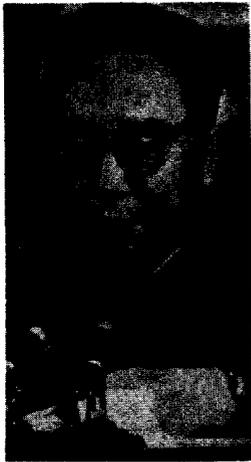


MARXIST BULLETIN

6

Chairman Hua Kuo-feng.

Vice-Chairman Teng Hsiao-ping



WE'RE WINNING WITH LABOUR

PAY RISES
LOWEST IN
EIGHT YEARS

40p

Executives broke
pay ceiling with
Government help



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Editorial One

1977 - THE YEAR OF BETRAYAL: 1978 - "THE YEAR OF RECOVERY?".

Writing in the Financial Times (29.11.77), Joe Rogaly stated:

"I cannot for the life of me think of any reason why anyone should consider voting Conservative at the next General Election. In terms of what Mrs Thatcher's Tories have to offer we are already served by about as a Conservative government as we are liable to get... Mr Callaghan's government has set out a level of unemployment that no Conservative government would have dared to accept... Is there a Conservative Home Secretary who would behave very differently from Mr Merlyn Rees? A Secretary of State for Social Services who would differ radically from Mr David Ennals?"

This sums up the pernicious role of the Labour government in the last year. It has been doing that which a Conservative government could not do, without a confrontation with the unions of the proportion of the 1974 clash with the miners. They have decided on a high unemployment economy, and done their very best to make the working class pay the cost of the crisis of British capitalism.

The defeat of the Tories in 1974 showed the immense frailty of the British ruling class in the face of a working class offensive. It threw them into a crisis from which they have not recovered. They are divided as to what strategy to use against the organised labour movement. The relations between the classes have not been radically transformed since 1974. However, the danger signs are all too clear, as Social Democracy is used to disarm the working class, and split its ranks in preparation for a ruling class assault on its organisations.

The British bourgeoisie, if it is to make its industry competitive with the world giants (USA, Japan, West Germany) needs to tackle the trade union movement, which has still undergone no major defeats in the post-war period. The ruling class is as yet not strong enough to achieve this, nor in agreement as to the means. But the leadership of the Labour movement in its quest to resuscitate antiquated British capitalism, attempts to tie its organisations to the needs of the British ruling class - to subordinate these organisations to the bourgeois state. The trade union and Labour bureaucracy acts as the policeman of the bourgeoisie within our movement. Its job is to discipline the Labour movement to the needs of capitalism. This is the aim of the policy of "voluntary" incomes policy. Phases one and two, in 1975 and 1976 were said to be emergency measures forced onto the government by economic circumstance. Even the present 10% limit was supposed to be an "orderly transition" back to "free collective bargaining".

However, Healey and Callaghan are now looking ahead.

"A powerful group within the government now favours a permanent incomes policy. The Prime Minister and his economics ministers are already turning their minds to what should follow the current ten per cent pay guidelines in August. But their real

aim is a long term wage restraint which would do away with the need to cobble together separate "stages" of pay control every summer (as they have for the past three years)". (Economist, January 7th. P. 83).

At the TUC Conference in September, Callaghan suggested that he no longer believed that "free collective bargaining" was consistent with controlling inflation or social justice. In December, Healey told a group of "moderate" Labour MPs that wage restraint would have to continue for the "foreseeable future". He followed this by writing in the Christmas edition of "Socialist Commentary" that he was in favour of a West German style "restraint" in which the government determines the maximum increase in earnings, "compatible with growth and stable prices", and the unions and employers negotiate within the government set limit (this idea is supported by the CBI). He said that no government could avoid an incomes policy for its own employees, and therefore it was only "fair" that the same pay policy was operated in the private sector as well! Callaghan later confirmed that with inflation "liable to fall to 5%", than a 5% wage increase "seemed reasonable" for the post-ten percent period. Transport Secretary William Rodgers recently joined in the unholy chorus, telling an audience in Leicester that

"the time has come now to stop thinking of incomes policy as a temporary expedient and to begin to accept it as a necessary and obvious component of economic management and social planning". (Economist, January 7th. P 83).

And, of course, there was GMWU leader David Bassnett's statement in favour of reforms for "better regulation" of public sector pay, since in his opinion "free collective bargaining" doesn't really exist in the public sector anyway.

Heady with the success of their wage limit and the relative ease with which they have been able to achieve it (aside from self-financing productivity deals) the government wants more grovelling from the TUC, without whose treacherous assistance they could not have succeeded thus far. With a permanent incomes policy the role of the Trades Unions is castrated. They are tied to the state, in as much as they must adhere to the "plan" of a bourgeois government. The great advantage, from the standpoint of the bourgeoisie, is that such a policy divides the working class by making different sections of the workforce, in a particular factory or industry, fight each other for the biggest slice of the predefined "cake". Thus, the employer is no longer seen as the direct enemy, and internal strife is sown within the Labour movement, debilitating its capacity to struggle in a unified way against the bourgeoisie as a whole.

Acceptance of "a year for Britain" in 1975, led to yet another in 1976 and a further reduction in living standards last year. Now, the government aims to ensure that nobody will regain the loss in their living standards by tying wages to the level of inflation in each particular year. If the government is allowed to continue to get away with "phase three", then its chances of implementing a further "phase" will be heightened. The burning necessity for those unions with wage claims in (above 10%) like the Power workers, is to unite to bring about the breakthrough necessary to defeat government policy. At the same time pressure should be heightened on the TUC (especially in the light of plans for a permanent incomes policy) to support those struggles and to break with this government.

The Lib-Lab Pact

The year 1977 was, of course, the year of the Lib-Lab pact. This was supposed to sustain the government in office, long enough for them to get the economy on its feet and to ensure a Labour majority at the next election. A minority position is, of course, a good alibi for this reactionary right wing government, since it can point to this as the reason for its inability to carry out "radical"

legislation, lacking a working majority in Parliament.

The Lib-Lab pact was accepted with relative ease by the Labour movement, and notably, by the rank and file of the Labour Party, fearful of the prospect of a Tory government (see Editorial 3). The left Labour MPs did nothing to challenge the pact, as could be seen by their complete capitulation to the Callaghan, Healey leadership at the LP Conference.

The dangers inherent in such a step as the agreement with the Liberals cannot be underestimated. In present circumstances there is a distinct possibility that the nationalist movements (SNP and Plaid Cymru) could make considerable headway in the next General Election. Such growth, if sustained, could lead to a situation in which it would be extremely difficult for Labour to achieve a Parliamentary majority. This would pose the possibility of a whole series of coalition governments, as the norm of political rule in Britain in the future.

For the rank and file of the Labour Party the idea of coalition is synonymous with betrayal of our class. However, for the more "pragmatic" leadership that it is burdened with, the idea of coalition, if "forced" upon them by the "realities" of a particular situation, is to say the least, not unreasonable. To foist such a course on the LP could be a monumental task for the right wing and would pose a split. Yet there is no room whatsoever for complacency. We cannot simply sit back and say that the spectre of MacDonald will prevent such a course. Despite the virulent hatred of the rank and file at the very thought of such a policy, the Lib-Lab pact has created a precedent, which unless defeated, could prepare the ground for future betrayals of historic proportions.

If a situation were to develop where there was continually no overall majority for a single party, then there would be much argument brought forward about the need to "adapt to political realities"; that coalition would give the LP at least the opportunity of influencing the direction of the government, which after all, would be better than a right wing Tory government etc.. For anybody who is serious about fighting to change to course of this government, a total rejection of the Lib-Lab pact is an indispensable base to their opposition. But most important, the struggle must continue, both within the LP and the Trades Unions, to break the pact. This necessity means smashing through the ten percent limit. If it was significantly broken then the pact could not hold together.

The Firemens' Strike.

The defeat of the firemens' strike represented a great blow to the entire Labour movement. The General Council of the TUC, in opposing the strike 20 votes to 17 and incidentally, breaking Congress policy to oppose the ten percent, succeeded in dealing it a death blow. In isolation, they had no chance whatsoever especially with a leadership which was opposed to the strike in the first place.

Whilst being verbally "opposed" to the ten percent limit, which they considered "too inflexible", the TUC has done nothing to mobilise the workers' movement against it, and indeed urged the firemen back to work. Murray even had the audacity to suggest that opposition to the firemens' action did not represent a capitulation to the government's pay limit! However, the TUC has by its tacit support of government policy, thus far ensured that such struggles as do occur have been purely sectional, so that in isolation they can be beaten back to work.

The determination of the firemen was considerable, despite the fact that it was their first ever strike. It reflected the enormous frustration which is building up within the workers' movement - frustration with falling living standards. Everybody was watching and waiting for the outcome. Many groups of workers have

held back their claims, to see if any of the "big battalions" could succeed in smashing through the government limit. It was not without reason that Callaghan declared that he had to stand firm or a single breach would open up the flood-gates. In taking such an intransigent position, Callaghan stood firmer (in the interests of capitalism) than even some sections of the bourgeoisie who believed that the firemen should have been treated as a "special case" (along with the Army).

Supporting this "special case" argument were virtually the entirety of the left Labour MPs. They could have used the opportunity of the strike to develop a campaign against government policy in support of workers in struggle against the ten percent limit. However, having capitulated at the Labour Party Conference they chose "the least line of resistance" instead of challenging the government. The only exception was Dennis Skinner who insisted that the whole working class should be treated as a "special case".

Now that the firemen have been defeated it can be expected that more workers will be convinced of the impossibility of breaking the government barrier (especially with the situation in the NUM).

The Miners

The last year was notable for the infamous machinations of the right wing leadership of the NUM. They have pulled off a coup of some significance. In support of government policy they have managed to overthrow both the Conference decisions and the ballot on the question of productivity deals that they saw as a means of defusing the possibilities of a struggle against the government limit, for the £135 wage. Yet even when the ballot went against them, these great "democrats" and "moderates" showed their complete contempt for the democratic procedures of their union. In defence of such blatantly anti-democratic procedures Gormley said: "life doesn't stop just because a decision has been taken in the past" or, in other words, Conference decisions are not binding on the leadership of the NUM!

