented lands, in whatever form, were also expropriated. All the owners were in principle compensated. The distributed lands were inalienable.

The reality was quite different. The armed peasants, as we have seen, had not always waited for the passing of the law. Even after, they kept to its provisions only very approximately. The peasant army, either directly or through the INRA, speeded things up, did not burden itself with formalities or precise measures, and, quite rightly, regarded all the large estates as 'properties badly acquired'.

Moreover, one article of the law provided for the sequestration of any land whatever if it were 'in the interests of agriculture': this article was often to serve to cover up actions taken outside of the law, or the wide interpretation of a document which those appointed to apply it had not read. The result was that in two years, three-fifths of the agricultural land of the island had passed under the control of INRA and that less than a tenth of the expropriated land had been paid for in money or in goods.

In addition, consequent upon an article of the law imposed, it is said, by Fidel Castro himself, against the advice of the experts, INRA had as its object the organization, 'wherever it is possible', of collective cultivation of the expropriated land. The old traditions of the agricultural worker 'first of all a proletarian, demanding higher wages and better conditions of employment, but not always wanting to cultivate on his own account',<sup>9</sup> as they were expressed in the Zapata movement, were here joined to the economic problem which had also faced Cardenas, that of avoiding the division of the land into holdings so small as to be prejudicial to productivity and the final return to vast estates. Thus INRA organizes cooperatives which enjoy State aid in capital and equipment, which are administered by its appointed officials and which compete among themselves. For they are integrated into a market which obeys the laws of capitalism and also coexists with independent peasants, about one-third, owning less than 400 hectares and consequently untouched by the reform. The nature of the regime is not in the least changed by 'collectivisation' which introduces cooperatives into a capitalist framework, opening up a perspective of the enrichment of some and the ruin of others through competition. Moreover it does not solve the problem of the agricultural workers who did not receive land during the reform.

8. Article on the Agrarian Reform, *Esprit*, April 1961.

9. Dumont, *op cit.*, p. 592.

## Book Reviews

### *That devil Wilkes*

**Wilkes and Liberty: A Social Study of 1763 to 1774.** By George Rudé. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 30s.

'In 1779, Saunders Welsh, the London Magistrate, told Dr. Johnson that more than twenty such persons died every week of starvation in the streets and garrets of London.' (*The Life of Samuel Johnson*, p. 410. Quoted, George Rudé, p. 9, n.2)

Eighteenth century London was grim. Commercial expansion had swollen its population, and while farming techniques had made considerable progress, life for a large urban population that had become dependent on wages as a source of life was precarious. When bread sold at 1½d. a lb. the poor could live. When it rose to 2d. a lb. they starved. 1768 was one of those bad years. It was also the year in which John Wilkes' agitation for civil liberty evoked its first significant response from the London working class.

Before Wilkes, 18th century politicians, pamphleteers and journalists had stirred up feeling against the King's government. Such agitations rarely reached far below the level of the urban rich and the rural gentry. John Wilkes was the first politician of his century to mobilize mass support in a political fight for the preservation and extension of democratic freedoms.

George III came to the throne in 1760. A group of Whigs centring round the Earl of Chatham opposed his foreign policy as insufficiently belligerent. The peace that brought the Seven Years War to an end in 1763 had not brought those gains in the West Indies at the expense of Spain which a powerful group of City merchants regarded as their due. Wilkes was a political agitator, running the *North Briton* as an organ

of this group. The King and his Chief Minister, stung by the paper's violence, retaliated with a series of arrests under a General Warrant. Wilkes challenged the legality of General Warrants. His success earned him widespread support and made it harder for future governments to quell opposition through arbitrary arrests.

When Wilkes was elected MP for the County of Middlesex, in 1768, a House of Commons subservient to the King's orders decided to expel him. When Parliament reassembled, a huge demonstration gathered at St. George's Fields. Soldiers opened fire, 11 lives were lost and many more were wounded. Wilkes denounced the massacre and the King panicked. He insisted on Wilkes' expulsion from the House—'a measure whereon almost my Crown depends'—and the House complied by 219 votes to 137.

The high price of wheat touched off an unprecedented movement for wage increases among a section of the London proletariat. 'In mid-May,' George Rudé points out, 'as the price of wheat at the London Corn Exchange rose to 56s. a quarter, the authorities were faced with almost simultaneous demands and demonstrations by sailors, watermen, coopers, hatters, glass-grinders, sawyers, tailors, weavers and coal-heavers.' Their demands for higher wages to meet the higher cost of living were on occasions accompanied by cries of 'Wilkes for ever'. Wilkes became associated in some of their minds with the cause of the poor against the rich. This, almost despite himself, was Wilkes' stupendous achievement. This gave Wilkes his lasting niche in English history.

Not all the economic struggles of the wage earners developed into a political fight against the King's government. The Newcastle sailors declared for 'Wilkes and Liberty'.

The London sailors did not. Neither did the tailors, watermen, glass-grinders, hatters and sawyers, whose economic demands never became linked with a political movement. On the other hand, Whig politicians, Yorkshire gentry and London merchants had their grievances against the government. Wilkes, whether they liked it or not, was their most effective spokesman. Here and there, notably among the weavers and coal-heavers, Wilkes touched off a response from sections of the proletariat not normally affected by political agitations. That was all. But it was enough.

The main value of Rudé's book lies in its detailed analysis of the social basis of the Wilkite movement during the years 1868 to 1874 when the agitation was at its height. From this it became clear for the first time how sporadic and partial was Wilkes' support among the proletariat. His most sustained backing came, as might have been expected, from the London petty-bourgeoisie—coal merchants, warehousemen, brewers, haberdashers, linen drapers, saddlers and the like. Outside the City it was the freeholders of Middlesex—a handful of gentry, much greater numbers of tradesmen and manufacturers and, overwhelmingly, the lesser freeholders ranging from 40/- to £10 a year—whose consistent loyalty seated Wilkes triumphantly in the Commons at the General Election of 1774.

Rudé's book is a useful contribution to social history. It deepens our understanding of the immediate antecedents of the British Labour Movement. In insight and originality it does not compare with his great study of *The Crowd in the French Revolution*. In the last chapter the author tries to explain why this extraordinary movement developed when it did, why modern British radicalism

was born in the 1760s. Neither Rude's nor anyone else's explanation is completely satisfactory. The great Whig families resented a brash new monarch who challenged their control over Parliament. The merchants demanded a more effectively aggressive foreign policy. Small freeholders suffered from enclosing landlords and turnpike trusts. Small craftsmen, traders and wage earners went bankrupt and hungry during the high food prices of 1768 and of the early 1770s. To lead these disparate elements and to weld them temporarily into an effective political force came a richly born, dissolute, improvident, sardonic and immensely audacious democrat, who combined organising drive with great shrewdness. Persecuted relentlessly by the King and his ministers, Wilkes stood firm and fought back. In doing so he became a symbol for the oppressed and discontented. Under his leadership the bourgeois-democratic revolution was carried a step further. The proletariat was waiting in the wings. Wilkes called them on to the stage and put the fear of God, or of the Devil, into the King and his Establishment. **H.C.**

## Anti-Marx

**The Tyranny of Concepts.** By Gordon Leff. Merlin Press, 21s.

**Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx.** By Robert Tucker, Cambridge University Press, 35s.

**Marxism: an Historical and Critical Study.** By George Lichtheim, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 40s.

Marxist theory, which is born of struggle, thrives on polemic and criticism. Well-informed opposition should be welcome to Marxists as helping to clarify our understanding and indicating which aspects of our ideas need further investigation in the light of modern developments.

It is indicative of the theoretical backwardness of the British Labour movement that intelligent anti-Marxism in this country is a rarity. H. B. Acton's *The Illusion of the Epoch* remains an isolated example of the species.

Dr. Leff's book covers some of the same ground as Professor Acton in his attack on dialectical and historical

materialism. Like Acton, he omits almost all examination of Marx's analysis of capitalism, which was, after all, his major work.

Like other Marx-critics, Leff takes Marxism to pieces before dealing with it. He separates dialectics from materialism, both from history and all three from politics. The dismembered corpse is then examined and its death certificate signed.

The section on historical materialism is the best part of the book and has some interesting observations on Popper. Throughout the book, however, Leff implicitly identifies Marxism with its Stalinist caricature.

As with so many writers influenced by the 'New Left', Dr. Leff suffers from the English disease of eclecticism. Breaking with some of the symptoms of Stalinism, these people replace Marxist theory with a thin ideological porridge in which are mixed lumps of psycho-analysis, logical positivism, and something called 'humanism'.

Professor Tucker's very American work is a more serious affair. It is mainly devoted to an account of the early writings of Marx. The chapter on the 1844 manuscripts would alone make the book worthwhile.

The ideas of the young Marx are related to Hegelianism via Feuerbach and to developed Marxist theory. However, the whole is fitted into an interpretative framework prefabricated by Tucker.

Marxism is viewed as 'a system of religious myth'. This appears to mean that the concepts of both Hegel and Marx refer to individual psychology. 'The dialectic may therefore be described as the psychodynamics of Hegelian spirit in its quest to know itself as the Absolute. The conception is fundamentally psychological.' (p. 58)

This interpretation of Hegel is one-sided and distorted, but when applied to Marxism it is nonsensical. Marxism can only be understood as the theory of the proletarian revolutionary vanguard. It subsumes the truth of bourgeois culture and science and puts it at the disposal of the working class.

Mr. Lichtheim, coming from the background of German and Austrian Social-Democracy, knows that Marxist theory cannot be detached from the Marxist movement. He describes the development of Marxism from

German idealism to the theory of the international socialist movement.

However, he also finds a contradiction in Marxism between its theory and its practice. In this he leans heavily on some formulations of Engels in which he discerns the origins of opportunism. In the chapter on Kautsky he tries to show how this contradiction developed.

Lichtheim finds the origins of Stalinism in the concept and practice of the Leninist party. His view of the USSR and its satellites as a new sort of exploiting society is directly linked with his allegation of the inadequacy of Marxism. He is also convinced that 'the emergence of new forms of dependence and control, both under corporate control and state-controlled planning, has "sublated" the historic antagonism of capital and labour . . .' (p. 392)

Lichtheim's book attacks Marxism in the most 'useful' way of the three under review. His approach forces us to see the unity of Marx's philosophy, politics and sociology.

By denying the adequacy of Marxism to deal with modern problems (without of course indicating an alternative), Lichtheim shows that this world view only makes sense today as the principle of an international socialist party. Once Lenin's conception of a disciplined party and Trotsky's analysis of the Soviet Union are rejected, Marxism falls to pieces.

Let us hope that we shall see more books in English attacking Marxism, but let us also hope our opponents will be better armed than hitherto.

**C.S.**

**Revisionism: Essays on the History of Marxist Ideas.** Labedz, L. (editor), George Allen and Unwin, 35s.

There is a school of anti-Marxist thought which considers that the best antidote to Marxism is the administration, as it were, of homeopathic doses to the educated public in the capitalist countries. The Congress for Cultural Freedom is one of the main exponents of this method and this work is one of its products. Instead of trying to kill Marxism by a conspiracy of silence, reputable scholars are now enlisted to discuss aspects of Marxist thought with sometimes pedantic seriousness, as though it were part of a rather lifeless, but

still interesting, intellectual game.

The misconceptions about Marx's own thought and the catalogue of his errors have now hardened into a system which is transmitted through the ranks of the academic world without the need for most of those who join in the discussion to make a first-hand examination of their source. Much of what passes for the views of Marx is in fact distilled from the programmatic pronouncements of sundry 'Marxists', from pre-1914 German Social Democrats to post-22nd Congress Khrushchevites. After all, it is open to any one to claim the title of 'Marxist' and the struggle for Marx's legacy was going on even before his death.

In this light the very use of the term 'revisionism' carries a fatal note of ambiguity. Rightly given, at first, to those who departed from the essence of Marx's teaching from within an avowedly Marxist movement and constructed an alien theory and guide to action, the term, in recent years, has been used, as in this volume, with ever-greater lack of discrimination. The enlightened anti-Marxists of *Survey* and other journals sponsored by the Congress of Cultural Freedom grant the Stalinists and Khrushchevites the signal honour of representing the mainstream of Marxism, as they themselves claim. While opposites meet on this point, then, all other trends deriving from Marxism are broadly labelled as 'revisionist', regardless of whether they have any connection with the Revisionism of Bernstein, or indeed, whether, apart from deviation from the prevailing Kremlin orthodoxy, they have any other common basis than a self-made claim to derive from Marx.

In fact, what we have in this volume is a number of academic studies, partly historical and descriptive, partly theoretical, dealing with past and contemporary thinkers in the idiom of Marxism. Some are too brief to be much more than factual outlines which give little real insight into the theoretical contribution made by their subjects. For example, the section on Trotsky deals only with the early development of the theory of Permanent Revolution, and not very competently at that. Professor North writes interestingly enough about the career of M. N. Roy, but only when he was a trusted

executant of Comintern policy; if he made his own contribution to that policy his theoretical work was scarcely profound. The sections on Georg Lukacs and Ernst Bloch are more strictly studies of ideas and it is the middle section of the book which most adequately lives up to its sub-title. Since Stalinism is in this book equated with orthodoxy, however, the point needs to be made that it was, in fact, the most banal and devastating of all the revisionisms, which cast a blight on most efforts made to develop Marxist methodology and theory in line with changing objective conditions and the advances of human thought. The stifling of all the original thinking offered by men like Lukacs and the reduction of 'orthodox' theorists to the role of cringing ideologists of the ruling power was profoundly anti-Marxist in purpose and method.

It was from this purported 'Marxism' that large numbers of members of the Communist Party broke inconspicuously over the years and in a wave after 1956. In fact, only the Left Opposition and its theoretical continuators worked practically, and as a movement, in the real tradition of Marx and Engels. The 'independent' Marxists—generally neglected in this work—here and there produced a work of merit. Other trends, such as the Bordigists, pursued a shadowy existence. For most intellectuals, however, the Stalinists were taken to be the genuine Marxists; the revulsion from Stalin's crimes and methods did incredible harm to the standing of Marxist thought in the capitalist world. Many of the latter-day 'revisionists' have been unable to throw off the incubus of Stalinism or to find a road back to Marxism, which they still see through the distorting glass provided by Kremlin orthodoxy. Not a self-conscious 'revision' of Marxism, but active and creative work in the line of Marx is the great need of today.

T.K.

## *Labour politics*

**Parliamentary Socialism: A Study in the Politics of Labour.** By Ralph Miliband, Allen and Unwin, 30s.

This is an important book, as was sensed by R. H. S. Crossman, once

wrongly suspected of being a left-winger, in his review in the *New Statesman*. Miliband has upset Crossman and his type by discussing Labour politics in a way which brings in the organized working class and its power, particularly in industrial action. It is a notable step forward for a book of this type to refuse to treat the 'political' and 'industrial' wings of the movement as watertight compartments. He explodes the fairy-tale that Left trends in the Labour Party since the war have been based on the 'wild men' of the Constituency Parties, opposed by the solid right-wing ranks of the trade unions. In fact, there has been a powerful left trend in the unions. It was restrained for years by reactionary leaders like Deakin, Evans, Watson and others, and still is, but the real problem for Gaitskell and the Right is in the power of this Left trend in the unions. A book like Miliband's is welcome, after the failure of the *Tribune* Left to check the Gaitskellites since Scarborough.

Miliband has made another positive contribution. Revolutionaries are usually asked to 'prove' the 'need' for any action in addition to parliamentary methods. But Miliband turns the tables by calling on the Parliamentarians to answer the charge of political bankruptcy, of having been incorporated into the capitalist system instead of fighting against it. A review of this book by Eric Hobsbawm in *New Left Review* was interesting in illustrating the inadequacy of Communist Party politics in this dilemma. Since 1951, the policy of the Communist Party has been 'the parliamentary road to socialism', and so a thoroughgoing criticism of what Lenin called 'parliamentary cretinism' is out of season.

After considering the main trends and events in the history of the Labour Party, stressing always the relation between the workers organized in the unions and the conduct of the parliamentary reformists and trade union bureaucratic leaders, Miliband seems to conclude that a workers' party can and should combine class methods of struggle, such as industrial action for political aims, with policies of 'broad alliance' such as the Popular Front, with all kinds of 'progressives'. This is a weakness in his book. Certainly Miliband's intention is the very opposite of

Woodrow Wyatt's, but there are hard objective facts about the interests of different classes in society. Would not the combination of independent class action and 'broad alliance', meet with the difficulties shown in experience in the past? Would not strikes be 'discouraged' on the grounds that all sorts of 'progressive' allies might be offended? The facts of such combinations amount to the political **subordination** of the working class to those classes who are tied to capitalism. The policies of working class action and accommodation to the 'progressives' of the other classes, in British politics yesterday and today, represent not just two 'good ideas' that can be combined, but opposite trends in the movement. One must establish its victory over the other.

This book should be seriously studied in all sections of the youth and trade union movement. A serious discussion of its theme can clarify many of the issues that will have to be settled if the British labour movement is to take its opportunities in the next few years.

**P.B.**

## *Sovietology*

**Soviet Society: A Book of Readings.** Inkeles, A., and Geiger, K. (editors). Constable, 63s.

Bulky books composed of previously published articles and extracts from books are a feature of American publishing. They serve a useful purpose in bringing together items which it would take many hours to track down even in a well-equipped library. This collection therefore has its value. Its limitations are no less obvious. It draws almost exclusively on the work of American and British 'sovietologists' of the last decade or two, with a few extracts from the Soviet press or Khrushchev's speeches thrown in to give a little local colour. There is nothing from continental sources, nor from the work of pro-Soviet writers. The work of Marxist critics of Soviet policy and practice, with the exception of Deutscher, is referred to but not represented. The general result, then, is a representative selection of scholarly work in the field from Anglo-Saxon, and conformist, sources; it would have re-

ceived the imprimatur of the State Department with no difficulty.

The present state of Soviet Studies of this kind, despite the greatly increased volume of work now being done, suffers from inevitable drawbacks. The very nature of the Stalin-Khrushchev regime prevents Soviet scholars from turning the searchlight on their own society and producing original work, or even primary data, of real worth. As a result, Western scholars, with all the prejudices and pre-suppositions of their kind, are reduced to mere compilation or exegesis—which reaches its peak in 'Kremlinology'—or to speculative hypotheses which too frequently, as in this collection, masquerade as objective scholarship. A perusal of this volume enables the student to become acquainted with some essential facts. In, for example, the articles of Kennan, Berlin or Bell he will encounter brilliance, if not profundity, and will be able to adjudge the value of work which, undoubtedly, has played a role in shaping educated public opinion, and perhaps government policy, towards the USSR.

If Soviet sociology is almost non-existent, that of the Western experts cannot transcend its own limitations and disabilities. The full appraisal of Russian social development in Marxist terms has yet to be made. One day it will be undertaken by a fresh generation of Soviet scholars freed from the shackles imposed by the present-day rulers, able to roam through the archives without challenge and in an objective spirit which even the best Western scholarship cannot aspire to.

**T.K.**

## *The tread mill*

**Education and the Working Class.** By Brian Jackson & Dennis Marsden. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 28s.

'The Grammar School', said the Headmistress, 'is concerned with manners (the girls should, for example, avoid dropping litter) and the creation of style: the public school virtues, in fact.' This old girl may have been a bit extreme, but the Grammar schools, despite the 1944 Act, are still riddled with anti-working class bias. As the Crowther Report showed, the odds are stacked

against a worker's child getting a Grammar school place. The authors of this book bring out even more startling facts.

Compared with the 1951 Census, which showed male occupations as being 74 per cent manual and 26 per cent professional or clerical a table of the occupations of the fathers of children taking the 'A' level in 'Marburton' gave almost exactly opposite figures—64 per cent professional and 36 per cent manual. (Taking girls alone, the figures were exactly reversed—74 per cent professional and 26 per cent manual.)

In fact, the educational system has a built-in class bias, and the various selection stages are **social**, not merely academic, selections. This is particularly true of Intelligence Tests which are mass produced and mass applied and which are particularly useful to bureaucracy in reducing complex human beings to figures on a scale.

The authors of this book, however, are trying to find out what happens to working-class children who get through the sieve. To some, the Grammar Schools are escape hatches to the middle class—and right nauseating specimens one or two of them are, as well. ('Oh, I never had any trouble at school. I've always been the kind of person that's—what's the word?—Establishment. I'm always the kind of person that's with the Establishment. My face always seems to be liked wherever I go.')

Others never settle down, and move from job to job. Very many become schoolteachers, not because of any real liking for the job, but because of the drift from school to College (or University) and back to school. This is itself a comment on the Education system, with its emphasis on marks, passing exams, getting certificates.

Like one eager-beaver who was interviewed: 'The way we teach, we teach for results. I want the passes, the schols, all those things. Tests all the time and scrub the teaching methods, forget about the educational side. Let me give you an instance, if a boy asks a question it might raise some interesting matters. Now, the other way you'd waste the whole period and follow up those matters. That's not our way. We've got no time for any questions or anything that leads off the syllabus. I like

teaching our A stream boys, but you should see our C stream! I don't like teaching them at all. I don't know what it can be like in the Secondary Moderns. What I want is Head of a Department in a really good school. I'd put on the pressure really hard. Really work those children, tests, tests, tests and get the results. That would establish me, wouldn't it and get me a reputation? I might slacken off, when I got established.'

The authors, like all empiricist sociologists, can only seek for solutions within the existing framework which they have accepted to start with. Thus, Messrs. Jackson and Marsden suggest partial improvements like extending Comprehensive schools and giving more information to working-class parents. They realise this is inadequate but confess that they do not know what to do.

It is really not enough to examine what is happening. We have to examine the social framework in which things happen. Education in Britain takes place within, and as part of, capitalist property relations. Its purpose is to sift out children to carry out necessary tasks in the system—either as unskilled workers, skilled workers, professional workers, cogs in the bureaucratic machine or tame intellectuals continuing and justifying the process. Education in such a framework can in general never be other than arid, mechanical, bureaucratic and soul-destroying.

To free education, we must change the property relations which dominate and determine all aspects of social life.

G.G.

### *The little man*

**The Abdication.** By Lewis Broad. Frederick Muller, 25s.

'Oh Thelma, the little man is going to be so lonely!'

'Well dear, you look after him for me while I'm away. See that he does not get into any mischief.'

With these fateful words Thelma, Viscountess Furness, signed her fate. For she returned from her trip abroad to find that she had been supplanted in the affections of the future Edward VIII. For her, there were to be no more of those 'damned weekends', as George V called them. Mrs. Simpson

had indeed 'looked after' Edward, and Thelma's future lay with Aly Khan.

But the course of true love did not run smooth. Queen Mary wrote pained letters about the family honour. Mrs. Baldwin considered that 'Mrs. Simpson had stolen the Fairy Prince'. Mr. Geoffrey Dawson moved into action. Anonymous letters appeared in **The Times**.

To those with nothing better to think about, the big question about Edward VIII is: 'Did he fall or was he pushed?' Mr. Broad considers that his offer of abdication was intended only as a bluff, to browbeat his opponents.

Unfortunately, Mr. Broad says, 'He was unable to adapt himself to play a part.' 'He could not play the politician.' 'Nature did not equip him with prudence and the qualities that make for skill-in statecraft.' In other words, he was not too bright. So out he went.

The formalities had to be gone through, of course. 'He behaved as a Great Gentleman,' declared Baldwin. 'I have lost a throne,' sighed Edward, 'but I have won the Queen of my Heart.'

And a great big 'Urg' from all of us.

C.G.

### *Age of Cromwell*

**The Century of Revolution.** By Christopher Hill, Nelsons, 25s.

It would be too easy to be disappointed with this book. We can hope that Christopher Hill will provide us with a consciously Marxist analysis of the 17th century, revealing clearly the class forces underlying the civil war and its consequences. He hasn't done this here.

But he has written a very useful book. Deep analyses of special events are most important, but a reader coming to them with no background in the basic facts of the history of a period cannot appreciate them fully or judge them critically. And learning the basic facts for oneself, without being ground through a formal course, is very difficult.

The textbook writer in history will choose and interpret 'the basic facts' to suit the prejudices of himself and the buyers of the book. For a

Marxist, reading a standard textbook can be maddening: a lot of useless rubbish envelops and distorts the solid information, the real causes of events get hardly any mention, and the most important information is usually left out. From this it is almost impossible to learn or remember anything, since the story doesn't fit together.

Christopher Hill's story at least fits together. He points up the class relationships, and he does show the real change in the positions of various sections of the bourgeois class after the Revolution (the thing that Professor Trevor-Roper claims he can never find). He also gives bits of solid example to illustrate general points (ending of Royal monopolies, break-up of guilds and many others). And, of course, he doesn't forget the 'unfree', and tries to describe their changing position. In addition, he always reminds his readers of the points where we simply don't know enough to make a judgment.

He has crammed everything into one short (and cheap) book, and so the pace is always breathless. Literature, the arts, science, ideology all get a quick look in each period; it is clear that he isn't so much at home here as in the politics and economics. The book needs to be read slowly.

'Social' interpretations are becoming fashionable in studies of 17th century history, and we can expect a lot of nonsense to come over the Third Programme. As a book to be read once and then kept for reference, **The Century of Revolution** will do a useful job in raising the general level of knowledge of the century. Perhaps then Christopher Hill or someone else will penetrate more deeply once again. J.R.