The position of the leadership quite naturally fanned the fires of "moderation" in the normally conservative areas, which began insisting that they would seek local productivity deals whatsoever the decision of the union. This clearly posed the danger of a disastrous split within the union. Such a prospect within an important vanguard element of the workers' movement would have been disastrous not only for the miners but for the entire working class. What was needed was a firm stand by the left wing around a policy which could have secured the unity of the union.

The left wing of the NUM Executive, to block this move of the right wing for local productivity deals, should have called for an emergency national conference, fighting to win enough support for it in the areas. This would have given the opportunity to reaffirm union policy and to instruct the executive to carry it out. In Scotland there was such a call. However, instead of this Scargill made the mistake of going to the bourgeois courts to try and overturn the decision of the Executive. The internal affairs of the NUM (and the workers' movement generally) are its business and not that of the bourgeois courts. Scargill set a dangerous precedent by his action. It was the decision of a bureaucrat who fears to mobilise his membership. The only way to defeat the right wing was, and remains, by the winning of the support of the union membership, not by seeking the support of a benevolent judge and then making wounded cries about lack of faith in British justice.

After the court's decision against Scargill, the Yorkshire area executive drew back from taking on the right wing at a national level. It decided to ballot its

membership to gain authority for striking in Yorkshire alone to ensure the same wage as those men in the areas subject to productivity deals. This was simply the road to isolation and defeat. The central question was that of developing national unity against productivity and for implementation of conference decisions. A strike in Yorkshire in complete isolation would only have caused confusion and disunity within the ranks of the NUM and would inevitably have been defeated.

The Scottish area NUM was the first of the traditionally militant areas to crack. Stalinist Mick McGahey said that one had to "accept reality" and that productivity deals were being negotiated all over the country, therefore, it was necessary for them to look at the possibility of such deals in Scotland. This was the worst kind of defeatism. McGahey's concern for his position in the bureaucracy meant that he was unwilling to make a stand and place his position at risk. Initially he had made a statement (for which he had no mandate) that the Scottish NUM would strike if local productivity deals went ahead. In response to this ultra-left verbiage, a local Scottish pit came out on strike against McGahey. In the face of this and the widening support for productivity deals, he capitulated without a struggle, unwilling to fight for an emergency conference.

Finally, the Yorkshire miners reversed their opposition to productivity schemes by voting by almost two to one against the mandate Scargill was seeking, for possible strike action in Yorkshire. This was hardly surprising when these men were faced with the prospect of fighting in isolation with the danger of a split in their union facing them.

The right wing of the NUM has struck a blow, not just for the Labour government, but for the British ruling class, which is undoubtedly rubbing its hands with glee at the division which has been created within the ranks of the NUM, the very union which dealt the death blow to the Heath government. The only way to retrieve the situation is to fight for an emergency conference to reverse the decision on productivity deals which are so devious.

However, the relationship of forces within the NUM have now shifted significantly. The left wing of the union, because of the inadequacy of its leadership, (which has played into the hands of the right wing) has a long and bitter struggle ahead of it, to restore its ascendancy. That struggle needs to be centred upon a reversal of the productivity scheme policy, and an overturning of government policy which facilitated the right wing's policy coup.

Grunwick

The year 1977 was, of course, infamous for the betrayal perpetrated by the TUC on the Grunwick strikers. Enforcing a legalistic policy on them, of reliance upon ACAS and the courts, it systematically refused to mobilise its membership to secure the defeat of Ward.

The whole dispute brings into question the right of workers to join a trade union. It is in that sense a test case, the implications of which are far-reaching. Should the Grunwick workers suffer final defeat then a vast number of Grunwicks will appear up and down the country (as has begun to be seen).

The strikers' union APEX, of course, has played just as reactionary a role as the TUC, in attempting to prevent any mass mobilisation in support of the strike. Like his bureaucratic kind, Grantham, the APEX leader was greatly frightened by the mobilisation of the working class. His position has long been that it was impossible to win the dispute and that "the best we can get is a draw".

Despite the great importance of the mass mobilisations, especially for the morale of the strikers and the Labour movement generally, the only final way to

put an end to the struggle would be to cut off the supplies of gas, electricity etc. to the firm. Yet the TUC and the various unions involved in the supply industries are determined not to break the (bourgeois) law, for such action would threaten them with legal action and prospective fines. However, we have seen before that in face of a determined Labour movement that the law is helpless (the AUEW fine and the Pentonville 5), yet the TUC leadership will not mobilise the movement unless they are absolutely forced to. The movement has shown its willingness time and time again to support the Grunwick strikers. Indeed, the postmen in the area operated a blacking of Grunwick mail, in opposition both to the law and their own union leadership. For this act of class solidarity the UPW disciplinary committee has fined London postal workers officials £1,400!

The prospects for the strikers are not good. Yet the situation is retrievable, but only on the basis of a struggle for continued mass mobilisations and within the unions such as the UPW for total blacking of supplies to close down Ward's scab shop. If the strikers can keep going over the winter then a chance remains. But what is required is a battle against the Trade Union bureaucracy which is prepared to sit back and see the strikers defeated. This necessarily means a heightening of pressure from union branches and Trades Councils. The movement is strong enough to defend any union from the wrath of the courts. The struggle must not be allowed to dissipate.

Bankruptcy of Trade Union Militancy

Above all else 1977 has shown the complete bankruptcy of mere Trade Union militancy in the struggle against a Labour government serving the needs of capitalism (aided by a subservient Trade Union leadership). Workers frustrated by the role of a Labour government in presiding over a considerable drop in their standard of living, have turned to the only weapon they know, their Trades Unions. Yet here they have been balked by a leadership in closest collaboration with the government. Where the pressure of the membership has been so great that the unions have been forced to act, they have done so in isolation, on the basis of more wage demands. Whilst we support any union in its struggle to achieve its wage demands, the problem that faces the working class cannot be met by individual unions pressing their separate wage claims in isolation. With the government imposed limit, a union fighting for a wage claim to restore the real income of their members must be prepared for a political battle with the government.

The lift engineers showed clearly the problems involved in attempting to break the government's pay limit. Their claim was for 135%. This was seen as the means of defending their living standards and regaining lost ground. Yet achieving such a demand in complete isolation was impossible. They struck for 135% and went back for 10%!

Similarly, the miners' struggle reflected the same illusions in mere militancy. If they could force the Tories to heel then why not a Labour government? Alas, the politics of 'muscle' in the face of a Labour government is bankrupt. In a political struggle against a Labour government (and the TUC leadership) is a programme of demands which can unify the working class in defence of its interests as a whole, to develop a unified movement to change the government course before it is replaced by a Tory government. There is a crying need to unify the struggle within the Labour Party (to change this course) with the Trade Union struggles to overthrow present government policy and defeat the right wing. There is a need to break through the artificial division between the political and Trade Union wings of the movement.

It is imperative if the pay policy is to be cracked open that those unions which are coming into struggle against the government, unite in a general offensive

to bring about an end to phase three. Above all, that requires a fight against the union bureaucracy which will resist such a course. Central to such a struggle though, must be the demand that the present government is ended and that it carry out the manifesto on which it was elected. This does not mean that we support that programme which is a Utopian dream of reforming British capitalism. But such a demand is necessary so that the majority of workers who place their confidence in Social Democracy can test out the reformist programme in action.

1978 - "THE YEAR OF RECOVERY"?

What then, when we look at the bleak picture of betrayal by the leadership of the Labour movement, are the prospects for 1978? According to Callaghan, it is to be the year of the Great Recovery when Britain begins to ascend from her long decline. There has been much euphoria about the more favourable financial situation and the inflowing "black gold" of North Sea oil. Yet the more realistic bourgeois press is far more cautious and not at all looking forward to the new year with confidence.

"It would be too saintly not to admit a sense of glee at the pound rising and the dollar falling. But a moment of chauvinist indulgence is all that we should allow ourselves. Everything is happening too quickly and too violently. To admire the change because it appears benevolent is to adopt the posture of a skier in a poor season who pauses on a sunny slope to admire an avalanche. Things appear to be going well for us with public expenditure at last controlled, big income tax cuts in prospect and a balance of payments in surplus. But our recovery - and world trade - is too fragile to flourish amid the turmoil we now have to associate with a world of floating exchange rates and massive monetary flows." (Our emphasis - Eds.) (Sunday Times, January 15th).

The "favourable" new British conditions, with the prospect of balance of payments surplus (thanks largely to North Sea oil) may appear to be the sign of 'success' to an election-minded Labour government, whose unpopularity threatens to return a Tory government. However, that 'success' if examined objectively, isn't what it appears to be (according to the government) especially when it is placed, as it must be, in the context of the state of the world economy.

Firstly it should be stressed that the rise of production levels is from a level lower even than during the three day week (during the Heath government)! The rising value of the pound will inevitably push up the cost of imports, and strike a blow at Britain's competitiveness in the export markets. First indications of this have already been seen in the December trade figures.

The main problem for the British bourgeoisie, though, remains the low levels of investment in productive industry which leaves them far behind foreign competitors, with lower levels of productivity. And the "investment strike" ensures this situation continues.

The World Economy

In the context of the present state of the world economy, British "success" is even more ephemeral and fragile than it might appear. The upturn in world trade after the 1974-75 recession (the first since the 'thirties) is running out of steam. The great concern of the bourgeoisie is that growth is nothing like as great as they would have hoped, or expected. Levels of investment in productive industry are much lower than they have been at this stage of the market cycle. This has two fundamental causes. Firstly, the rate of profit is falling and there is no sign of recovery. And, secondly, the strength of the workers' movement makes it

unlikely that profitability can be restored through austerity programmes.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report, recently published, offers no comfort for the bourgeoisie. The Economist, in fact, describes it as not so much a report, more of a warning. It has had to adjust its target for growth in 1978 (downwards) because of the slow growth rate in 1977, from 5% to 4½%. Yet member governments (save for the U.S. and Japan) are very dubious as to whether they will even be able to achieve this level. It is expected that another recession is in the offing, either at the end of 1978 or the beginning of 1979. This is what has precipitated moves (under U.S. pressure) towards a "reflationary" policy, in Japan and Germany, in an attempt to give world trade an impulse which could hold off a return to recession. However, the reflationary policies have thus far been unsatisfactory, as far as the U.S. is concerned, despite the fact that they have managed to bludgeon the Japanese government into increasing government spending for the next fiscal year by 16% (over the previous one). The Germans have been less accommodating. Such measures may well have a limited effect but only temporarily.