### *Different roads*

**The Break-Up of the Habsburg Empire.** By A. B. Zeman. Oxford University Press, 30s.

Austria-Hungary entered the First World War as an empire consisting of a dozen different national groups. At the end of the war, it was shattered. What brought about this collapse?

Mr. Zeman considers the decisive factor to have been the hesitancy and irresoluteness and lack of 'political



acumen' of the Austro-Hungarian government. In his view, even as late as spring 1917, decisive action might still have saved the monarchy. Similarly, some people have argued that if Nicholas II had been more 'decisive' he might have prevented the Russian Revolution. Commenting on this, Trotsky pointed out how frequently such traits were 'individual scratches made by a higher law of development'.

Russia and Austria-Hungary had more in common in 1914 than hesitant rulers. Russia was also a huge Empire of heterogeneous national composition. The important question for Marxists is: Why did the Austro-Hungarian Empire not take the same revolutionary road as Russia? It is not simply that there is a conflict, as Mr. Zeman seems to think, between a 'national' and a 'social' interpretation of history and that Austria-Hungary took the first and Russia the second road. National feelings were strong in both cases, but the Russian Marxists filled national form with social content.

What was lacking in Austria-Hungary was a revolutionary party. Austrian Social Democracy always bowed down before the ruling class, even mirroring the state apparatus by maintaining national divisions in the party and trade unions. It was only in October 1918, when the Empire was falling apart, that Otto Bauer brought forward the demand for national self-determination. Such a demand could earlier have been a revolutionary slogan against the Habsburgs. In these circumstances it was the last desperate hope for the Austro-German bourgeoisie who in fact adopted it as their programme.

Having no other alternative, the ruling class was prepared to accept the national revolution. Otto Bauer was therefore quite safe in declaring that this was 'a national and not a social revolution'. The bourgeoisie would not have given way peacefully to that—in fact they appealed to Italy (one of the powers anxious to grab as much as possible from the break-up) to occupy Vienna to put down the working class!

Mass strikes in January 1918 revealed, as Mr. Zeman points out, 'the wide gap between the leaders and the party's rank and file. The workers were by no means concerned with their bread and butter only; the strike

movement was inspired by political motives . . . The sympathy of the strikers (was) with the first socialist state in the world'.

And again: 'speakers frequently reminded the strikers that there was no need to fear the machine guns the military authorities might turn against them; the soldiers manning the guns were their comrades and shared their views. Leaflets distributed among the strikers also propagated Bolshevik ideas: the masses of Austrian workers demand peace at any price; their hopes are pinned to Lenin and Trotsky'.

The Social Democrats called off these strikes, but there were mutinies in the armed forces, hunger demonstrations and more strikes in rapid succession. Eventually the Social Democrats who, even after the collapse of the monarchy, tried to limit themselves to minor posts in the bourgeois government, were pushed into power by the workers and soldiers. There was, however, no revolutionary party, and the Social Democrats, the caretakers of capitalism, handed power back.

The lesson of the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire is that no crisis, however severe, will automatically lead to socialism. For that, a revolutionary party, armed with theory and steered in practice, is also necessary. **G.G.**

## *All in the mind*

**The Mind of Germany.** By Hans Kohn. Macmillan, 30s.

According to Mr. Kohn, Germans since the Middle Ages have been full of 'nationalism fused with the consciousness of the imperial mission'. The growth of modern science and technology, he claims, did not alter this 'social and intellectual sub-structure'. It was this, together with their 'dedicated discipline and feeling of superiority' which led the Germans to rally round Hitler, who appeared to them as the legendary figure of Frederick Barbarossa, said to be sleeping in the heart of a mountain, awaiting Germany's hour of need.

A fascination with the concepts of **Schicksal** (fate) and **Verhängnis** (doom), a refusal to recognise the 'demonic character of power', a

'longing for a Hidden Saviour', together make up a 'specific German intellectual and political heritage which made the Germans acclaim Hitler's rise to power'.

Thus Hitlerism, in Mr. Kohn's view, was not due to any contradictions within capitalism but to the imposition of modern society on pre-modern social and intellectual foundations. Similarly, the First World War was caused, not by a clash of rival imperialisms, but by 'reliance on power, a feeling of superiority and a disregard for moral factors' on the part of Germany.

In 1945, however, 'sober and responsible thinking began to assert itself' and West Germany—though not East—has returned to 'the principles of individual freedom'. Scholars have begun 'to re-evaluate modern Germany and to re-assess its principle trends in the light of reality and of universal ethical principles'. Dr. Adenauer, we are assured, is determined to re-establish 'moral and intellectual' ties with the West.

This theory that militarism and fascism were a product of the 'German mind' leaves out of account the crisis of imperialism which led to both world wars, and the deep economic crisis of German capitalism which forced the German industrialists to turn to Adolf Hitler in order to smash the German working class. It also ignores the struggles of the German working class against them. What of Karl Liebknecht's stand against the German war-credits in 1914? What about the Spartacists? What about the heroic March days?

There is no mention of the innumerable street battles between German Communists and Hitler's brownshirts; no mention of the thousands of Social-Democrats, Communists and Trotskyists who died in the concentration camps.

And there is no mention either of Dr. Adenauer's supporters in his new moral venture—many of them former Nazi industrialists, generals, judges or administrators.

To present Nazism merely as a triumph of authoritarian power (**Macht**) over spiritual depth (**Geist**), completely divorced from economic and social conflict, and moreover, to present the Adenauer regime as a reversal of this process, may fit in

well with the outlook of a professor at an American college. It is of little value to a Marxist, or to anyone who wishes to study seriously the roots of fascism or the history of Germany. **G.G.**

## Political novels

**Politics and the Novel.** By Irving Howe. A New Left Book, Stevens & Co., 21s.

In his preface Howe defines his limitations.

'This book is meant primarily as a study of the relationship between literature and ideas . . . My interest was far less in literature as a social testimony than in the literary problems of what happens to the novel when it is subjected to the pressure of politics and political stresses.'

He attempts to examine the effect of the intrusion of political ideology into the structure of the novel in a broad and ambitious survey of literature from Dostoyevsky to Koestler and Orwell. The first part of the book deals with the novelists from Stendhal to the turn of the century and does not penetrate further into the relationships between society and art more than do the conventional literary critics. Howe treats politics as a formal, rather conventional and somewhat abstract intrusion.

In his treatment of Henry James' *The Bostonians* he is taken to the theme of 'alienation' or estrangement in bourgeois society, especially in the case of women. The treatment of the themes of political literature in the 20th century centres around Malraux, Silone, Koestler and Orwell. Out of this discussion arises the reaction of the artist to Stalinism and also to revolutionary politics. Howe treats Trotsky as some kind of Bolshevik romantic and compares his *History of the Russian Revolution* with *Man's Estate* and Silone's *Fontamara* and *Bread and Wine*. Howe shares with Orwell a horror of totalitarianism and although he condemns its inhumanity denies dialectical analysis any capacity to explain these phenomena. At this point politics becomes a mystery and the literary critic wonders what he missed in his previous analysis. **T.O.**

## The second sex

**A History of Sex.** By Simone de Beauvoir, translated from the French and edited by H. M. Parshley; A Four Square Book, 3s. 6d.

This is Volume I of *Le Deuxieme Sexe*; Volume II has already been published here, entitled *The Second Sex*. It is a valuable addition to works on the Woman Problem, as the subject is considered from the standpoint of biology, psycho-analysis, history and 'myth'. Careful study should be accorded to the material which is summarised from a wide variety of writers.

Simone de Beauvoir writes from the standpoint not of Marxism but of existentialism, and is concerned with the aim of 'transcendence' for the individual reaching out always for fresh liberties. The conclusion is that men should recognise in every woman a human being, rather than a mystery, an 'object', the 'Other'. **B.H.**

## Misunderstanding?

**The Cold War—and its origins—1917-1960.** By Dr. D. F. Fleming. Allen & Unwin, £4 4s.

Doctor D. F. Fleming, the American historian, has certainly packed his 1,100 page tome with an enormous amount of useful facts and material for those of us who have to constantly use historical facts, both pre-war and post 1945, in our work.

Much of Fleming's material has been recorded elsewhere; much confirms all the Marxist analyses of situations like the Korean war, the Chinese and colonial revolutions, although Fleming would not agree with Marxist conclusions.

Fleming is a bourgeois liberal. As such, all the historical facts that he produces on Western imperialism's drive to war on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, are coloured by his political bias throughout the book. To him, the Cold War, the 1918-22 attempts to smash the Russian workers' state by armed force and all the antagonisms between the wars—are due to mistaken policies by Western capitalism. It is always a question with him 'if only they had done this and not that'

things would have turned out better; the Cold War would have been muted, Korea may not have occurred, and so on.

To 'convince' the American imperialists that a turn is necessary (according to Fleming), the historian puts much of the whole of 43 years' record straight. He therefore makes a refreshing contrast to Cold War writers who for years have poisoned American workers' minds with witch-hunt propaganda against Communism based on the most blatant lies or distortions of facts.

Fleming shows that the Russian Stalinist bureaucracy really has tried for peaceful co-existence with imperialism especially after the 'dreamers of world revolution like Trotsky' were defeated. An anguished cry throughout—'why did you not realise this?'—is the basic theme. Because of this he is very favourable to the Stalinist bureaucrat. He thinks that they would peacefully co-exist if only we would see this. At the end of the book, on 'The Future', Fleming can only put forward the rehashed clichés—more 'planned' capitalism, 'a super-United Nations community' and so on. He misses entirely that the driving force of imperialism for war is the chronic economic contradiction of a decaying system.

However, as we wrote earlier on, the wealth of historical facts contained in the book makes it a useful reference store. A few of these stand out: the smashing of the Greek workers' revolutionary movement at the end of the war by British imperialism whilst Stalin carried out faithfully his bargain with Churchill of non-interference, is recorded in detail.

The Korean war—3,000,000 killed and maimed to back up the corrupt Syngman Rhee bloody dictatorship; the role of American imperialism in this; with the UN as a tame US rubber stamp.

China—the sordid deals between American imperialism and Chiang kai-shek; arms, money to smash 'communism'—but 'democratically'—according to US millionaires. Chiang lost because he could offer nothing but oppression.

The McCarthy witch-hunt in America—the drive towards a police state—the fact that under the guise

of anti-communism this oppression is still present in America.

These, and such facts as the details of the early attempts to smash the Soviet Union and the ferocity of imperialist attacks on Russia in 1918-22, really bring out the conclusions that Fleming himself **cannot** see. Imperialism **has no choice**. Its policies derive from its need to settle accounts with this vast non-capitalist world.

It has to have expansion to exist even though the process of obtaining new areas of imperialist exploitation by war will mean non-existence. Only the working class led by revolutionary parties overthrowing imperialism completing world revolution can take humanity out of its impasse. **H.F.**

## Council of action

**The General Strike in the North East.** Pamphlet No. 22, published by the History Group of the Communist Party, 1s. 6d.

This pamphlet is an enthralling study of one area during the General Strike of 1926.

At the centre, during this struggle, was the Durham mining village of Chopwell—known as ‘Little Moscow’ for many years afterwards.

The first meetings which discussed plans for carrying on the strike in Northumberland and Durham were held at Chopwell. On Sunday, May 2 there met some 50 representatives of trade unions, co-operative societies, miners’ lodges, and Labour councillors.

During the previous months the government had been organizing its forces in preparation for the strike. The Chopwell meeting discussed this. The ‘Plan of Action’ which it adopted declared there would be ‘concentrated against the strikers . . . the whole of the civil and military institutions that are under central control; and also the civil institutions usually classed as Local Government’.

The ‘Plan of Action’ went on: ‘To

meet all this we must improvise. The improvised machinery must be simple, easy to throw up, all inclusive. All activities in each locality should be centralised in a single body to be called Council of Action, Strike Committee, Trades Council or what you will, all such bodies should be linked up and centralised in the county capital town under a body responsible for the whole region.’

It was just this improvised machinery which ran the General Strike in the area. In the Russian Revolution these types of organization were called soviets.

The pamphlet shows once again, through a study of one area, how the General Strike brought about a state of dual power in Britain. The ‘improvised machinery’ took decisions which paralysed or overrode the ruling institutions of capitalism.

The tactician who wrote the Chopwell ‘Plan of Action’, pointed to the key front in the struggle.

‘Whoever handles and transports food, that same person controls food: whoever controls food will find the “neutral” part of the population rallying to their side. Who feeds the people wins the strike! The problem of the general strike can be focussed down to one thing—the struggle for food control.’

But the trade union leaders had laid no plans for the strike. There had not even been any discussion on the provisioning of strikers with the assistance of the Co-operative Movement.