Protectionism

1977 saw the stepping up of a general movement towards protectionism, which could be transformed into a stampede when the recession hits. Despite the fact that the bourgeoisie is well aware of the very delicate balance of the world economy and the need for "planning" (i.e. agreed readjustment of world trade) its individual national interest is inevitably reasserted in a shrinking world market. Certainly, they are well aware of the dangers of protectionist measures leading to a full scale trade war, which none of them want. Yet the contradictions between national capitalisms cannot be resolved, or indefinitely "balanced" under the capitalist system. Readjustment of world trade means, of course, that the strongest bargaining position held, imposes the quota that country wants imposed upon its competitor. The Americans have done this with the Japanese, yet this has been a cue for switching of resources (of production) to other areas, which means the imbalance of trade (in favour of the Japanese) remains, nullifying the quotas in the original problem area.

What we have thus far seen is the imposition of a quota system by "free agreement" (i.e. barely disguised coercion) or the "trigger" system as introduced by the U.S. whereby certain levels of quotas are imposed should imports reach certain levels of price below the equivalent domestic product. What this amounts to is disguised protectionism, which hasn't yet broken out into open war.

The first unashamedly protectionist measure has ironically been taken by the Labour government. This was the banning of all Russian steel exports to Britain, after they refused British requests to limit these exports. The implications of such a move are enormous. Britain has won in the past 18 months orders for £400 million worth of Russian capital projects. This action puts these orders in danger.

With a return to recession, world markets would shrink significantly. The battle would then be on to secure the lions share of the smaller markets and the protection of home producers from exports. The danger of an international trade war with everybody retreating behind trade barriers to protect their own producers, looms up on the horizon and the bourgeoisie are well aware of it. This would shatter the world market and induce even greater shrinkage, with all the concomitant economic and political problems.

British industry is ill-equipped to take on the world giants in a struggle for shrinking markets, and even worse situated for a recession. Her industries have not got the levels of investment which such a struggle necessitates (to be competitive, that is). That is why the supposed "success" of the past year is purely superficial. The Great Recovery will be seen to be a myth.

Editorial Two

IS THE LIB-LAB PACT A COALITION?

Current amongst some of the left wing groupings at the present (the WRP and WSL), is the idea that the Labour government, kept in office by a Liberal Party fearful of an election, in reality amounts to being a coalition government. As Marxists we are opposed to workers' parties joining coalition governments with bourgeois parties, since for us the independence of the working class and its organisations from bourgeois parties and the bourgeois state, is what separates us from the class-collaboration of reformism. Hence if this government were a coalition government, our task as Marxists would be to work towards its overthrow and call for a Labour government to take its place. (Unless, of course, we were on the very eve of working class power, and could pose Soviet power as a governmental alternative.) We would call for a Labour government independent of all bourgeois parties.

Yet here lies the absurdity of the ultra-left call to bring down this government. It is patently not a governmental coalition. It is a bourgeois government (of a workers' party) which survives only through the support of the Liberals. The central struggle for Marxists is to break the pact with the Liberals, not bring the government down. What governmental perspective is there for us at the present time, save a Labour government? None - except a Tory one!

The cul-de-sac which the 'coalition' conception leads into, is well illustrated by the position of the Workers Socialist League (WSL). Unlike the WRP they do not openly call for the overthrow of the Labour government. The lead article in Socialist Press of November 16 was headed; "Join Firemans Fight : Break Lib-Lab Coalition". It would seem therefore that the question was not to bring the government down, but to 'break' the 'coalition'. This could conceivably mean fighting to end the Lib-Lab pact - forcing the Labour government to end its agreement with the Liberals. However, Socialist Press of November 30 said: "Now that some of the strikers have learned that to win their claim they must get rid of the wage-cutting coalition government, they must now go further." This implies ("get rid of ") bringing down the Labour government. We are not going to deduce from one phrase that the WSL is calling for bringing down the government. Their paper is unclear on this. But the fact that such a phrase can be accommodated in their paper stems from the theoretical confusion which the term 'coalition' promotes.

It is worth stressing that if the WSL is not calling for the overthrow of the 'Lib-Lab coalition', then why not? If the present government were a coalition then Marxists should be for its overthrow (though whether or not this would be an immediate prospect would depend on concrete circumstances). Marxists would be failing in their duty to pose the independence of the working class and its organisations from bourgeois parties and the bourgeois state, if they didn't pose the need to overthrow a coalition government!

Why then is it that the WSL does not without hesitation make the call 'Bring the Lib-Lab coalition down'? The reason is that at the present time there is no other governmental perspective for the working class than a Labour government. The WSL would have to call for bringing down a Labour government, to replace it with ... a Labour government! The WSL knows this would be absurd. That is what prevents them from clearly calling for this government to be driven from office. For such a demand poses the danger of the opportunist concept creeping in of 'forcing' a Labour government to carry out our Marxist programme (this is the position of the WRP!), and which the WSL knows full well would be an opportunist demand, adapting to illusions that Social Democracy could achieve

Socialism through a bourgeois Parliament. This was the logic of the WRP's demand to bring down the Labour government, and hold an emergency Labour Party conference to adopt a socialist (i.e. Marxist) programme.

This is not thus far the position of the WSL. However, the totally erroneous position of calling this Labour government a 'coalition' government, catches them on the horns of a dilemma. It opens the road for extreme ultra-leftism. But equally it opens up the danger of opportunism. This opportunism can be seen in the WSL's demands upon the left Labour MPs.

In Socialist Press of September 28 the WSL demanded of the left Labour MPs that they fight for the removal of the Callaghan-Healey leadership and for a socialist programme for the coming general election (this was an article related to the Labour Party conference, for which these demands were raised).

Firstly, for Marxists the role of a Labour government is not simply a question of personalities. It is the programme of Social Democracy which is the basis of the present government's policy, not the fact that Healey and Callaghan lead it. Even if the left Social Democrats were in office this would not change the counter-revolutionary nature of Social Democracy, as the WSL is aware.

If we were voting in an election for the leadership of the Labour Party, or the NEC, then we would undoubtedly vote for the left Social Democrats. But even if the left MPs were in the leadership of the Labour Party, Social Democracy has "definitely gone over to the side of the bourgeoisie"(ever since 1914). That is why it is a bourgeois government.

To simply demand of the left Labour MPs that they get rid of the Callaghan-Healey leadership, adapts to the conceptions of Social Democratic workers that the reason for betrayals by Labour governments is not the political nature of Social Democracy, but simply 'bad leaders'. The central question in challenging the positions of the right-wing leadership, is that of Conference control of a Labour government (something that the above-mentioned Socialist Press article totally ignored). This would undoubtedly pose the removal of the right-wing from the Cabinet. But to pose getting rid of Healey-Callaghan without reference to the internal struggles of the Labour Party, and the need for the sovereignty of Conference over a Labour government, is a sectarian abstentionist stance with an opportunist content. This is exemplified by the demand that the left MPs 'Fight for a socialist programme for the coming general election.'

Whilst the WSL does not, like the WRP, capitulate to reformism by demanding that the right-wing carry out a Marxist programme, it does so by calling on reformists of the left variety to fight for a socialist(i.e.Marxist)programme. This is an adaptation to the belief that the Labour Party could adopt the Marxist programme! The logic of the WSL's slogan leads it to demand of Social Democracy that it carry out the Marxist programme in order to 'expose' itself, by showing that it cannot carry out such a programme(the position of the WRP.) The WSL have not said this, but their position in relation to the left MPs has the same opportunist content.

Marxists never demand of Social Democrats (left or right wing) that they carry out a socialist programme. Only Marxists can fight for a programme which represents the interests of the working class(or else we would attempt to 'reform'reformism! The programme of Social Democracy(even if it is that of left Social Democracy)is a bourgeois programme, because Social Democracy cannot break with the interests of the bourgeoisie.

So we see that the ultra-left conception of this government being a coalition government, leads not only to sectarianism but to opportunism. Unless the

comrades of the WSL 'overthrow' this conception then the danger of going further off course will become an inevitability.

This Labour government is not a coalition government. It is undoubtedly true that the acceptance of the Lib-Lab pact opens the road to the danger of coalition government in the future. But it does not, as the WSL says, embody a new level of subordination of the Labour Party to the Liberal Party. The Labour government governs in the interests of the bourgeoisie. This is what determines its programme, not the Liberals. Its programme would be no different even if the pact did not exist.

Marxists must centre their work on the need to break the Lib-Lab agreement, which means of course, opposing the third round of 'voluntary' wage restraint, supporting the mass struggles to break through it. Indeed as the WSL itself points out: if wage restraint is shattered, then the agreement with the Liberals could not hold together. We need to struggle within the Labour Party to put pressure on the left Labour MPs to openly support the mass struggles against the third round and to win the NEC to opposition to the Lib-Lab pact, and support of workers' struggles against wage restraint.

Dictatorship of the Proletariat & the Kremlin Bureaucracy

An article on the abandonment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the 'polemics' which it arouses in the international apparatus of the Kremlin, by Michel Lancray.

Translated by Alan Bridges from the November and December issues (Nos.578 and 579) of 'La Verite', organ of the Central Committee of the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste.

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Editorial Three

THE LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE AND DEMOCRACY.

The 1977 Labour Party conference was a complete contrast to that of the previous year. Then there was complete uproar, with Healey receiving a hot reception, and of course the famous clash between Jones and Mikado took place. The difference in mood of the '77 conference was considerable. Callaghan's speech in '76 was met with a very poor reception. Yet the following year, when the content of his speech was not much different, he received a standing ovation. Why the change in temper?

Firstly, in '76 there was still hope of holding off further cut-backs in government spending. Yet in '77 they were an accomplished fact. The resistance of conference to the government was low not because the rank and file had come to endorse the cuts - that would have represented a real rightward shift - but because they saw no prospect of winning the battle in the near future. We should not overlook the fact that there were no debates on housing, health, and education, all of which have been badly affected by the cuts, and would have allowed conference a chance to voice its opposition. Skillful manoeuvring by the Conference Arrangements Committee played its part in stage-managing the calm of conference.