The ‘Northumberland and Durham General Council and Joint Strike Committee’ was to comment in its report—drawn up immediately after the strike—‘Had there been previously carefully worked out plans on the Trade Union side as there had been on the employers and governmental side it would have been possible to start the general strike on Friday with a complete and immediate withdrawal of labour and thereafter to issue permits under a system of strict controls.’

But the national leadership of the strike was in a state of panic. At

every point the initiative from below collided with their fears of what forces the strike could release. They refused to allow the Joint Strike Committee to issue its own bulletin to counter the misrepresentations from the BBC, the government organs and local sheets.

The contest between the initiative, and fighting capacity in the ranks and the cowardice of the trade union leaders stands out from the records from the North East.

Page Arnot, who helped plan the campaign in the area, reports that when the call for Councils of Action was to be sent from Chopwell throughout the coalfield—‘Dozens of mining lads who never attended a lodge meeting and were therefore thought to be of little account turned up the next day ready to speed throughout the two counties on bicycles and motor bykes.’ So much for those who measure by the number of regular ‘branch attenders’ the capacities of the working class to fight for socialism.

Page Arnot also reports, when checking pickets, meeting up with 125 workers—mainly young miners—most of them carrying pick shafts and guarding a moorland road into Chopwell.

At the end of the General Strike there were more workers out nationally than at the beginning. The report of the North East strike committee shows that this area was no exception.

Over a hundred years ago, George Julian Harney pointed out to the Chartist Convention that a General Strike was only useful if it served as a prelude to a revolution, that it must end either in the surrender of the workers or in a collision with the armed forces of the government.

In 1926, the capacity for carrying the struggle forward was there among the workers, in the North East and elsewhere. That was one of the things which terrified the leaders. They did not end the strike even with the surrender which Harney warned about. Theirs was a cowardly capitulation. **W.H.**

## THE 'ECONOMIC WAR' AND NATIONALIZATION

The agrarian law did not constitute a serious attack on the international financial interests of imperialism. Protests began in the US only with the non-payment of compensation. But it is the political implications of the reform which cause anxiety; the very words 'agrarian reform' have an enormous power of attraction for the millions of starving peasants throughout Latin America. The Cuban reform is dangerous above all because of the risks of contagion; and it is probably for this reason that the leaders of the US decided to call a halt on the first excuse, after having accepted agrarian reform in principle.

Batista had pillaged the Treasury, and in spite of the initial loans from large American firms, the Cuban government faced a catastrophic financial situation. This necessity explains such measures as the compulsory reduction of electricity rates, imposed up to then by American firms, the introduction of new automatic methods in the telephone service, and the 'mineral law' which imposed on firms a tax of 25 per cent of the total value of their exports of minerals. In the spring of 1960, the conflict between Cuba and the US opened the way for intervention by the USSR, which put the Cuban problem at the centre of the world rivalry between the two great powers. It was in fact to reduce the export of currency and to make wholesale economies that the Cuban government agreed to buy the oil offered by Moscow at a lower price than that of Venezuela; this was to be paid for in deliveries of sugar instead of money. The masters of the island's refineries, Texaco, Standard Oil, Shell, refused to refine the Russian oil (refining itself was carried on at a loss, so that the companies were interested in it only if it were a question of refining oil extracted by themselves, such as that from Venezuela). As in Mexico just over 20 years earlier, the government replied in the only way which would allow it to maintain its authority and to ensure the continued working of the economy: in reply to their blackmail, the government nationalized the oil companies. The US replied by cutting its sugar purchases by 700,000 tons, a heavy blow at the Cuban economy.

One thing led to another, attack provoked counter-attack, the 'economic war' got worse: capital took flight, firms closed down, and in order to keep the wheels turning, nationalizations multiplied. By the autumn, all large American undertakings, in effect all the large undertakings in Cuba, some 80 per cent of the industrial enterprises, oil, coffee, tobacco, the mines, were nationalized. The American Government put an embargo on exports to Cuba. In order to fill the gap thus created in the provision of

essential goods, up to then supplied by American industry, the Cuban leaders imported from the USSR and the people's democracies. In the year 1960, imports from the East rose to 40 per cent of the total although before the revolution they had been insignificant. The foreign trade of Cuba was profoundly changed, and with it, the political forces within the country.

## THE 'RADICALIZATION' OF THE REVOLUTION

One cannot deny that the radicalization of the Cuban regime has been partially the work of the leadership. The decision to resist imperialism compelled it to take measures which would broaden its popular support. It would be interesting to have information as to what went on at that time in the leading circles. Viewed from outside, the process was relatively simple: one after the other, the 'bearded ones' of the early days, following the petty-bourgeois politicians installed in the government in 1959, abandoned Castro: they meant to remain faithful to the 'humanist and neutralist revolution' which they believed he was deserting. However, how did this differentiation develop? Were there real discussions in which different theses were put forward, were possibilities envisaged of development by different roads: limited mobilization of the masses in order to stand fast; the use, against the pressure of the US, of the counter-pressure of the USSR, or a trading of the Russian alliance for a compromise with imperialism? In the absence of precise information, the knowledge which we have of the behaviour of Castro and his friends suggests a different hypothesis: it was doubtless empirically, as in the earlier stages, that the Cuban leaders, strengthened by their initial successes, pushed forward by the masses whom they had aroused, sure of their prestige and their ascendancy, chose a policy of resistance which has dragged them farther than they wished and which one would not normally have expected from men of their social origin and ideology. One can also imagine that the experience of Arbenz, which Guevara shared, contributed to this choice; all the time emphasizing that this course was possible for the Cuban leaders only because they had carried on the struggle at the side of the peasants in the mountains during the guerrilla stage.

Urban reform constituted a step forward: by fixing a ceiling on rents and allowing all tenants to become owners, it dealt a serious blow at certain elements of the oligarchy, like those of Havana who owned and rented out 5,000 apartments, but above all it served to gain the support of the urban masses hitherto standing aside from a revolution which was

essentially peasant. The same anxiety led to the setting up of state farms in the countryside, the *Granjas del Pueblo*, which gradually took the place of the cooperatives. The profits of the *Granjas* go to the state, and their introduction has limited the risk of the development of a 'cooperative capitalism'.

However it is in the measures of direct resistance that are found the most important elements of radicalization. The nationalization of enterprises, in the absence of the necessary personnel, inevitably constituted an appeal to the initiative and responsibility of the workers: it was the workers' militias which undertook the task of guarding the factories. Their extension, in a few months, on the basis of voluntary recruitment, training and serving outside working hours, marked a turning point in the history of the Cuban revolution: the working class, from being a beneficiary, became a participant. A rapid increase in its role was promoted by the American menace, the fear of intervention, the open activities of the counter-revolution. The government accepted this: in the event of a full-scale offensive, the Cuban people, once having resisted the disembarkation so as to make it as costly as possible, could have counted only on popular guerrilla action and civil resistance, for which militias are more effective than a regular army.

Thus the relationship between political forces modified both itself and the course of the revolution. The counter-revolutionary oligarchy found accomplices at all levels in the State apparatus: its activities provoked a repression which delivered blows at the traditional state a thousand times more powerful than those which it received in 1959. The diplomatic corps was thoroughly purged, the navy partly so; at all levels officials were affected, and the sacrosanct judiciary was dismantled after having been decapitated by the dissolution of the Supreme Court in the middle of 1960.

At the same time the importance of the organizations linked to the masses grew: after the sabotage of an arms factory in Havana, it was the workers' militia which undertook counter-measures; it was the vigilance committees<sup>10</sup> which increased during the days of April 1961, taking the place of the police in carrying out the repressive tasks which daily became more numerous. The Cuban Revolution had ceased to be solely a peasant revolution: it was becoming a workers' revolution, and the growth of workers' militias, to the detriment of the army—a peasant army—is the clearest illustration of this change in the internal relationship of forces of the revolution.

10. According to Max Clos (*Figaro* 14.6.61), there were in May 1961, in Havana, 10,000 committees and in Cuba 100,000, each made up of 10-30 persons, and with 500,000 'vigilantes' under their control.

## WHERE DOES THE CUBAN REVOLUTION STAND?

On several occasions, discussing in public speeches the criticisms of his pro-imperialist adversaries, Fidel Castro has ferociously attacked parliamentary democracy and extolled 'direct democracy'. But the 'General Assembly of the Cuban People' at Havana is simply an immense mobilization of the masses, which it would take a great deal of imagination to equate with a direct democracy in which each worker is involved in the direction of the state. Direct contact between the Cuban workers and peasants and their 'lider maximo' (great leader), thanks to the television screen, is a one-way process, and cannot be equivalent to the conscious activity of the workers deciding their own fate through their own class organizations.

The Cuban state is not the ancient type of direct democracy described by Castro's propaganda and some European intellectuals. Nor is it the direct democracy of the workers and peasants as in the soviets of Russia, the committees of Spain, the workers' councils of Hungary, such as were thrown up by the revolutions in those countries. It is not, however, by chance that direct democracy is spoken of so much in Cuba: the revolution, a conscious activity of the widest masses, brings to the forefront their most fundamental demands, notably that of exercising their power through direct democracy.

In reality, the island today presents an original form of dual power. On the one hand, a bourgeois state, purged and 'reformed' by the creation of new organs like the Rebel Army and INRA, their aim to curb the Cuban masses: directors and administrators of the factories, *granjas* and cooperatives, are appointed from above. But at the same time there have developed the characteristic forms of workers' power, where the initiative comes from below: the 400,000 militiamen organised on the basis of their place of work, the vigilance committees, are competing with the old forces, 'reformed', of the army and police. They are the true channel for the ever more conscious mobilization of the masses. Such as they are, they represent—as was shown in the events in Poland and Hungary in 1956—the beginning of the workers' consciousness of their own striving for power. The institution in the factories of 'Technical Assessing Councils' (*Consejos Tecnicos Asesores*, or CTA), reflects this duality. Consultative bodies appointed by the management from a list of workers elected in a general meeting, they are not organs of the workers' will, but at this stage represent concessions to that will which the later evolution of the workers' struggle can transform, under the pressure of the vanguard, into instruments of power and workers' control.

A correct definition of the nature of the Cuban government and state is an indispensable step in understanding the present situation and the future perspectives. But for this it is necessary to be on guard against rigid terms which, by transfixing a moving reality, may prevent us from grasping the dynamism and transitory character of a situation.

The Cuban government is a petty-bourgeois government, in its original social basis, in its social composition and in its ideology. The section of the Cuban petty bourgeoisie personified by Fidel Castro has, as much by its own empiricism as by the absence of a working-class leadership, found itself drawn beyond its own class objectives, and has been able, in a genuine though distorted manner, to express the revolutionary drive of the workers and peasants. But it has not a true revolutionary perspective, and it is once more Guevara who reveals this when he declares: 'In order to know where Cuba is going, the best thing is to ask the government of the US just how far it intends to go.' The two powers



**'Ché' Guevara:**

'In order to know where Cuba is going, the best thing is to ask the government of the US just how far it intends to go.'

which face each other are in a position which may take various forms but in which the alternatives are unavoidable: either the 'reformed' traditional state will evolve towards bureaucratisation and a bourgeois victory and will destroy the elements of workers' power (militia, committees and CTA) or else the militias and councils will become the organs and the basis of a workers' state. Many factors interact in deciding their future. We lack a great deal of information necessary for evaluating them: what is actually the structure of political life in Cuba? How and where does it appear in the trade unions, the militia, the army, the cooperatives? How can a conscious leadership emerge to deal with the dangers which threaten the revolution, and, above all, the influence of the Communist Party?

## A THREAT: STALINISM

The 'Popular Socialist Party', the Cuban Stalinist Party, has never in the past played any real role, certainly not that of leadership: long ago the Latin American Stalinist parties abandoned all revolutionary or even reformist ambitions, being content to play the part of agents of the Kremlin bureaucracy. We have seen that for a long time they supported Batista, and that at a time when Castro's programme was merely an advanced bourgeois-democratic one, they reproached him both for his adventurism and his radicalism. Rallying to him at the last moment, they began to play a real role only with the economic war and the reorientation of Cuba's foreign trade.

As Claude Julien writes, 'To each attack from the US, to each gesture of solidarity from the USSR, corresponds a defection of the moderates and the reinforcement of the Cuban CP.' Official propaganda on the friendship of Russia or the deliveries of arms, raise the prestige of the party in this threatened country. Its bureaucratic apparatus and its organization enabled it to benefit from this popularity to a much greater extent because the July 26 movement, created by Fidel Castro, has never developed a real organization, a real apparatus. In 1959 and 1960 it was, as Claude Julien emphasizes, 'too late to enter the Movement of the 26 July, but there was still time to join the Communist Party' (op. cit.). Also the PSP includes many 'eleventh-hour recruits' recruited especially from the petty bourgeoisie: these well disciplined and firmly controlled 'militants' have set out to gain the key posts in the trade unions and cooperatives. More 'Fidelist' than Fidel, powerful from the prestige of the great 'ally', the Stalinists are taking up in Cuba a method which has so often succeeded for them elsewhere, denouncing as 'counter-revolutionary' in the name of 'unity' all those who will not play their political game: 'Fear and suspicion have reappeared on the Cuban scene.' (Julien, op. cit.)