Secondly, the apparent success of the government in putting its financial house in order (balance of payments surplus etc) together with the tempting promise of abundance on the morrow as a result of North Sea Oil, have misled large numbers of Labour supporters into believing that the governments policies will hold off catastrophe long enough for the Labour Party to win an overall majority at the next election, by which time we should be able to reverse the cuts, and then halt the rise in unemployment etc. Closely related to this apparent success and illusory hopes was a real suspicion, played upon cynically by Callaghan and Healey, that there would be an early election. This, of course, produces a tendency to close ranks and mute differences.

The third factor in the calm of conference was the minority position of the government. This has been the pretext for the left Labour MPs avoiding any real fight against the government - and on the whole the Labour Party accepted it. In other words the calm of conference was predictable ever since the passive acceptance of the Lib-Lab pact by many if not most rank and file members of the Labour Party. It has been accepted on the grounds that it is necessary to keep the Labour government in office. This, of course, was and is not correct. But given that the prevalent view was that the only choice was the Lib-Lab pact (until the next election could provide a Labour majority) or a Tory government, it was hardly surprising that the majority of the rank and file chose to acquiesce in the former. These factors, and not any shift in political allegiance to the right, were the main reasons for the calm of the '77 conference.

A look at the constituency votes for the NEC shows the left holding its majority. Admittedly most NEC members gained fewer votes, but this was due to their wider distribution over a much larger list of candidates. Left wingers lost votes, but so did Lena Jaeger and Shirley Williams. Right wingers gained votes, but so did Kinnock, Skinner and Wise. The left wing held its ground, and this is indicative of the opposition which is still prevalent in the constituencies.

Without doubt the most outstanding feature of the conference was the complete capitulation by the left MPs. It was not that their opposition was inadequate - they just did not put up any opposition at all. They acceded to the facade of a "united" conference. Despite the fact that 50 MPs signed a statement saying that they were not bound by the Lib-Lab pact, they have done nothing to bring it to an end.

The abdication of the left Labour MPs lay initially in their failure in the summer of 1975 to demand of the Labour government that it carry out the mandate of the movement on the Common Market referendum. The entire labour movement was united in opposition to the EEC. Even the conservative Parliamentary Labour Party had a majority in favour of a 'No' vote. However, the Labour Party NEC dominated by the lefts, failed to challenge the government, refusing to demand of it that it accede to conference decisions.

The defeat suffered at the referendum was a considerable blow to the ascendancy of the left, and the responsibility rested firmly with the left Labour MPs. Ever since that defeat we have seen one capitulation after another, culminating in the ignominious silence of the last conference. The lefts have failed even to fight for to fight for their own programme (the Alternative Strategy.)

Prime-Ministerial Patronage or Conference Control?

The last conference was notable for the number of resolutions on the question of the automatic reselection of MPs. This represented not simply the desire of the rank and file to control individual MPs, but to control the government itself. The question of reselection was remitted at the request of the NEC, with Mikado's assurance that the issue would be resolved at the next conference, in favour of those resolutions received. However, indications are that the NEC is attempting to delay implementation by setting up a 'study group'.

We support automatic reselection of MPs, who should not be seen as "free individuals" able to follow the dictates of their "conscience" in opposition to decisions of their local Labour party. Important as this is though, in itself it is inadequate. The central democratic question in the Labour Party is that of conference control of the government.

The left of the Labour Party cannot come to terms with this problem without challenging some of the basic tenets of bourgeois democracy. As things stand at present, a Labour government has no direct relationship with the Labour Party. "Our" government is in reality Callaghan's government - not that of the Labour Party. Bourgeois democratic tradition demands of a government that it acts as a representative of the "people" (in theory only, of course) and not one section of it. This was the basis of the argument used by Prentice to justify his case against the 'unrepresentative' nature of local Labour Party general management committees. In capitalist society however, the people are divided into classes, with different and opposed class interests.

In opposition to Prime Ministerial patronage we must pose the need for conference control - its sovereignty over a Labour government. We need to struggle for a government of the Labour Party, and not a single individual - the Prime Minister - who chooses the cabinet himself. We believe that the leader of the Labour Party should be elected by party conference and not by the PLP. Furthermore, the NEC as the leading body elected by conference, should be the guardian of conference decisions - the highest body in between conferences. If the Labour Party is in government, then the cabinet should be chosen by the elected NEC, and not by the leader of the party. The cabinet should thus be under the control of the NEC, and through them, under the control of the Labour Party's conference. "Collective cabinet responsibility" should be dispensed

with, and the whole process of government opened up to the scrutiny of the workers' movement. Secrecy of discussions at cabinet meetings should not be sacrosanct. The Labour Party and the working class in general should have the opportunity to know what discussions occur within the hallowed walls of Downing Street, and to decide which of their leaders are working in their interests, and who needs replacing.

The struggle on these democratic issues, however, should not be seen as a thing in itself, but in the context of the struggle for a government which will bring about "fundamental and irreversible shift in the balance of wealth and power towards working people."

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BY ROBERT BLACK

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The price for two volumes, approx. 600 pages each, is £7.00. Cheques payable to K. Blick, at Steyne Publications, 18 Mervyn Rd. London W.13. Also obtainable from left-wing bookshops.

China's Bureaucratic Strife - The Purging of The Gang Of Four

BY SAM STACEY.

The purging of the "gang of four" represents a watershed in the internal struggles within the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). To comprehend the nature of the struggle which emerged after the death of Mao Tse-tung, it is necessary to understand both the nature of the regime and the political differences which appeared before and during the Cultural Revolution.

The CCP was ruled over from the late 'twenties in the Stalinist tradition of bureaucratism, slander, vilification, and stifling of open debate (not to mention murder.) The struggles within the party were restricted to the highest echelons, rather than political tendencies attempting to win support from the membership by gaining a majority in open debate. Of course, from the days of the Shanghai massacre (1) a centralised national organisation was very difficult to achieve, and the ultra-left Stalin line led the CCP to abandon the cities and retreat to the countryside, leading the workers to their fate. (2) However, it was not the problems of a dictatorial regime which prevented open debate within the party, but the insistence of the leadership that was Moscow was omniscient. The line of Stalin was 'totally correct'. It had simply been carried out incorrectly by the Chinese leadership. A succession of leaders were thus blamed and slandered in defence of the 'infallible' Kremlin boss. Thus the responsibility for the debacle of Comintern policy was placed on the shoulders of Chen Tu-hsiu, Chu Chiu-pai, and Li Li San. (3) It is this tradition which set the CCP on the road to bureaucratisation (as part of the degeneration of the Comintern) (4) and the perfection of the technique of slander and abuse, aided by suppression of open debate.

Since Mao won control of the CCP in the 'thirties, every serious opponent (who threatened his leadership) has been subject to the most extreme vilification, decries usually as 'monsters' and 'demons' and of course 'capitalist roaders'. Men who had despite their weaknesses and acceptance of Stalinist methods, devoted their lives to the cause of socialism in China, on opposing Mao were immediately transformed into 'bourgeois renegades', 'agents of imperialism', longing to bring about the counter-revolution in China, and restore Chiang Kai-shek. The Stalinist logic, of which Mao was one of the most brutal practitioners, is that if you throw enough mud, some of it will stick.

The regime of the CCP was, under Mao, based on his omniscience, and all the excesses of the 'cult of the individual'. His personal cult reached the most extreme heights during the so-called Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Because of the prevalence of this cult, warring factions within the bureaucracy tend to oppose each other in the name of Mao Tse-tung Thought, (5) (i.e. they both say they interpret the 'Bible' correctly). As in the traditions of Chinese Stalinism, the two opposed tendencies in the recent struggle did not imagine that they should have an open political debate in which the CCP membership should democratically choose which they believed to be the correct political orientation

for the party to take. Being good students of Mao, they prepared to fight for control of the apparatus, the normal method of political struggle in the CCP.

The Cultural Revolution.

The roots of the CR are to be found in the economic and political differences which emerged in the 1950s. A wing of the bureaucracy was seriously concerned with the widespread unrest caused by Mao's 'three red banners' (the General Line, the Great Leap Forward and the People's Communes) (8). The ultra-left Stalinist policy of slavedriving promoted opposition among both the workers and peasants. So discredited was Mao by his policies ignominious failure that he stepped down from his leading role allowing Liu Schao-chi to take over the reins of government, and sort out the mess. The Liu wing of the bureaucracy adapted to the movement of the Chinese masses, to head off its opposition to the bureaucracy as a whole. Industrial tempo was considerably slowed down and a resurgence of the worker in agriculture was allowed. The economy was stabilised after the disasters of the 'three red banners', and there was, to a certain degree, a cultural thaw.

Meanwhile Mao began preparations to challenge the Liu wing and to regain control of overall policy, and the Party apparatus. However, such was the hopelessness of his position within the apparatus that Mao had to turn to the People's Liberation Army and the student 'shock-troops' to smash the ageing bureaucracy into line. With the support of Lin Piao the People's Liberation Army (PLA) was transformed into a huge study group of 'Mao Tse-tung Thought', by way of Mao's Socialist Education Movement, in preparation for the eventual battle.

Whilst the CR was supposedly a struggle against bureaucracy in reality it was a struggle against one wing of the bureaucracy (the majority of it) by Mao, utilising firstly a petty bourgeois mass student movement, and then the PLA. This was illustrated at the end of the CR by the purging of Red Guards who attacked elements of the bureaucracy who supported Mao (notably Chou En-lai).

The proletarian centres of China were the core of the opposition to the Red Guard plague which infested the industrial cities, denouncing the workers for having a bourgeois consciousness (i.e. wanting a decent standard of living), demanding that they take wage cuts, and generally bossing them about.

The entire line of the CR was opposed to the independence of the proletariat from the bureaucracy. The Trades Unions were closed down by Mao because they were mostly staffed by Liuists, and tended to adapt to the pressure of the workers (9). The Mao wing, however, demanded that the proletariat slaved away for the good of the fatherland, with no remuneration.

The Liuist wing of the bureaucracy refracted the movement of the Chinese proletariat. At each crisis it had tended to adapt to the pressure of the Chinese masses, especially in the lower echelons of the apparatus. But its adaption was within the confines of assuring the overall control of the CCP bureaucracy. Nonetheless, when they did adapt to the pressure of the masses, they went beyond the control of the bureaucracy. This can be seen by the fact that the working class threw up organisational forms in the industrial cities which were independent of either wing of the bureaucracy.

In response to the wage-cutting Red Guard movement, the workers of Shanghai and Wuhan launched insurrections which placed power into the hands of the armed proletariat. Only the intervention of the PLA was able to put them down.

It is important to grasp the political line up of the two opposing wings of the bureaucracy to understand the post-CR events. Essentially the Mao wing was

irreconcilably opposed to the independent movement of the proletariat, whilst the Liu wing adapted to it to ensure it did not become transformed into a torrent which would wash away the entire bureaucracy.

The 'gang of four' - Chiang Ch'ing, Chang Ch'un-chiao, Wang Hun-wen and Yao Wen-yuan(6) - were central leaders of the Cultural Revolution. Their authority had rested on the direct support of Mao. They were, so to speak, his lieutenants in the struggle against the 'rights', Liu Shao-Chi and Teng Hsiao-ping. Chiang and Co. were not well placed for a power-struggle after Mao's death, for their main support had lain not in the party apparatus, but in the 'mass organisations'(7) which developed during the Cultural Revolution. These however, were superseded by a reconstituted party organisation, to which a lot of the old cadres were restored after being purged during the Cultural Revolution.

A Resurgence of the 'Moderates'.

The union with Lin Piao during the CR had been the essential element in his victory. Without the PLA he would have been undoubtedly defeated. At the 1969 Congress of the CCP Lin was made Mao's successor. Yet inside two years a rift developed between them. The differences are obscure, but it is believed that they centred on foreign policy, and the move towards detente with Washington, and the denouncing of the USSR as the "main enemy". Either way, the death of Lin, supposedly in a plane crash whilst fleeing to Moscow, left Mao in a somewhat isolated position. Most of the leading veteran cadres were now either dead or purged. He therefore turned to Chou En-lai as his main support.

In the early 1970s Chou began rehabilitating a great number of cadres purged during the CR, including "No.2 capitalist roader" Teng Hsiao-ping. When Chou became ill in 1974, his role of premier was fulfilled by Teng rather than by Wang Hung-wen, who was designated as third in command at the 1973 Congress (after Mao and Chou). This was a clear indication of the resurgence of the "moderates" and of the powerful position of Chou. Any doubts were removed by the Fourth National People's Congress in 1975. Chou's "four modernisations" (in industry, agriculture, defence, science/technology) were adopted as national policy. The new constitution announced by the Fourth NPC contained guarantees of private plots and wage differentials, to which Mao was opposed. His disapproval was made apparent by his absence from the Congress.

Thus with the rehabilitation of the purged "moderates" Teng and his supporters began to draw up their programmes for government work. The "radicals" of the 'gang of four' responded by attempting to reverse the policies adopted by the NPC. They developed a campaign against "bourgeois rights" which the NPC's decisions supposedly embodied.

The policies adopted by the Fourth NPC were a response to a widespread wave of "economism" and "anarchism" (i.e. strikes). The highest expression of this movement occurred in Hangchow where general unrest and a series of strikes, culminated in a localised insurrection, which was only put down through the intervention of the PLA. Teng took advantage of these troubles to attack the radicals' campaign of the levelling down of wages. In an interview with foreign visitors he told them that he believed that some of the Hangchow workers' demands were "rational and reasonable".

The tolling of the bell which signalled the imminent demise of the 'gang of four', was the April 1976 T'ien-an-men events. A huge anti-"radical" demonstration was transformed into a full scale riot by the removal of wreaths by soldiers placed in the square (in Peking) in commemoration of Chou En-lai. Hundreds of people were arrested, and some executed. The arch enemy of the mobilisation was Chiang Ch'ing. Slogans centred against the campaign of the

radicals to "deepen the all-round dictatorship"(i.e.win control for their faction.)At the same time there were many similar mobilisations throughout China, and they would appear to have been partially concerned with wage demands.

These mobilisations sent shock waves throughout the bureaucracy. Teng was expelled from the leadership as the main representative of the "right deviationist wind" and an "unrepentant capitalist roader." He was blamed as the instigator of the Tien-an-men events. The removal of Teng was the last official act by Mao before his death later that year. At the same meeting which purged Teng, Hua Kuo-feng was appointed First Vice-Chairman of the Party, which was tantamount to making him heir to the 'throne'.(10)

There is some question as to why Mao chose as his successor Hua Kuo-feng, rather than one of the 'gang of four'. Hua tells in his political report to the CCP Congress of a struggle between Mao and the 'gang of four' in the last two years of Mao's life. This could of course be total fabrication, to legitimise the purging of the 'gang', or there could be an element of truth in the assertion. Why did Mao not name one of the 'gang', who had been his closest supporters, as his successor? It is possible(in the author's opinion)that Mao being aware that Chiang,Chang,Wangand Yao had little or no support among the older basic cadre of the Party, decided to choose an apparatus man who could win the support of the majority of the cadre. For the moment though, we can only speculate.

The Purge of the 'Radicals'.

After the death of Mao the 'gang of four' were arrested at Hua's behest, on the basis of the decision of his supporters in the Politburo. The Central Committee was simply called to ratify the decision. The 'gang' were purged with relative ease, without throwing the country into great turmoil. The downfall of the 'gang' was greeted in China by an enthusiastic public,especially in Shanghai,where western journalists reported that millions of people turned out onto the streets to express their joy at Chiang Ch'ing's fate. At this giant mobilisation though, the government swiftly sent considerable numbers of troops from other areas into the city, in case this popular enthusiasm went beyond the bounds of thanking their "wise leader" Hua, for ridding them of the burden of the 'gang'. Articles proliferated in the press, stressing the necessity of subordinating the spontaneous upsurge of the masses to Party committees at all levels. The 'gang' and their supporters were for the most part defeated within a mere four weeks, which was an indication of their isolation.

Disatisfaction with low wage rates was widespread among Chinese workers. This had played a considerable part in the low levels of productivity in recent years. It has been estimated that the average industrial wage in China in 1975 was below that of 1957. In the industrial centre of Shanghai, in the same period('57-'75)industrial output rose by 450%. So, in reward for an increase in productivity of 4½ times, the Shanghai workers received less money than 18 years before! It is hardly a surprise that absenteeism and a general lack of concern with working conscientiously, has been reported to predominate in Chinese industry. The 'gang of four' and their 'egalitarian communism' were, naturally enough, the main target of the anger of Chinese workers, due to the continuously low standard of living.

The Charges.

Chiang Ch'ing and Co. have suffered the normal campaign of abuse with the CCP Congress, of course, centred upon the struggle against them. This struggle is seen as the "pivot of the struggle between the two classes." Naturally enough they have been declared to be bourgeois restorationists.

"They used all sorts of underhand methods to oppose Chairman Mao, the Central Committee headed by him, and his revolutionary line, in their attempt to usurp supreme power in the Party and

State, turn the Marxist Communist Party of China into a revisionist Party, turn our dictatorship of the proletariat into a fascist dictatorship by the bourgeoisie, and reduce China to its former status of a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country."(11)

According to Chairman Hua, Chang Ch'un-chiao had for years been "a Kuomintang secret agent"; Chiang Ch'ing "a renegade"; Yao Wen-yuan an "alien class element"; and Wang Hung-wen "a new bourgeois element." The leading lieutenants of Mao's Cultural Revolution, it seems, fooled even the great man himself! Carrying out Mao's directives were people, who according to Hua:

"...are a sinister clique formed of old and new counter-revolutionaries, who sneaked into our Party. They are typical representatives within our Party of landlords, rich peasants, counter-revolutionaries and bad elements, as well as of the old and new bourgeoisie, and they embody the desire of class enemies at home and abroad to restore capitalism in China."(12)

Thus slandered, it is of course unnecessary to hold discussions with such 'enemy' elements, but simply to purge them!

The 'gang' are accused of just about everything, including, amazingly, "disrupting" the campaign against the "right deviationist wind". As we have seen, Mao's last official act was to dismiss Teng Hsiao-ping for being a "capitalist roader" and the main representative of the "right deviationist wind". The 'gang of four' were avid supporters of the decision to remove Teng. Hua, having rehabilitated Teng, who is a member of the Standing Committee of the Politburo, (13) now accused the 'gang' of having opposed the struggle against Teng and his supporters! No doubt the irony of the statement was not lost on Teng. The "wind" was blowing in his favour.

The Eleventh Party Congress in August 1977, gave Hua plenty of time to purge the apparatus of any remaining supporters of Chiang and Co., and to prepare his programme. It was a stage-managed affair (in the tradition of CCP Congresses), which was simply a rubber stamp for decisions already made. The Chinese people did not even know it had occurred until a press release informed them of it, two days after it had finished!

The change in the composition of the leadership ratified at the Congress was fairly substantial. Of the nine members of the Politburo (at the 10th Congress in 1973) only two remained. Of the five Vice-Chairmen only one remained. Eighty five of the one hundred and ninety five members of the CC were removed. This represented 40% of the leadership dismissed in one fell swoop. (14) Furthermore, most of those dropped were the relatively young representatives of the so-called "mass organisations" used by Mao to beat the veteran bureaucracy into line. The ardent ideologues, unquestioning supporters of Mao, have been replaced with a "new" group of old bureaucrats. Mao's "model" workers and peasants have been replaced with ageing military men, technicians, police, city administrators, foreign trade experts, economists and planners.

The Political Differences.

What then are the political differences between the Hua gang and the Chiang-Chang-Wang-Yao gang? The November 25 1976 press release by the Hsinshua agency gave a clear indication. Bemoaning the role of the 'gang of four' it said:

"If you wanted to develop socialist production you were accused of "productionism"; if you wanted to strengthen administration in industry you were accused of "administrative oppression"; if you wanted to maintain principles of economic accounting you were accused of "putting profits in command"; if you were concerned about the living standards of the people

"you were said to want to "bribe the people" and accused of advocating "material incentives"; if you wanted to study technology, you were labelled a "white expert"; and so on. As a result no one knew where to turn or what to do."(15)

What this this statement indicates is an attack not on the 'gang of four' alone but on the central ideas of the Cultural Revolution: an attack on Mao himself. It especially attacks the Maoist utopian(non-Marxist)conception that ideological purity would ensure the transformation of the Chinese economy. This was taken up in the People's Daily(the CCP paper)of November 11th 1976.