The banning of the journal of the Cuban Trotskyist organization, the Revolutionary Workers' Party, the silence which has fallen on the fate of the leaders, the destruction of the presses on which was being printed Trotsky's *Permanent Revolution*, show the influence which the Stalinist apparatus wields in Cuba today, and its determination to use it against the revolutionaries.<sup>11</sup> It is significant that Castro and the other July 26 Movement upholders of the 'anti-totalitarian and humanist revolution' have

11. They show also, in passing, the naivety of petty bourgeois like Wright Mills (cf. his book *Castro's Cuba*), according to which the Cuban revolutionaries (i.e., Castro and his friends) 'are afraid of no ideas of any sort'.

agreed to the proscription of a working-class tendency which the Stalinist bureaucracy, now their main supplier, has pursued for decades with implacable hatred. These measures throw a clear light on the proposals for prohibition of the right to strike and the formation of a 'United Party' which the Stalinists will no doubt control right from the beginning and which they will use to subdue the mass movement.<sup>12</sup>

### WHERE IS THE CUBAN REVOLUTION GOING?

A discussion on the Cuban Revolution is going on amongst the advanced workers. Certain positions taken up are hardly reassuring as regards cohesion of thought on the part of comrades who claim to be revolutionary Marxists. It is impossible to make an analysis of what is going on in Cuba by collecting facts and pigeon-holing them. It is impossible to analyse the evolution of Cuba while leaving out the foreign policy of American imperialism and the Soviet bureaucracy, or, unless one accepts that the Kremlin bureaucracy is a revolutionary force, to consider the help given by Moscow as disinterested and without political strings.

In similar conditions—almost by armed struggle—the Stalinist bureaucracy strangled the Spanish revolution. In 1936, the anti-Franco camp presented similar forms of dual power: a crumbling bourgeois state, with a government led by petty bourgeois; local and regional workers' power with committees and militias. The Spanish bourgeois state was a thousand times more shaken than that of Cuba. The organs of workers' power were more numerous, more differentiated, more stiffened by a conscious leadership than their Cuban equivalents have hitherto been. As soon as the Spanish Republican bourgeois state had been 'reformed' and rebaptised 'popular', the organs of workers' power were destroyed, the committees dissolved, the militias integrated into the bourgeois army and the masses subjugated. It was finally the oligarchy and the troops of Franco which won the war, crushing for more than 20 years the Spanish working-class movement.

The feeble Spanish bourgeoisie was able, in the first stage, to defeat the workers and peasants and subordinate them because the anti-Franco camp, faced with what was in effect an imperialist coalition—intervention of Rome and Berlin, non-intervention of London and Paris—obtained from the USSR the supplies of arms necessary for the war. Russian aid was the starting point for the influence of the Stalinist party, but this party, because of its counter-



Spain: Workers' militias strangled by Stalinist bureaucracy.

revolutionary policy, was definitely the expression of the Spanish petty bourgeoisie at the same time as being the transmission line of the double pressure, against the workers' and peasants' revolution, of imperialism and the bureaucracy. The same events can recur in Cuba, arising from similar relations between the USA, the USSR and the revolution.

What perspectives open up today for Cuba? Theoretically there are three. First, that which imperialist propaganda declares daily has already taken place, the transformation of Cuba into a 'People's Democracy', for Marxists a 'deformed workers' state'. All the internal conditions exist: a much-purged bourgeois state in which the Stalinists, thanks to the support of the USSR, hold the key positions, an economy in which the large capitalists have been expropriated, but whose backwardness, like its cultural level, is favourable to the formation of a state bureaucracy based on advantages in kind and higher salaries for officials and technicians, finally a genuine movement of the masses, but one capable of being controlled within narrow limits by a bureaucracy. But the international situation which allowed the creation of the people's democracies in Europe is absent, for they are what they are because imperialism agreed to allow the USSR buffer states. Geographically, Cuba is part of the American 'buffer', and it would need an at present unforeseeable reversal of the international situation for a people's democracy to be established 95 miles from the American coast.

The second hypothesis is that of a Thermidor, a halting of the Cuban revolution, and the negotiation of a compromise with imperialism. Khrushchev showed in April 1961 that he was not prepared to go to war for Cuba. On the contrary, Cuba is more and more a hostage in his hands, something which can be traded in an eventual summit agreement. Whether Khrushchev, dealing with Kennedy, will agree to dictate Wall Street's conditions to Cuba by refusing to continue his 'aid', or whether Castro, to escape Moscow's blackmail, will agree to discuss a 'modus vivendi' with Kennedy, in either case, this capitulation of the Cuban revolution can only take

12. Since this article was written, the United Party of the Socialist Revolution has been formed.—Ed.

place through the repression of the mass movement, that is, if the way is prepared by the joint policy of Castro and the Stalinists, the construction of a strong state, which is beginning today through the formation of the United Party and the proposals for the suppression of the right to strike. This orientation of the Cuban leaders implies the abandonment of their appeal to 'make the Andes into new Sierras Maestras', of the search for support among the workers and peasants of Latin America, to the benefit of the alliance of bourgeois states of the 'third force', Brazil and Argentina, in other words, the renunciation of a revolutionary foreign policy, even purely verbal, in favour of a policy of peaceful coexistence.

This hypothesis, which agrees perfectly with the facts of the international situation, unfortunately appears today as the most probable, for it corresponds both to the empiricism of the Castro leadership and to the objectives of Russian policy. It is probably taken seriously by the State Department, forced to revise its policy after the setback of the April landing and anxious to put a stop, if necessary by a new sharing out of the cake, to the fire which Cuba is in danger of spreading. Finally, it is the policy recommended by the bourgeois governments of Brazil and Argentina, anxious to 'reintegrate Cuba into the American community', and conscious of the price they can exact from imperialism for their mediation.

The Cuban workers know all this, as does Che Guevara, who said 'We are attacked certainly for what we are, but we are attacked far more because we show the road to follow. What upsets imperialism is not so much the nickel mines and the sugar refineries which it has just lost in Cuba, but the fate of Venezuelan oil, Mexican cotton, Chilean copper, Argentinian herds and Brazilian coffee, which swell the riches of the American monopolists.'

Either Cuba will be brought back into the sphere of influence of North American imperialism or it will open the way to the Latin American revolution. Either way, the key to the future of Cuba is not to be found in Cuba alone, and the defenders of the slogan 'Cuba socialist and independent' will have some difficulty in constructing a theory of 'socialism in a single island', which nonetheless represents the logical—and absurd—development of 'socialism in a single country'. To this new 'surpassing' of Marxism can rally only a few left-wing intellectuals in search of a saviour, ready to cling to Castro after having been let down by Tito or Mao—those who substitute magic for policy and incantation for analysis.

The perspective which inspires fear in Washington, that which the policy of the Stalinist bureaucracy is designed to prevent, is a revolutionary explosion in Latin America, in the countries where the organized

proletariat already plays or will soon play a leading role, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico.

If the Cuban revolution is of such great importance, it is because, beyond the Latin American revolution, it opens the way ultimately to the decisive revolution, without which no conquest will be definitive, that of the proletariat of the US. The fate of humanity is not decided in the sierra but in the industrial metropolis. It is not decided in one island, not even for the islanders themselves, but for everyone and on a world scale. The workers, in order to win this prolonged battle, need to know where they are going and along what road: they need a leadership organized internationally, of which the common denominator will be that of being the party of the workers' councils. To forget this in an analysis is to forget the unity of the world market, the unity of the workers' struggle against capitalism, the interdependence of all parts of the world. Unless one believes that the revolution in North America can be started by 12 farmers in Minnesota taking to the bush and growing beards, one must admit that so long as the revolution is confined to Cuba it must inevitably be defeated, and that a workers' state cannot arise without the conscious action of the working masses and the formation—in Cuba as in Mexico or Detroit or Essen—of workers' councils like those spontaneously formed by Polish and Hungarian workers in 1956. The 'Cuban' revolution will grasp at victory on the day the workers in Fords and elsewhere in the United States form their committees and their militias. More than ever, revolutionary action in any country poses the problem of the building of the revolutionary workers' party on a world scale. That is the great lesson of Cuba, where the masses and the world forces of counter-revolution face each other, and whose immediate future largely depends upon the possibility of forming a revolutionary leadership distinct from the ideology of both the petty-bourgeois Castro leadership and that of the Stalinists, and determined to go forward at once to extend the workers' and peasants' revolution to Latin America.

April 1961

P.S. Certain observers have believed it possible to discover a 'beginning of proletarian government' in the Committees of Coordination, Execution and Inspection (JUCEI), set up, after those in the Eastern Province, in several other provinces, to coordinate the activities of different authorities, and made general by the decree of July 23 last. They find an argument in support of their theses in the fact that Raul Castro, responsible for these (the JUCEI) has announced that in the future they will be elected



and subject to recall. But one must not take one's desires for reality. The JUCEI are made up of representatives of existing organizations, some of which are elected and some appointed, and apparently none yet subject to recall: representatives of state farms, of cooperative managements, of workers' and peasants' unions, of the organization of small peasants' (ANAP), of the political parties, CP included, of the officials of various ministries, dele-

gates from the army, the militias, the committees of defence, etc. It is not impossible that workers' power can arise through these organs, as through others, such as the CTA or the committee of defence, if the masses manage to change their nature profoundly and impose their control upon them. At present they are far more instruments of control exercised from above, by the Castro government, to ward off undesired developments.

Since this article was written, there have been important developments in Cuba, above all:

1. Statements made by Guevara on Trotskyism and on past differences between Castro's movement and the Stalinists.
2. Castro's speech of December 2, 1961 on his 'conversion' to Marxism.
3. The formation in January 1962 of the United Party of the Socialist Revolution.
4. The introduction of rationing to meet Cuba's economic difficulties, and the pronouncement by Castro on the need to check abuses carried on in the name of the Revolution.

### THE WITCH-HUNT AGAINST TROTSKYISM

In August 1960 at the Congress of the PSP (Cuban Communist Party), the General-Secretary Blas Roca devoted a considerable section of his report, in the part concerned with 'enemies of the Cuban revolution', to the Trotskyists, whom he characterized as first Hitler's spies, then agents of American imperialism. He lumped them together

#### Blas Roca:

Among 'enemies of the Cuban Revolution', he names 'Trotskyists', condemning them as 'Hitler's spies' and 'agents of American imperialism'.



with 'Tito-ists' and 'anarcho-syndicalists' as imperialist agents with the job of attacking revolution from leftist positions.

On April 30, 1961, in a television interview devoted to economic questions, Che Guevara criticised *Voz Proletaria*, 'a small Trotskyist periodical', especially for its critical viewpoint on the Factory Committees. He declared its positions to

be 'from the theoretical point of view absurd' and 'from the practical point of view, an infamy or a mistake'.

On May 26, 1961, *Voz Proletaria* was banned.

On August 13, 1961, the same Guevara declared, in the Chilean paper, *Ultima Hora*, that this ban was justified on the grounds that 'it was unwise to allow Trotskyism to go calling for subversion'. He went on to explain that 'Trotskyism was born at Guantanamo', close to the well-known American base, and that this proximity was ample justification for the measures taken. Thus in four months Guevara graduated from polemic to outright calumny. He differed from Blas Roca only in not mentioning Hitler.

### THE GENERAL STRIKE OF APRIL 9, 1958

Another part of the Guevara interview is worth taking up. It was not the first time, he said, that they had experience with Trotskyists. 'One of the members of the July 26 Movement who was very close to Trotskyism, David Salvador, was responsible for the death of our people on April 9th (1958) by his refusal to carry out a united strike action with the mass parties, trying instead a "putschist" type of strike, which was wiped out by Batista. Batista knew about the strike . . . and many of our comrades died.'

(a) **Salvador 'close to Trotskyism'**. This is the only point in Guevara's statement bearing any relation to fact. A militant worker of the July 26 Movement, Salvador was known among foreign correspondents as being at the same time a Marxist and yet a consistent opponent of Stalinism.

(b) **The strike**. Salvador was responsible for the workers' section of the July 26 Movement in Havana. He did his duty in that capacity, preparing for the General Strike decided on by the leadership and called for in a manifesto written by Castro himself. Thus it was the *leader* of the July 26

Movement who 'informed' Batista of the strike, just as he announced his own landing on Cuba, following out his principle of 'psychological warfare'. It seems clear that from the start Castro was doubtful about the idea of the strike, but that he had high hopes of it which were disappointed. He criticised later the bad organization and 'over-clandestine' character of the strike, reflecting a lack of confidence in the masses. It should be added, however, that the workers of Havana were terrorised by Batista's police. Foreign correspondents wrote of drivers being forced at gunpoint to drive their buses through the city.