"They(i.e.the 'gang of four')considered the common knowledge that communism must have a material base as heresy and used all their efforts to denounce it... They never mentioned that an important task of the proletarian dictatorship is to develop socialist production."(16)

Chairman Hua has declared that the Cultural Revolution has come to a 'triumphant' conclusion with the purging of the 'gang of four'. (It should be remembered that it was said to have come to a triumphant conclusion at both the 9th and 10th Congresses in 1969 and 1973 respectively!) Furthermore, he added:

"...this has ushered in a new period of development in our country's socialist revolution and socialist construction. Now we are able to achieve stability and unity and to attain great order across the land in compliance with Chairman Mao's wishes."(17)

This gives us a clue as to the policy of Hua, and if we examine his speech to the Eleventh Congress, it becomes even clearer.

The key to Hua's policy, and the tone for the Congress was set when he said:

"At this critical moment, the Central Committee of the Party has made the strategic decision to grasp the key link of class struggle and run the country well, that is to achieve stability and unity, strengthen the dictatorship of the proletariat and consolidate and expand the achievements of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in the midst of acute conflict between the two classes and between the two roads, so as to bring about great order throughout the country."(18) (my emphasis-S.St.)

It should be remembered that 'Chairman Mao's wishes' were expressed when Teng was sacked for allegedly failing to make "class struggle" the "key link" ahead of "stability and unity". Hua, to avoid this charge being levelled at him, links the two together. But in reality what he is most concerned about is achieving "great order across the land" which means you cannot have "class struggle" predominating(i.e. continuous purging of the party apparatus of "bourgeois" and other "bad elements", for disagreeing with the leadership.)

The Cultural Revolution's victory over those elements of the bureaucracy who opposed Mao's line caused enormous dislocation of the economy and the educational institutions of the country, especially the technical and scientific institutions. The purging of technical experts in favour of "model" ideologues (i.e. sycophants of Mao) had a detrimental effect both in industry and education, which supplied the new ideologically "pure" technicians, whose efficiency was somewhat questionable. The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists reported that Chou Jung-hsin, the Minister of Education purged by Mao (along with Teng Hsaio-ping) in 1976,

"concluded after investigation, that university standards in 1975 were no higher than those of technical middle schools before the Cultural Revolution." (19) (my emphasis - Sam Stacey).

All the evidence which has emerged points to the fact that education and scientific research are in an abysmal state of decay. Central Committee member Fang Yi, in a recent statement upon the decision of the regime to devote more money to education

and scientific research, said that the disarray of these two areas was a real barrier to the modernisation of China. To resurrect the Chinese economy there is a real need for the bureaucracy to achieve "stability and unity".

The "Eight Musts".

The core of Hua's address to the Eleventh Congress, decorated with innumerable declarations of the CCP's loyalty to every decision of their omniscient leader Mao, is what are described as the "eight musts". These constitute the main line of the programme of the new leadership. The first is the necessity to carry through the struggle against the 'gang of four' to the end. Second is the need to "consolidate and strengthen party building". Hua talks of the need to "promote the Part's centralised and unified leadership." However, he also says:

"The Party must invigorate its leadership over the Trades Unions, the Communist Youth League, Women's Federations, and other mass organisations, and must effectively overhaul and build them up and give a free reign to their due role."(my emphasis-S.St.)

Whilst the last phrase does not indicate that Hua and Co. would allow trades unions independence from the party and state(anathema to Stalinists, and tied to their overthrow by a political revolution) it does in all probability indicate that the new leadership recognises that you cannot direct the trades unions like you can the party. In the long struggle between the 'rightist' Liu Schiao-chi faction and the Mao wing of the bureaucracy, the former were always far more receptive to the demands of workers which tended to be imposed on their unions. For the Mao wing, any independent action by the proletariat was something which had to be bitterly opposed at all costs. In the 1950s he purged the entire leadership of the trades unions both at a national and local level, because his apparatus had tended to adapt to the pressure of the working class. Indeed, during the Cultural Revolution most of the trade union apparatus supported the Liu wing, and so Mao closed down the trades unions. It seems most likely that the regime, especially at a local level, will tend to adapt to one degree or another to the pressure of the proletariat, but only so far as to block the latter's independent action.

The third "must" stresses the need to build up and consolidate the CCP's leading bodies. Of course this poses the need to clear out any last supporters of Chiang and Co., but it means more than just that. So deep was the support for Liu Schao-chi and Teng Hsiao-ping at the time of the Cultural Revolution that Mao had to issue the order "Bombard the headquarters"(i.e. shake out the Party apparatus.) This entailed setting up "revolutionary committees" which consisted of "revolutionary" students(those that supported Mao), old party cadres who had "passed the test" and soldiers. Mao was forced to go outside the apparatus of the party to secure his control. After the end of the Cultural Revolution these "mass organisations" were gradually superceded by a rebuilt party apparatus.(21) They were not officially wound up though; the third "must" of Hua is their final death-knell.

The fourth point stresses the need to 'grasp revolution' and promote production, to develop the national economy.

"It answers the need for improving the material and cultural life of the people step by step and in the long run also for gradually eliminating the distinctions between town and country, between industry and culture, and between physical and mental labour and creating the material conditions for the transition to communist society. The productive forces are the most revolutionary factor."(22)

This marks a shift from the former Maoist line. To say that the productive forces were "the most revolutionary factor" during the Cultural Revolution would have been considered "rightist" heresy, as would also the mention of improving the material life of the masses. Indeed, Hua goes on to say:

"Our leading comrades at all levels should at all times have the

"well being(i.e.material well being-S.St) of the masses at heart."(23)

Whilst this will ensure the masses of nothing, it does represent a shift away from the "equalitarian communism" of the Cultural Revolution when wage increases for workers were considered as counter-revolutionary bourgeois individualism, and workers were driven to work for the good of China(i.e. the Stalinist bureaucracy) with no reward for themselves. The leadership of the regime has in fact already indicated wage increases for some workers - the very material incentives which so disgusted Mao and his supporters.

The CCP leadership aims to build an "independent and fairly comprehensive" industrial and economic system by 1980. They are careful though to set no firm targets. Hua said that by that year farming must be "basically" mechanised, and considerable(though unspecified) increases should be achieved in agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry and fisheries. Finally, on the economic plane, he said that the collective economy of the "people's communes" must be further consolidated and developed. The communes are the only area where there is as yet no indication of an overturn of Mao's policy. However, with the old "rightist" Teng Hsiao-ping re-established and the 'gang of four' purged, if agricultural development should fail to be sufficient, then it is highly probable that the leadership would lean towards allowing the expansion of personal plots, and even a 'controlled' expansion of open market conditions.

A Cultural Thaw?

The fifth "must" concerns the cultural and educational fields. Here the complete overturn of the Maoist policy is very clear. To legitimise this about turn Hua utilised the name of Mao who, supposedly, in the course of two "significant" conversations in July 1975(luckily unrecorded!) made the following "pungent" remarks:

"Model operas are not enough.(24) What is worse, one comes under fire for the slightest fault. No longer are a hundred flowers blossoming. Others are not allowed to offer any opinion, that's no good... People are afraid to write or produce plays... There should be some readjustments in the Party's policy on Literature and Art, and the performing arts should enlarge their repertoires in a year or two, or three years."(25)

According to Hua these were "stern denunciations" of the "bourgeois cultural autocracy" of the gang of four. Such words coming from Mao would indeed have been significant, for they would run counter to his Stalinist arts and literature policy, which with the exception of the brief "hundred flowers" period, he followed from the Yennan period.(26) The Cultural Revolution was initiated in the field of art and literature, with an enormous purge of those elements who would not tailor their work to the political directives of Mao.(27) Such elements were considered "bourgeois" for having the audacity to think for themselves. It certainly was true that people were frightened to write articles or produce plays. But this was a direct result of Mao's Cultural Revolution! If a writer was fearful of ending up in a labour camp for producing "counter-revolutionary" literature, then the chances were that he would neglect putting pen to paper at all!

Declaring Mao's artistic policy dead(without of course actually saying so) Hua announced that in order to allow the prospering of socialist culture it would be necessary to carry out the policy of "letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend." To develop the educational system which was rendered very backward(in terms of academic achievement) by the Cultural Revolution, Hua and Co. will obviously have to attract back many of the purged educational cadres, and they could not possibly do so without a "thaw" which would allow the intellectuals some freedom from the "thought

control" methods of Mao and the 'gang of four'. This shift in policy, however, has to be clothed in supposed support of Mao's policy. Thus Hua says that it is necessary to put into effect Mao's educational policy under which education must "serve proletarian politics" and be concerned with productive labour. However, it is fairly certain that the emphasis on students and professors doing productive labour will be lessened, if not gradually phased out altogether. One thing is certain in this respect though. The local cadres for the most part will see it as a signal to overturn Mao's educational and art and literature policies, and will tend to go further than the central leadership.

The sixth "must" emphasises the need to strengthen the state apparatus. It poses the necessity of "revolutionising" and modernising the army. Hua talks of the need to improve research in science and technology so as to increase armaments production, and improve the army's equipment. The Politburo has already sent representatives abroad to look at the possibilities of buying arms from capitalist countries. This marks the end of a rigid "self-reliance" which predominated under Mao.

The seventh main policy Hua refers to is the need to promote democracy and strengthen democratic centralism. The purpose of "democracy" though is said to be to "strengthen the Party's leading role"(i.e. the bureaucratic dictatorship of the CCP leadership). The real concern of Hua was that the 'gang of four' were stirring up "anarchism" and advocating "kicking aside the party committees in order to make revolution" and the necessity of directing "the spearhead upwards against the leadership." What Hua and Co. are concerned with is not democratic control of the regime by the Chinese workers and peasants, but merely the need for a stable regime which necessarily means giving the cadres of the Party some rope to play with, and not threatening to purge them at every twist and turn. For Hua just as for Mao, the dictatorship of the proletariat is synonymous with the dictatorship of the CCP over the workers and peasants. Indeed Hua emphasises that the entire party is subordinate to the Central Committee.