Thus it was not Salvador, but the general preparation and outlook of the July 26 Movement, which were responsible for the failure of the strike, a strike which could not be decided on by Salvador but only by the leaders who now condemn him. When he was released from Batista's jail, he became secretary of the Trade Unions in Cuba, with Castro's backing.

(c) **Salvador 'refused united action'**. Salvador had no more power to decide alliances than to decide the calling of the strike. Castro's call for a struggle to the end was issued to all anti-Castro forces. The PSP *refused* to support the strike; they stood aside and watched the July 26 militants being wiped out. Although by now they had abandoned their support of Batista, they still condemned every revolutionary initiative against him, criticising Castro for his adventurism and too extreme anti-imperialist propaganda. C. R. Rodriguez, PSP spokesman (who this year replaced Castro as head of INRA) justified this



**C. R. Rodriguez:**

'If there were in existence in the country the forces capable of throwing Batista out and setting up a progressive and anti-imperialist government, things would be easy. Unfortunately, that is not the case.' (June 5, 1958)

policy in an article on June 5, 1958: 'If there were in existence in the country the forces capable of throwing Batista out and setting up a progressive and anti-imperialist government, things would be easy. Unfortunately, that is not the case.'

So it was not Salvador who kept the PSP out of

the strike. In fact they condemned it, just as they condemned the idea of an armed insurrection against Batista.

### GUEVARA'S LIES. THE UNITED PARTY

On the morrow of the defeated strike, at the time of the taking of power, Castro supported Salvador, who took over the leadership of the trade unions against the Communists. But in the following year Castro personally challenged the vote of the trade union congress, which had just elected Salvador general secretary against a communist candidate. Accusing the Congress of having 'shown neither wisdom, nor unity, nor anything else', he imposed a division of responsibility between Salvador and two other secretaries, one of whom, Jesus Soto, would control the apparatus. Finally, Salvador was imprisoned.

Today he is a whipping boy: Guevara covers up for the PSP, who fought *against* the revolution, by accusing Salvador of 'refusing united action with the mass parties'. The Stalinists were late jumping on Castro's bandwagon; now Guevara is helping them to smooth over that 'mistake': by putting the blame on Salvador, 'close to Trotskyism', not on the July 26 Movement, he pushes into the background the past differences of Castro's followers with the Stalinists.

This falsification of history throws some light on the formation of the new United Socialist Party, and on Castro's speech of December 2. In this speech he declared that he accepted the validity of Marxism-Leninism. Further he affirmed that the PSP was one of the 'revolutionary forces', representing 'the advanced sections of the working class in the towns and in the countryside'. He welcomed into the United Party from the PSP its 'leadership of trained fighters educated in socialism'. He explained the differences of 1953-58 between his own movement, radically anti-imperialist, and the counter-revolutionary Stalinist movement, as 'misunderstandings' arising from propaganda and prejudice. Castro whitewashed the Stalinist policy, excusing his own opposition to it on the grounds of his own 'political illiteracy and class origins' Castro has chosen Stalinism, with its 1962 face-lift, instead of the Cuban Revolution. The falsification of history and the attacks on the left which have accompanied the setting up of the new party confirm this fact.

**LABOUR REVIEW** readers will be interested in the following extracts from an interview given by Ché Guevara on September 14, 1961, to Maurice Zeitlin, a member of the sociology faculty of Princeton University. The extracts are quoted from the New York 'Militant', for Monday, April 9, 1962.—Ed.

'Zeitlin: How will other radical tendencies—organizations other than the Revolutionary Directorate, the Communist Party and the 26th of July, whose members will unite in the new party—be included? What about the Trotskyists, for example? Carleton Beals pointed out recently that their press here had been smashed and they were unable to complete printing copies of Trotsky's *The Permanent Revolution*.

'Guevara: That did happen. It was an error. It was an error committed by a functionary of second rank. They smashed the plates. It should not have been done.

'However, we consider the Trotskyist party to be acting against the revolution. For example, they were taking the line that the revolutionary government is petty bourgeois, and were calling on the proletariat to exert pressure on the government, and even to carry out another revolution in which the proletariat would come to power. This was prejudicing the discipline necessary at this time.

'Zeitlin: You might be interested in knowing that the Trotskyists in the U.S. have been almost completely behind the Cuban Revolution, and their recent official

statement on the revolution is enthusiastically approving.

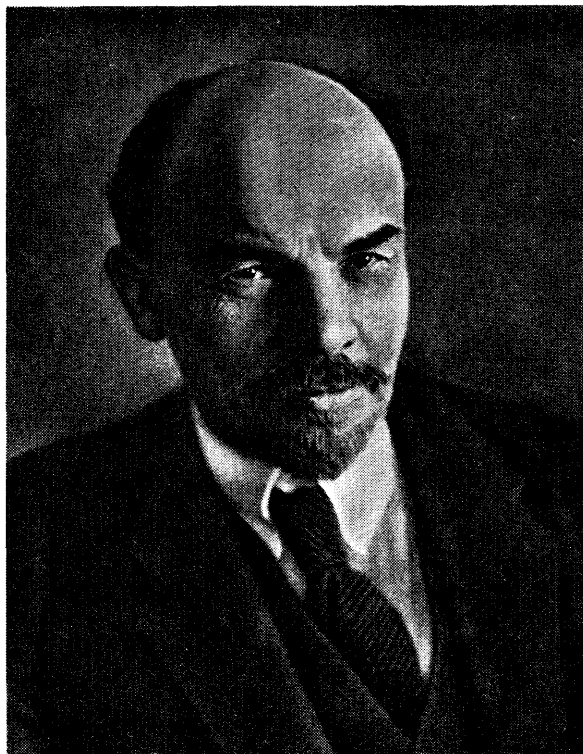
'Guevara: I do not have any opinions about Trotskyists in general. But here in Cuba—let me give an example. They have one of their principal centers in the town of Guantanamo near the U.S. base. And they agitated there for the Cuban people to march on the base—something that cannot be permitted. Something else. Sometime ago when we had just created the workers' technical committees, the Trotskyists characterized them as a crumb given to the workers because the workers were calling for the direction of the factories.

'Several people have asked me the same question (about the Trotskyists)—but it is a problem I regard as small. They have very few members in Cuba.

'Zeitlin: The reason is not because we are specifically interested in the Trotskyists—I am hardly one—but because how they are treated is probably as good an index as any of how different political tendencies within the revolution will be treated, especially groups who differ with the Communist Party, which has always had a particular animosity for the Trotskyists, labeling anyone who disagrees with them as Trotskyists—or worse.

'Guevara: You cannot be for the revolution and be against the Cuban Communist Party. The Revolution and the Communist Party march together. The Trotskyists say that they are against "Stalinism". But in the (1959) [1958?] general strike, for instance, the Trotskyists refused to cooperate with the Communist Party.'

Socialists everywhere will join the campaign to help the people of Cuba in their latest economic difficulties. The US blockade has produced these difficulties, and only the international action of the working-class movement can save the Revolution. Food and medical supplies must pour into Cuba from every country. Along with the spread of the revolution to Latin America, and the construction of a leadership based on the masses themselves, in workers' councils, not on a bureaucratic apparatus, such united action can save the Cuban Revolution and carry it forward to new victories.



# In the Workshop of the Revolution

## *Lenin's Philosophical Notebooks*

By Cliff Slaughter

(Vol. 38, *Lenin Collected Works*, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1961, 7s. 6d. *Except where otherwise stated, all page references in this article are to this volume.*)

1961 MARKED the beginning of the publication in English of a new edition of the Collected Works of the greatest thinker of this century, V. I. Lenin.<sup>1</sup> These writings will prove absolutely invaluable in the process, now beginning, of developing Marxist theory to answer the revolutionary tasks of the working class in this and every other country. Just as Lenin made his enormous original contribution to theory as part of the construction of a revolutionary leadership at the beginning of the century, so theoretical development today will be made only as part of the living struggle to overcome the betrayals and the theoretical degeneration of the Social-Democratic and Stalinist movements. Overcoming the consequences of those betrayals is not a question of words, but of building an alternative leadership which can arm the working class with the

1. Some half-dozen volumes of the **Collected Works** were published in English before 1939, and odd volumes in 1946 and 1947. It is to be hoped that the present edition will be complete. The volumes already published contain new material in English.

developing theory required to achieve consciousness of its historic role and the necessary strategy of class struggle.

In reading Lenin, therefore, our aim is not to find recipes for our present problems, but to gain an insight into the *method* used by this outstanding thinker and political leader. With the use of this method Lenin made important discoveries about the nature of world capitalism and about the social relations and ideologies of his own time, particularly in Russia. These discoveries have received more study than the method itself, and yet Lenin's use of the dialectical method was the key to his ability to analyse new stages in economic and political development, and to his mastery of political strategy and tactics. Future articles in **LABOUR REVIEW** will take up some of Lenin's specific contributions in various fields. Here we are concerned primarily with his method of approach; all the volumes published so far could be used as illustrations of Lenin's method, but the publication of his *Philosophical Notebooks* (Vol. 38) in English for the first time is a useful occasion for taking up the question more generally.

The *Notebooks* are not bedtime reading. Not one sentence in them was in any way prepared for publication. The text consists entirely of extracts taken by Lenin from various philosophical works

and reviews, his underlinings in these extracts, and his own comments, usually very cryptic. Of most interest are the notes on Hegel's *Science of Logic* and *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. Anyone undertaking a systematic study of Lenin's Notebooks will have to have beside him Hegel's *Logic*; only in this way can one see the continuity between separate notes and extracts. Even without this, Marxist students will find many of Lenin's brief notes very stimulating and worth detailed study. But these notes and extracts are part of a single project, and are therefore best taken as a whole, read through and reworked several times by the student in the light of his own knowledge of Marxism and of Lenin's own writings and actions. Once he gets past Hegel's Preface and Introduction, Lenin writes: 'I am in general trying to read Hegel materialistically . . .' It is clear from his notes that his intention was to prepare the basis for a materialist exposition of the dialectical method which in Hegel remains in mystical form. A study of these notes clarifies greatly what Marx and Engels meant when they said that in order to arrive at a scientific method they had only to 'stand Hegel on his head, or rather, on his feet'.

## LOGIC AND REALITY

Hegel insisted on a Logic which was not something separate from the reality which confronted man, a Logic which was identical with the richness and movement of all reality, a Logic which expressed the whole process of man's growing consciousness of reality, and not just a dry summary of formal principles of argument, reflecting only one brief phase in the definition of reality by thinking men. Lenin notes:

'What Hegel demands is a Logic, the forms of which would be **gehaltvolle Formen** (forms with content), forms of living, real content, inseparably connected with the content.'

'Logic is the science not of external forms of thought, but of the laws of development "of all material, natural and spiritual things", i.e., of the development of the entire concrete content of the world and of its cognition i.e. the sum-total, the conclusion of the **History** of knowledge of the world.' (p. 92)

Lenin's aim in 'reading Hegel materialistically' was to sift out the rational kernel of this Logic from the idealism in which it was constricted, for Hegel believed that only the 'Absolute Idea' had reality, expressing its necessary development in nature and history. When the highest product of this natural and historical evolution, critical philosophy, grasped consciously the truth of this process, then freedom replaced necessity. When Lenin 'rewrites' passages of the *Logic*, the relationship is inverted, without

losing any of the brilliance and wealth of Hegel's insight. Our concepts are the reflection, worked out in the history of logic and philosophy, of the objective world of nature grasped by social man in his practical struggle to survive and develop. The 'leap from necessity to freedom' is then not a matter of philosophy, not a mental act, but a practical transformation of society and nature by men who have achieved consciousness of the social necessity of revolution.

Lenin lays great stress on Hegel's insistence that Dialectics is not a master-key, a sort of set of magic numbers by which all secrets will be revealed. It is wrong to think of dialectical logic as something that is complete in itself and then 'applied' to particular examples. It is not a model of interpretation to be learned, then fitted on to reality from the outside; the task is rather to uncover the law of development of the reality itself.

'Logic is usually understood as being the "science of thinking", the "bare form of cognition".' (p. 95)

'Dialectics has often been considered an art, as though it rested upon a subjective **talent** and did not belong to the objectivity of the Notion . . .' (p. 223)

So long as this is the approach then we do not get beyond the limits of formal logic, considered by Hegel to be dead and fixed, rigidly insisting on the separateness of the aspects of phenomena instead of on their transitions into one another. Hegel says logic must be 'not abstract, dead and immobile, but concrete . . .' and Lenin: 'This is characteristic! The spirit and essence of dialectics!' (p. 100). Consequently it is absolutely against the spirit of dialectics to artificially impose the 'triad' of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis on whatever process one chooses to abstract. Hegel is most explicit:

'That this unity, as well as the whole form of the method, is a **triplicity** is wholly, however, the merely superficial and external side of the manner of cognition.' (p. 230)

He goes on to say that this 'triad',

' . . . has been rendered tedious and of ill-repute by the shallow misuse and the barrenness of modern so-called philosophic **construction**, which consists simply in attaching the formal framework without concept and immanent determination to all sorts of matter and employing it for external arrangement.'