The final "must" is described as the policy of "overall consideration and all-round arrangement", or that of mobilising all "positive forces" to build socialism. This is really an emphasis on the necessity for efficiency in carrying out the overall policy. Hua stresses that the cadres are vital in achieving such aims, contrary to the 'gang of four', who considered them as 'democrats' and 'capitalist roaders', and hence totally worthless.

Conclusions.

The purging of the "leftist radicals" of the 'gang of four' is in essence a historic judgement of the older elements of the bureaucracy against Mao's overall policy from the days of the collectivisation movement and Great Leap Forward onwards. It represents their revenge upon him(if only partial thus far); revenge barely masked by use of his name in support of a line which he was opposed to. When the Hsinhua agency talks of the 'gang of four' accusing cadres of "bribing the population" and "advocating incentives", what in reality Hua and Co. are attacking is the charge levelled at the Liu Schao-chi wing of the Party during the Cultural Revolution. That is that they gave workers wage increases, thus appealing to their "bourgeois individualism." But these charges came from Mao himself!

The Cultural Revolution brought in a regime of the most anti-intellectual variety; a complete disregard for the most elementary requirements of teaching science and technology; and a cultural and political monolithism which served to disrupt the development of the economy. It is this that the new leadership is attacking. They are rejecting the politics of the Cultural Revolution. They have now put 'profits in command' in industrial enterprises(i.e. each firm must make a profit), and granted some wage increases. They have in practice(if not in word) rejected a rigid "self-reliance", and begun preparations for developing

foreign trade.

It is undoubtedly true that the majority of workers and intellectuals will expect many concessions from Hua. The workers have for many years been scolded by Maoist ideologues for having been subject to "bourgeois individualism". That is, wanting a decent standard of living. Intellectuals have likewise suffered with the outlawing of artistic freedom in the name of a supposedly revolutionary "objectivist" Zhdanov-like art which only has merit insofar as it "serves the revolution".(28)

Whilst Hua will undoubtedly grant concessions, he will do so not for the sake of democratising the regime, but to keep control for the CCP bureaucracy, and to begin the enormous task of developing the Chinese economy. However, it is impossible for him to satisfy the needs of the Chinese working class. The new leadership, as did Mao, bases itself on the platform of "socialism in a single country". Such a task is impossible, especially in such a backward country as China. The annual gross national product per head is a meagre US \$350. The economy is still essentially peasant based. Industrial production is inhibited by all manner of bottlenecks created by the bureaucratic apparatus, and also by the Maoist educational and science/technology policy. Shanghai city recently tested science and technical departments and found that few of them could reach middle-school standards in their own fields: 68% failed mathematics, 70% failed physics and 76% chemistry.(29) No doubt they were ideologically 'pure' by Maoist standards, but of little use to the Chinese economy. Hua has already reintroduced exams. In December 15-20 million students sat them, competing for a mere 300,000 undergraduate places. The prospect of not having to centre one's university studies on Mao's 'little red book'(and to mindlessly learn it by rote) has led to a resurgence of interest in attending university. Many areas have been so flooded by applicants that they have had to hold impromptu exams to enable people to sit for the actual entrance exams(to cut the numbers down). Before when a student was applying to go to a university, he had to work for a period in the countryside. There is evidence that this is now being ignored.

The overall aim of Hua and Co. is to develop an educational system which will provide the technicians and scientists which the country needs if it is to "modernise" the economy. Preparations are in hand for expanding university places. However, even if this policy is successful it cannot even begin to resolve the problems of the economy. The fate of China is inextricably linked with that of the world revolution. The Chinese bureaucracy of course supports the status quo(despite its revolutionary language). It remains a barrier to the development of Chinese society in the direction of socialism, whilst its foreign policy is opposed to revolution abroad.

However, it would be incorrect to imagine the present leadership as a monolith, simply because it was agreed on the need to purge the 'gang of four'. The problems of developing the Chinese economy are enormous. The bureaucracy aims to restore discipline to the workforce, with minimal wage increases as an incentive. In February 1977 the Times reported a conference in Peking that announced railway workers were to be reorganised into a "semi-military industrial army", and that it would need 3-5 years "hard work" to restore and develop railway transport in China. This is indicative of the real aims of the new leadership, and places their talk of a "thaw" into perspective. Whilst the Chinese masses have certain expectations of them, Hua and Co. will do nothing to place at risk the overall dictatorship of the CCP bureaucracy. The concessions which it has made, and will make in the future, will no doubt give it a wide base of support. However, the independent movement of the working class will bring it into head-on collision with the bureaucracy which cannot co-exist with an independent workers' movement. With the purging of the 'gang of four' the Chinese masses began to breathe again. They saw the purging as the first step towards

democratisation of the regime. In January 1977, on the first anniversary of Chou En-lai's death, tens of thousands of demonstrators gathered once again in the Tien An-men square, over a period of several days. They raised calls for democratic rights for the masses. One typical poster read:

"Would Chairman Hua and the CCP realise the people's aspirations by restoring the popular socialist democracy and freedom which have been snatched away by the gang of four...Would they ensure that the masses have the right to exercise supervision at all levels."(30)

It also demanded the right to select and dismiss officials and called the Tien An-men events of 1977, "the greatest mass movement since the founding of the CCP". The attitude of the bureaucracy to such demands was shown by the fact that no leading party members spoke at these demonstrations, and at night the army covered up such posters as these.

The future of the Chinese masses lies not with a benevolent CCP bureaucracy, but with its own independent action, and its own independent organs of power. The democratisation of the deformed Chinese workers state will only come through a political revolution which sweeps away the entire bureaucracy - the seizure of political power by the proletariat, with the support of the peasantry. Only an internationalist policy, based on the necessity to struggle for the overthrow of capitalism on a world scale, can defend the socialised means of production. Without the support and material assistance of an advanced workers state, socialism in backward China is an impossibility. The fate of China is linked inextricably with the struggle of the proletariat on an international scale.

- NOTES -

- (1) The Shanghai massacre was the murder of thousands of communists by Chiang Kai-shek in 1927. It was the result of Stalin's subordination of the CCP to the bourgeois nationalist Kuomintang. (See "Trotsky on China" by Pathfinder or "Problems of the Chinese Revolution", published by Ann Arbour.)
- (2) In the wake of the defeat of the Chinese revolution in 1927, as a direct result of Stalin's policy, he shifted his ground a hundred and eighty degrees and instructed the CCP to seize power. After the defeat of several ultra-left insurrections Stalin instructed the CCP to set up "soviets" in the countryside.
- (3) Chen Tu-hsiu was the founder member of the CCP, and a leader of the Left Opposition, founded in 1928. He was blamed for Stalin's policy of subordination of the CCP to the Kuomintang. Chu Chiu-pai and Li Li San were successive General Secretaries of the CCP after Chen. They were held responsible for the ultra-left putschist phase of Stalin's policies.
- (4) The Comintern was the Communist International which, with the defeat of the Left Opposition came under the control of Stalin.
- (5) Mao Tse-tung Thought is the term which describes the contribution of Mao to the "development" of Marxism. In reality it is synonymous with the supposed infallibility of Mao.
- (6) The 'gang' were in fact leading members of the Cultural Revolution Group which organised the CR according to Mao's directives.
- (7) The 'mass organisations' were supposedly organs of power in the hands of the people. In reality they were controlled by the PLA.
- (8) The Great Leap Forward was a typical Stalinist policy (of the ultra-left variety) which saw steel being made (literally) in people's back yards. Three million tons were produced, but most of it was so poor as to be unusable.

- The policy also included forced entry for the peasantry into the "People's Communes", which they resisted. (See the American SWP's Education for Socialists pamphlet "The Chinese Revolution Part 3")
- (9) In the 1950s Mao had had to purge the trade union apparatus twice, because it had adapted to the pressure of the workers for higher wages and real independent unions. Mao opposed any such heresy, stressing the 'leading role' of the Party in the unions.
- (10) There had never been a First Vice-Chairman.
- (11) Eleventh CCP Congress documents. Hua Kuo-feng's Report, p.10.
- (12) Ibid, p.20.
- (13) The Standing Committee of the Politburo is the seat of real power. It runs the day to day affairs of the State and Party.
- (14) Figures from Intercontinental Press, October 3rd 1977, p.1072
- (15) Intercontinental Press, March 14 1977, p.268.
- (16) Ibid, p.267.
- (17) Intercontinental Press, October 3rd 1977, p.1072.
- (18) Eleventh CCP Congress documents. Hua's Report, p.53.
- (19) Intercontinental Press, October 3rd 1977, p.1072.
- (20) Eleventh CCP Congress documents. Hua's Report, p.79.
- (21) Many of the purged cadres were gradually brought back (Teng included) and the Party apparatus rebuilt. This was a source of disagreement with those who wanted power to "remain" in the hands of the "mass organisations".
- (22) Eleventh CCP Congress documents. Hua's Report, p.83-84.
- (23) Ibid, p.89.
- (24) Model Operas were introduced during the CR. They dealt only with "revolutionary" themes (i.e. Mao's political line.) The "Feking Opera" form from which they emerged had its repertoire of 1500 operas reduced to eight approved ones!
- (25) Eleventh CCP Congress documents. Hua's Report, p. 90.
- (26) The Yennan period was when the Red Army controlled that area after reaching there via the long march. Mao's policy on literature and art was first clearly enunciated in May 1942 in his "Talks at the Yennan Forum on Literature and Art". (See the Chinese Revolution, Part 3, as above.)
- (27) The CR was officially initiated with an attack by Yao Wen-yuan (one of the 'gang of four') on a play by Teng To. (See the Chinese Revolution, Part 3, as above.)
- (28) Zhdanov was a lieutenant of Stalin's who ensured a rigid orthodoxy in the fields of art, literature and science.
- (29) See the Economist's Report on China, December 31st 1977, p.13.
- (30) Gregor Benton "The Factional Struggle In The CCP." Critique No.8, p.122.