It is the logic of processes themselves that must be exposed. Hegel says that dialectics has often been derided as an idle play with clever concepts, whose only aim is to sceptically demonstrate the difficulties and inconsistencies of 'common sense'.

'Dialectic is generally regarded as an external and negative procedure, that does not belong to the subject matter itself, that is based on pure vanity, as a subjective craving to shake and break down what is fixed and true, or that at best leads to nothing but the inane of the dialectically treated matter.' (pp. 97-8)

When Hegel here asks for a method that 'belongs to the subject-matter itself', he is not suggesting that only a description of what appears to the observer at first sight is required. Such descriptions are always couched in definite forms of thought, and are not 'pure descriptions'. It is possible to record the external characteristics of phenomena, then to arrive at judgments 'based' on these observations which in fact are an imposition *on* the 'facts' of some unexpressed assumption or theory. Dialectics attempts to probe to the essential self-movement of the phenomenon itself; the relations between its different aspects can then be shown as parts of a unified process, not just as separate determinations whose only interrelation is one imposed by the demands of consistency in thought. Hegel says:

'The absolute method (i.e., the method of cognition of objective truth, says Lenin) does not behave as external reflection; it draws the determinate element directly from its object itself, since it is the object's immanent principle and soul. It was this that Plato demanded of cognition, that it should **consider things in and for themselves**, and while partly considering them in their universality, it should also hold fast to them, not catching at externals, examples and comparisons, but contemplating the things alone and bringing before consciousness what is immanent in them.' (p. 220)

This 'catching at externals, examples and comparisons' and 'generalising' from them often parades as scientific method, particularly in the study of society and politics. Instead of the law of development of things being discovered, we get instead a neat or 'consistent' arrangement of abstracted characteristics of similar phenomena. Lenin remarks on the sharpness of Hegel's criticism of this method, extracting, for example, his verdict on

'That procedure of knowledge reflecting on experience, which first **perceives** determinations in the phenomenon, next makes them the basis, and assumes for their so-called **explanation** corresponding **fundamental materials** or **forces** which are supposed to produce these determinations of the phenomenon . . .' (p. 115)

What is advanced as an explanation of a thing turns out to be only

'Determination deduced from that for which they are meant to be the grounds—hypotheses and figments derived by an uncritical reflection.' (p. 145)

Hegel's dialectical method is often condemned as an accommodation to the *status quo*, with its insistence on the 'identity of thought and the object'. But if the dialectic is properly understood it does not lead to any such conclusion. The following quotations explain clearly the *dynamic* and *critical* nature of dialectical knowledge, and incidentally illustrate well the process by which Lenin worked at the materialist reworking of Hegel's Logic:

'The self-identity of the Idea is one with the **process**; and the thought which frees actuality from

the semblance of purposeless changeability and transfigures it into the Idea must not imagine this truth of actuality as a dead repose or bare **picture**, **matt**, without impulse or motion, or as a genius, number, or abstract thought. In the Idea the Notion reaches freedom, and because of this the Idea contains also the **harshest opposition**; its repose consists in the security and certainty with which it eternally creates and eternally overcomes it, coinciding in it with itself.'

Lenin, reading Hegel materialistically, substitutes:

'The coincidence of thought with the object is a **process**: thought (man) must not imagine truth in the form of dead repose, in the form of a bare picture (image), pale (matt), without impulse, without motion, like a genius, like a number, like abstract thought.

'The idea contains also the strongest contradiction, repose (for man's thought) consists in the firmness and certainty with which he eternally creates (this contradiction between thought and object) and eternally overcomes it . . .'

Finally, Lenin rewrites the passage:

'Cognition is the eternal, endless approximation of thought to the object. The **reflection** of nature in man's thought must be understood not "lifelessly", not "abstractly", not **devoid of movement**, **not without contradictions**, but in the eternal **process** of movement, the arising of contradictions and their solution.' (pp. 194-5)

## LENIN BEFORE AND AFTER 1914

It is customary in some circles to claim that only when Lenin read Hegel in 1914-15 did he grasp the dialectic; indeed it is fashionable to take this as proved. In his early writings Lenin is said to have been crude and mechanical; this crudeness is supposed to have been most explicit in his *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* (1908), but the implication is that his attitudes on Party organisation and political questions were rigid and dogmatic. It is important to see that this case is sustained on a very narrow base: instead of an examination of the actual work of Lenin, including *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, we are usually presented with truncated extracts from the latter work, which distort its meaning,<sup>2</sup> or with a series of short quotations from the Notebooks which are supposed to show that Lenin renounced his philosophical past.<sup>3</sup> Raya Dunayevskaya goes so far as to say, 'It is under the section on "Syllogism", where Hegel destroys the opposition between subjectivity and objectivity, that Lenin bursts forth with the aphorisms that reveal how decisive was his *break with his own philosophic past*.' (my emphasis, C.S.)

2. Peter Fryer disposed of a recent critic of this type when replying to E. P. Thompson in 'Lenin as Philosopher' (Labour Review, Vol. 2, No. 5).

3. R. Dunayevskaya, *Marxism and Freedom* (1958).

In this passage the reference is to Lenin's remarks on pp. 179 and 180 of the present edition, primarily the following:

'Marxists criticised (at the beginning of the twentieth century) the Kantians and Humanists more in the manner of Feuerbach (and Büchner) than of Hegel . . .'

and

'It is impossible completely to understand Marx's **Capital**, and especially its first chapter, without having thoroughly studied and understood the **whole** of Hegel's **Logic**. Consequently, half a century later none of the Marxists understood Marx!'

There is no examination of Lenin's earlier works, only speculation that these passages imply a condemnation of Lenin's past philosophical assumptions, i.e., that he includes himself among the 'Marxists who did not understand Marx'. Now while there is no doubt that his reading of Hegel at the beginning of the First World War enriched Lenin's theory, enabled him to penetrate more deeply to the essence of the contradictions of imperialism and of the working-class movement, it is quite wrong to make the rigid demarcation which is now so often made between the 'pre-Hegelian' and 'post-Hegelian' phases of his political life. Rather there is a really dialectical development in Lenin's own work. 1914 and his work towards the 1917 Revolution and the construction of a new Communist International mark a new stage in the history of the movement, the stage when Lenin and his followers brought into the consciousness of a section of the working-class vanguard the reality of the new stage of Imperialism and the tasks with which it confronted the working class. Lenin's study of Hegel is part of this advance, a necessary part of the process by which consciousness was advanced. Like every other advance in Marxism, it could only come from a man immersed in the intensive theory and practice of the living movement of society and politics for many years.

If Dunayevskaya had only looked at Lenin's whole work with the same method which he outlines in *Philosophical Notebooks*, instead of formally comparing striking phrases in it with parts abstracted from other works written in different circumstances and with deliberately different emphases, then her work might have had some value to Marxism; but in fact she remains bogged down in the very formal method of which she accuses the early Lenin. Lenin could well have been pointing to his own case when he quoted so admiringly the comparison made by Hegel: Lenin writes,

'Logic resembles grammar, being one thing for the beginner and another thing for one who knows the language (and languages) and the spirit of language. "It is one thing to him who approaches Logic and the Sciences in general for the first time



G. W. F. Hegel

He took philosophy 'to the eve' of dialectical and historical materialism, said Lenin.

and another thing for him who comes back from the sciences to Logic."

'Then logic gives "the essential character of this wealth" (the wealth of the world view), "the inner nature of spirit and of the world . . ."' (p. 98)

Lenin is an experienced and accomplished revolutionary returning to Hegelian logic as logic; he brings to the task all the experience of 20 years' struggle in the construction of a revolutionary party against tendencies reflecting the complex forces of Russian society, struggle accompanied always by a profound study of social reality and all the schools of thought expressing the interests of the classes in that reality. Thus his 'reading' of Hegel is full and rich, able to appreciate and expose the many-sidedness and depth of the dialectical method formally presented by Hegel. This new appreciation of the richness of the dialectical concept of knowledge was an important part of his insistence on theory and principle, on understanding the tasks of the working class and its leadership in those years when, as he himself put it, the thinking of some Marxists was 'depressed and oppressed' by the war to such a degree that they departed from the interests of the class they set out to represent, advocating instead theories which tied the proletariat to the ruling class in war.

The use of *Philosophical Notebooks* to discredit Lenin's earlier work is a cover for a trend towards idealism in some critics.<sup>4</sup> It becomes important to condemn Lenin's exposition of the idea that knowledge is the reflection of objective reality, and implicitly or explicitly to condemn his concept of a 'party of new type' as a necessity for the socialist revolution. It is therefore necessary to dispose of claims such as Dunayevskaya's that

'The keynote of his **Philosophical Notebooks** is nothing short of a restoration of truth to philosophic idealism against vulgar materialism to which he had given the green light with his work on **Materialism and Empirio-Criticism**.'

Dunayevskaya naturally quotes Lenin's aphorism: 'Intelligent idealism is closer to intelligent materialism than stupid materialism'. (He rewrote this to read: 'Dialectical idealism is closer to intelligent [dialectical] materialism than metaphysical, undeveloped, dead, crude, rigid materialism.' p. 277.) But it is nonsense to suggest that Lenin revised his opinions on the general relationship between materialism and idealism. On page 293 of the *Notebooks*, he writes, *after* the notes on *Logic*, *after* the quotation so beloved of the idealists, the following:

'Hegel completely **concealed** (NB) the **main thing**: (NB) the existence of things **outside** the consciousness of man and **independent** of it.' (p. 293)

It was to hammer home precisely that this was 'the main thing' that *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* was written, in answer to a group of 'God-seekers' in the Russian Party, in 1908. In his notes on Hegel, Lenin's concern is, rather, explicitly to sift out the rational kernel of the method of this greatest idealist, and to show that consistent 'objective idealism' takes philosophy to the very eve of historical materialism. But only to the eve; Dunayevskaya does not quote any of Lenin's spirited sallies at Hegel's failures to leave idealism behind, even though they are liberally scattered through the *Notebooks*. A small sample will suffice:

'The mystic - idealist - spiritualist Hegel (like all official, clerical-idealist philosophy of our day) extols and expatiates on mysticism, idealism in the history of philosophy, while ignoring and slighting materialism. Cf. Hegel on Democritus-nill! On Plato a huge mass of mystical slush.' (pp. 281-2)

'And a **mass of thin porridge** ladled out about God . . .' (p. 303)

'Here in Hegel is often to be found—about God, religion, morality in general—extremely trite idealistic nonsense.' (p. 309)

And in many places Lenin takes Hegel to task for ' . . . concealing the weaknesses of idealism' (p. 289), 'a sophisticated dodge from materialism' (p. 289), 'a cowardly evasion of materialism' (p. 288), and 'he pities God!! the idealistic scoundrel!!' (p. 295)

That this condemnation of idealism does not stop Lenin from taking the very most from Hegel's logic is a tribute to his great intellectual acuteness combined with an unrelenting partisanship. It is quite foreign to the spirit of his work to quote him selectively in order to convey the impression that he 'broke with his philosophical past'. He did nothing of the kind, and *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* will retain its significance as a brilliant statement of the materialist foundations of Marxism against pseudo-scientific 'realism'. The presentation of similar problems in the *Notebooks* is a refinement but by no stretch of the imagination a rejection of the work of 1908.

## THE ROLE OF CONSCIOUSNESS

If we examine even the earliest works of Lenin on social and political questions, it is difficult to see any justification for the view of Dunayevskaya that before 1914 Lenin did not really grasp the concept of unity of opposites, that he saw the opposite sides of phenomena simply co-existing alongside each other rather than interpenetrating and determining each other. She has to admit that in his political practice Lenin showed a grasp of dialectics, but this appears to have been 'unconscious', while in his thoughts Lenin remained rigid and mechanical. Quite apart from the comic aspect of this division, it can be shown that Lenin's writings are thoroughly imbued with the dialectical method, studying processes in their totality and in their development, with a bitter struggle waged against those who, like the Narodniks, abstracted separate features of society and appraised them with some set of abstract norms. Any number of quotations from 'What The Friends of the People Are' or 'The Economic Content of Narodism' would illustrate Lenin's grasp, already in 1896, of 'the unity of opposites'. A summary of Lenin's *method* against the Narodnik sociologists will perhaps be useful. These Narodniks sought to defend small peasant property, particularly as part of the Russian village commune. In order to do this they made a study of the condition of this section of producers, their holdings, the impact on them of other classes and of government policy, etc., and they often gave harrowing accounts of the effect of commerce in driving the independent peasant to misery.

Lenin pointed out that a study of land ownership alone, and even a burning and partisan account of the misery of the peasants, were no substitute for beginning with an analysis of the whole economic structure which determined the dominant trends and relationships in Russian society. The *sector* of that society which the Narodniks chose to defend by

4. e.g., M. Merleau-Ponty, *Les Aventures de la Dialectique*.



exposing its misery was not an alternative to the actually developing economic conditions, *except in their minds*. Only by seeing small peasant ownership as one 'moment' in the development of the structure of the very conditions they deplored could they ever understand it, i.e., bring their theoretical concepts into line with the actual economic development. Clearly this is only an example of the principle expounded by Lenin (and Hegel) in the quotations at the beginning of this article. So long as the Narodnik sociologists remained at the level of abstract criticism of the ruin of small peasant farming, then they in fact supported the dominant classes in the *status quo*. How could Lenin call their criticism of existing conditions *abstract* when the works they produced were packed with data about conditions of peasant life? Because 'small peasant farming' was *abstracted* from its actually developing context in the economic structure, a context in which it is *necessarily* tied to all those 'aspects' which the Narodniks *abstracted* and called 'negative'. The result of this mistaken method was political impotence. Narodism reflected the basic fact of conflict between labour and capital, but 'through the prism of the living conditions and interests of the small producer, and therefore did so in a distorted and cowardly way, creating a theory which did not give prominence to the antagonism of social interests, but to sterile hopes in a different path of development'.<sup>5</sup>

But Lenin took up the cudgels against some of the so-called Marxists like Struve, as well as against the Narodniks. It is worth dwelling on his criticism of Struve's 'objectivism', as it leads us to a vital point, the role of human consciousness and the relation between theory and practice. Lenin's consistent attack on 'objectivism' in the early writing gives the lie to those critics who claim that he neglected human agency in his pre-1914 theory. Although Struve correctly criticised the Narodniks for their defence of backwardness, he ended up by becoming an apologist for the advance of capitalism, rather than a Marxist able to analyse its contradictions. Lenin attacked him for seeing technical progress 'on the one hand' as progressive, and bondage 'on the other hand' as regressive, a brake on technical progress. These two are phases of the same development of capitalism:

'This bondage which he has now demolished as retrogressive is nothing but the initial manifestation of capitalism in agriculture, of that very same capitalism which leads later to sweeping technical progress, etc.'<sup>6</sup>

What is lacking in Struve is the standpoint of a given class in the basic class contradiction of society:

'The main feature is . . . narrow objectivism, which is confined to proving the inevitability and necessity of the process and makes no effort to reveal at each specific stage of this process the form of class contradiction inherent in it—an objectivism that describes the process in general, and not each of the antagonistic classes whose conflict make up the process.'<sup>7</sup>

' . . . though he correctly indicates the existence of a process, he does not examine what classes arose while it was going on, what classes were the vehicles of the process, overshadowing other strata of the population subordinate to them; in a word, the author's objectivism does not rise to the level of materialism . . .'<sup>8</sup>

This objectivism leads Struve to pose problems in a non-class way that is not without parallel in political thinking today. For example, he asks, 'In what way, on what basis, can our national economy be reorganised?' and Lenin replies,

' "Our national economy" is a capitalist economy, the organisation and reorganisation of which is determined by the bourgeoisie, who "manage" this economy. Instead of the question of possible reorganisation, what should have been put is the question of the successive stages of the development of this bourgeois economy . . .'<sup>9</sup>

Lenin, in other words, demands an approach which sees all the 'aspects' of the process as necessarily interconnected parts of the whole, developing in necessary opposition; further, the analysis offered must be seen as part of the consciousness of the representatives of the social classes opposed to one another in the developing process, with the characteristic distortions of each class, only the point of view of the working class being able to sustain a scientific view of the unity and general development of the whole system. Here are the very real bases of Lenin's whole theoretical and practical approach in politics, bases upon which he built prodigiously for 25 years.

The 1905 Revolution was a forcing-house for the political development of Russian Socialist thinking, as well as a decisive step forward in the experience of the working class itself. Lenin showed in his writings of that period that he did not have to wait until 1914 to be able to pose very clearly the difference between dialectical and 'vulgar' materialism in the prominence given to conscious action. In his *Two Tactics of Social Democracy*, Lenin condemns that method which offers

' . . . a general description of the process (and) does not say a word about the concrete tasks of our activity. The new Iskra-ist method of exposition reminds one of Marx's reference (in his famous *Theses on Feuerbach*) to the old materialism, which was alien to the ideas of dialectics. . . . They degrade the materialist conception of history by ignoring the active, leading and guiding part in history which

5. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol 1, p. 400.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 484.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 499.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 425.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 468.

can and must be played by parties which understand the material prerequisites of a revolution and have placed themselves at the head of the advanced classes.<sup>10</sup>

All this reads very strangely beside Dunayevskaya's suggestion that only in 1914 did Lenin consciously understand the role of consciousness and the role of the masses in history. Lenin had already written in exile in 1897 a very direct characterisation of the connection between the Narodniks' lack of scientific method and their relation to the action of the masses. This quotation rounds off this section of the argument:

... their lack of sociological realism impels them to a specific manner of thinking and reasoning about social affairs and problems which might be called narrow self-conceit or, perhaps, the **bureaucratic mentality**. The Narodnik is always dilating on the path "we" should choose for our country, the misfortunes that would arise if "we" directed the country along such-and-such a path, the prospects "we" could ensure ourselves if we avoided the dangers of the path old Europe has taken, if we "take what is good" both from Europe and from our ancient village-community system, and so on and so forth. Hence the Narodnik's complete distrust and contempt for the independent trends of the **various social classes which are shaping history in accordance with their own interests** ... As man's history-making activity grows broader and deeper, the size of that mass of the population which is the **conscious maker of history** is bound to increase. The Narodnik, however, always regarded the population in general, and the working population in particular, as the **object** of this or that more or less sensible measure, as something to be directed along this or that path, and never regarded the various classes of the population as **independent history-makers** on the existing path, never asked which conditions of the present path might **stimulate (or, on the contrary, paralyse) the independent and conscious activity of these history-makers**.<sup>11</sup> (my emphasis, C.S.)

## THEORY AND PRACTICE

It is only on the basis of seeing the existence of objective reality independent of human consciousness as 'the main thing' that Lenin is able to make the great contribution on reflection and cognition as an active *process*, not as a dead mirroring, which he does in the *Notebooks*. Only a materialist understanding of the active role of human practice in the real world could form the basis for the richness of Lenin's conceptions, for it is from that real world that the infinitely expanding and enriched truth of human understanding is derived. If Lenin had written a book on dialectics based on the *Notebooks*, it would have been a presentation of the lines of growth of this human knowledge, the process by which man has continuously developed new processes

of learning about the real world through his practice and through the development of thought. Every aspect of the development of techniques, of philosophy and social science, must be viewed as part of this process by which man's concepts become more and more 'filled with content'. This implies that every aspect of the history of thought and philosophy is viewed not abstractly, negatively, from the point of view of the number of right and wrong elements contained in it, but in its own concrete development, and as part of the whole of human progress. Secondly, it implies the complete denial of dogmatism in theory. There is not a fixed truth, a secret of the world to be one day finally discovered, and our 'true' concepts about the reality we know are only true insofar as they express the changing character of the reality concerned, together with the change and flexibility of our own concepts, whose limitations are revealed by every experience and advance in thought. Lenin heavily underscores the following passage:

'Hegel says, the expression "unity" of thinking and being, of finite and infinite, etc., is false, because it expresses "quietly persisting identity" ... Actually, we have a **process**.' (p. 200)

Hegel insists that thought must not imagine, once it gets beyond appearance to essence, that it has done its work. On the contrary, the discovery of truth is an infinite process, and the concepts which reflect it are the developing modes of a deeper and deeper penetration of that reality. Lenin says briefly: 'The coincidence of thought with the object is a *process*.' Man does not arrive at the truth, at 'repose' in his relation to truth, by simply reaching conclusions about it. Man's thought is relaxed, developing freely, in 'repose', only through the denial of repose, only through 'the firmness with which he eternally creates the contradiction between thought and object and eternally overcome it'. This view of the relation between concepts and reality is brilliantly formulated, and to grasp this relation is the essence of Marxist politics as of any other science. Let us take as an example the problems which often arise in the day-to-day work of Marxist organisation. So long as the 'truth' about politics is thought to consist of some fixed secret of Marxist doctrine, some set of recipes, then reality proves very intractable indeed, constantly facing the revolutionary with frustrations, 'disappointments' and 'disillusionments'. Methods of work become inconsistent and moody, in a word, subjectivist. But if there is constant and conscious effort to probe and learn from reality, from the living movement, and on the deeper and deeper theoretical understanding flowing from this to base the Party's activity and organisation, a thirsting for enrichment by penetration of living reality, then the result is different. Although this *looks* more 'difficult', less 'sure',

10. Lenin, Selected Works, Vol. 3, p. 68.

11. Collected Works, Vol. 2, p. 523-4.

constantly re-examining its own assumptions, yet it gives rise to steadier, more relaxed methods of work, real 'repose' resting on strength, by virtue of the security and certainty and determination with which the learning, penetrating, questing process is organized, in order to fill our concepts with objective content. This is the process of creating and overcoming the contradiction between our ideas and objective reality.

'The **Reflection** of nature in man's thought must be understood not "lifelessly", not "abstractly", not **devoid of movement, not without contradictions**, but in the eternal **process** of movement, the arising of contradictions and their solution.' (p. 195)

The implications of this view of cognition, of the process by which men have gained and will continue to gain knowledge of the truth, for a Marxist view of the history of philosophy, are pointed out by Lenin in some very stimulating short passages, particularly in the fragment, 'On the Question of Dialectics', which has appeared previously in English, but will be much more meaningful now that it can be compared with the earlier notes which prepare for it (pp. 87-100). For reasons of space this question must await treatment in a later article.

Lenin very specifically says that the self-movement of things through the struggle of opposites is the essence of dialectics. This is the logical consequence of the understanding that dialectics is the self-movement of reality, and of the concepts reflecting reality, and not an external logic which imposes its own distinctions and comparisons on reality. Dialectics is the theory of how reality *sorts itself out*, with growing human knowledge seen as the latest development of this reality, rather than a way of *sorting out* reality. Hegel is quoted by Lenin to this effect::

'Thinking Reason (as compared with "imagination" and "intelligent reflection"), sharpens the blunt differences of Variety, the mere manifold of imagination, into essential difference, that is, Opposition. The manifold entities acquire activity and vitality in relation to one another only when driven on to the sharp point of Contradiction; thence they draw negativity, which is the inherent pulsation of self-movement and vitality . . .' (p. 142)

It is not necessary to mention here the occasions on which Lenin applied this approach to political questions in such a way that he was constantly condemned for doctrinairism and factionalism. Right through the history of Russian Social-Democracy he fought bitterly its petty-bourgeois and

intellectual wing, expressing itself first through Struve and the 'legal Marxists', then in Plekhanov's subjectivism and 'circle' spirit and the Menshevik objection to proletarian conceptions of organization, in the ultra-left ideas which sprang up during the years of reaction, through to the struggle against liquidationism and the weakness of those who 'conciliated' the reformists rather than fight to establish the independence of the working class against them. As Trotsky later acknowledged, he and others took for pettiness and crudeness what in fact amounted in Lenin to political necessity, based upon a method of proceeding from the basic contradictions facing the movement. Again, later articles will take up some of these important points.

It is vital to see the unity between Lenin's political career and his dialectical method. In his iron insistence on principle, even at the expense of personal and organisational difficulties which horrified those with more impressionistic methods, Lenin carried into practice the idea that the working class must decide its own fate, must place the achievement of its political independence through a revolutionary party before all partial considerations. Political and theoretical vacillations, subjective reactions to difficulties and to discipline, these were not separate or partial questions; they had to be analysed and decisively dealt with from the point of view of building a movement in the concrete conditions of Russia. Lenin's study of Hegel in 1914-15 helped to heighten his awareness of the universality and depth of this method and so equipped him for the even greater task of reorientating the socialist movement of the whole world. This could not be done on an empirical basis alone. The facts studied for Lenin's *Imperialism* and his work on the Second International and the Russian Revolution were selected and had meaning only in the framework of the dialectical method roughly drafted in the *Notebooks*, with its stress on the interconnection of all aspects of phenomena, the identity of opposites, the need to go deeper and deeper into the practice of men in changing nature and themselves. A return to the study of Lenin's practice and method today is an essential part of the solution of our revolutionary tasks.

(A further article on 'Thought and Action in Lenin's *Philosophical Notebooks*' will appear in the next issue of LABOUR REVIEW.)

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