STALINISM AND THE POLITICAL REVOLUTION

PART TWO

THE NATIONAL QUESTION AND THE POLITICAL REVOLUTION

The division of Germany raises point-blank the problem of the national question and the role which it plays in the political revolution, not to speak of the social revolution. In Germany the specific weight of the national question is enormous, arising from the division of the nation. It is augmented by the strategic position of Germany and of its proletariat in the history of Europe (and indeed the world), and the development of the international Marxist movement.

In Poland also the question has loomed large, not just since the war, but for centuries, because of its history. Of course, it would be quite wrong to equate in every respect national oppression by the Kremlin and by imperialism. They arise on different economic systems. In the same way it would be wrong, for the same reason, to equate in every respect facism and Stalinism. But this methodological error is not to be avoided, indeed, it can be compounded, by minimising the reactionary role which the Kremlin plays in the sphere of the national question.

The bureaucracy is a bourgeois agency within the workers' states. It is the medium for the transmission of imperialist pressures and interests. Though the Kremlin apparatus defends its privileged positions in order to uphold and extend its own caste interests (just as the labour bureaucracy does inside the workers' movement of the capitalist countries), in doing so it has no choice but to perform an indispensable service to world imperialism, which fears the revival of Soviet democracy like the plague, no less than the Kremlin.

So just as the intransigent resistance of the Kremlin to the political and organisational independence of the proletariat (i. e. denial of trade union independence, of genuine soviet democracy, of the right to strike, to demonstrate, etc.) is in the last analysis a policy carried out in the interests not only of the bureaucracy but of imperialism, so likewise the equally counter-revolutionary policy of the Kremlin on the national question (both within and outside the U. S. S. R.) is a policy which serves the interests of imperialism. For, as Lenin demonstrated more than half a century ago in his polemic against the "imperialist economists", "imperialism is political reaction right along the line", including, and in fact especially, in the sphere of the national question. By subjugating both the national minorities of the U. S. S. R. and the nationalities of the buffer states, the Kremlin, in its capacity as a bourgeois

agency of imperialism within the workers' state, is conducting on the foundation of nationalised property relations the same national policy as imperialism conducts on the foundations of capitalist property relations. The essential difference in property relations prevents the policy of the Kremlin from being designated as imperialist, just as the same difference distinguishes Stalinism from facism, but that will not prevent us from denouncing it as not one whit less reactionary. That is why we advance the demand for disbanding the Warsaw Pact and Comecon together with the call to break up the imperialist N.A.T.O. and the E.E.C.. The former organisations, in their own special way, perform the same function in Eastern Europe as do the latter in the West. They are designed to perpetuate the counter-revolutionary division of Europe and its proletariat, and to hold in subjugation the oppressed nationalities of the buffer states.

Thus we conclude that the counter-revolutionary role of the Kremlin carries over from direct political oppression of the proletariat to the no less reactionary oppression of national minorities; and also religious minorities, especially, though not always, when they tend to coincide with national minorities, for example, Lithuanian Catholics, Kazakh Muslims, etc.. The oppressive role of the Kremlin extends to every imaginable field of human activity, from the factory, the mine and the farm, to the laboratory, the church, the lecture room, barrack, studio, recital-room and library. The constituent parts, therefore, of the programme of the political revolution will of necessity contain all these elements in the most rich and varied combinations. Denial of human liberties in all these fields (including the right to any religion or none, the right to make religious propaganda no less than to make anti-religious propaganda) is counter to the interests of human progress, to the liberation of the proletariat and the establishment of a world socialist order.

If one does not subscribe to this principle - and there are, to their shame, many individuals and groups masquerading as Trotskyist who do not - then, not only are they not seen as components of the programme of the political revolution, but one would be duty-bound to support the Kremlin in crushing those who struggle for them. The irrefutable logic of this position has already carried the W.R.P. far along the road, further than ever Pablo travelled in 1951-1953, towards justifying the counter-revolutionary role of the Kremlin in the U.S.S.R. and in Eastern Europe.(1) In the W.S.L. one wing of the leadership (Thornett) even upholds the Berlin Wall as a bulwark against imperialism.

All the more necessary then to re-affirm the traditional positions of Trotskyism on these questions. Trotsky's writings on the Ukraine, as well as Poland, provide us with the method through which to approach the far more complex problems and processes that have emerged since the war in the course of the development of the political revolution as a living reality.

It will be recalled that the Ukraine had been partitioned at the end of the Soviet-Polish War of 1920. This division was forced on the U.S.S.R. by sheer force of arms and, in this respect, therefore, differs from the partitions of Poland, of Germany, of Korea and of Vietnam in which the Soviet Government was later involved.

In the early years of the Soviet regime a truly enlightened policy of "Ukrainisation" was carried out in the eastern region of the country, which is by far the largest. (2) Every attempt was made to compensate, by Lenin's policy of over-compensation, for centuries of attempted, though largely abortive Russification by the Tsars. In the West Ukraine, on the other hand, the Polish regime of landlords and capitalists carried on the repressive, anti-Ukrainian policy of the Romanovs.

As a result the Ukrainian masses under Polish rule turned with renewed sympathy towards not only their fellow countrymen in the East, but to the Soviet Union, as a regime which had genuinely respected the national feelings and dignity of the Ukraine. The crime of Stalinism was, therefore, all the greater when it ruthlessly stifled the national aspirations and development of the various national republics, the Ukraine being foremost among them, when it was crushing the Bolshevik Old Guard and proletarian democracy in the organisations of the working class. The organisation of the Ukrainian Communist Party fell victim to not one, but several purges of "nationalist deviators", despite its attempts to carry out Stalin's barely-masked Russification policy.

In the period of the forced collectivisation, the burden carried by the Ukraine was the triple one of national as well as political and economic oppression. First Skrypnik fell (suicide), then Kossior, then Postyshev (3) (both executed) - all accused of aiding and abetting Ukrainian nationalism. The purges, with Khrushchev in command, were halted only by the Nazi invasion in 1941. At this point Stalin's national policy bore its bitter fruit, as Trotsky had warned. When the Nazi armies rolled into the Ukraine, a segment of its tormented population deserted en masse to the invaders, whom they welcomed as their deliverers from the tyranny of the Kremlin. The Soviet Ukraine was far from serving as a beacon for the oppressed Ukrainians of Poland and for all the oppressed nationalities of Eastern Europe.

Only after the even more grim experience of Nazi rule did the sympathies of these deluded Ukrainians begin to turn back towards the U.S.S.R. - and then it was with profound hatred and bitterness in their hearts. Open resistance to the re-imposition of Kremlin rule, including guerilla fighting, continued at least up to the early 1950s. Purges have gone on to this day, the latest victim being Shelest, who is now under house arrest and accused, like all his predecessors, of "nationalist deviations".

The Ukraine is, of course, a special case because of its unique history but the method which Trotsky employs to develop democratic transitional demands on the national question in relation to the political revolution is highly instructive for an understanding of the problems of the political revolution in the buffer states no less than in the U.S.S.R. itself. The framework for Trotsky's treatment of the question is the theory, programme and process of the permanent revolution, of which the political revolution is an integral, though subordinate part:

"The triumph of the proletariat on a world scale is the end product of multiple movements, campaigns and battles, and not at all a ready-made pre-condition for solving all questions automatically. Only a direct and bold posing of the Ukrainian question in the given concrete circumstances will facilitate the rallying of the petty-bourgeois and peasant masses around the proletariat, just as in Russia in 1917 ...

"It might be objected that, in contradiction with the U.S.S.R. today, in Russia prior to October it was the bourgeois revolution that unfolded, whereas today we have the socialist revolution behind us. A demand which might have been progressive in 1917 is nowadays reactionary. Such reasoning, wholly in the spirit of bureaucrats and sectarians is false from beginning to end. The right of national self-determination is, of course, a democratic and not a socialist principle. But genuinely democratic principles are supported and realised in our era only by the revolutionary proletariat; it is for this very reason that they interlace with socialist tasks."

This statement contains the very essence of the contradictory nature and process of the political revolution. While it unfolds on socialist-type property relations (that is why it is a political and not a social revolution), it nevertheless has as one of its motor forces and goals the struggle to reconquer - at a far higher level - those political and democratic liberties which the revolutions of the epoch of capitalist ascent inscribed on its banner. Naturally these demands will have a profound proletarian content. The struggle for them will be carried out under the social as well as the political hegemony of the proletariat; not the bourgeoisie or its petty-bourgeois vanguard, as was the case in the French revolution.

The task will be to unfetter the talents and energies of the population, on the basis of the already existing property relations, thereby enhancing the latter tenfold. But all this notwithstanding, many of the essential tasks of the political revolution will be of a democratic nature, precisely because it is a movement directed against the bureaucratic agency of imperialism within the workers' states. The overthrow of the Kremlin apparatus, therefore, is in the last analysis a deadly blow struck at the imperialist interests which it defends. It will have world-wide repercussions and in its initial stages has already done so.

We must consequently guard against the trap of making a fetish, and absolute, out of property relations. This has ensnared so many sectarians. Property relations must never be given so much independent weight as to blot out the political problems and tasks associated with the political revolution. The Ukraine was divided between the Kremlin (with its collective property forms) and Poland (with its capitalist ones), just as Germany is today. Yet Trotsky wrote:

"The slightest attempt to raise the question of an independent Ukraine openly (in the U.S.S.R.) would mean immediate execution on the charge of treason (despite this right being written into the Soviet Constitution: R. Bl.). But ... it is precisely this hounding of all free national thought that has led the toiling masses of the Ukraine, to an even greater extent than the masses of Great Russians (N. B. : R. Bl.) to look upon the rule of the Kremlin as monstrously oppressive. In the face of such an internal situation it is naturally impossible even to talk of Western (i. e. Polish: R. Bl.) Ukraine voluntarily joining the U.S.S.R. as it is at present constituted. Consequently the unification of the Ukraine presupposes freeing the so-called Soviet Ukraine from the Stalinist boot. In this matter too, the Bonapartist clique will reap what it has sown" (as indeed it did in 1941, and after: R. Bl.).

"Nor would such a Ukraine necessarily desire an immediate union with what would be the remainder of the U.S.S.R., and this would be hardly surprising; in view of its past experience under both Stalin and the Romanovs.

"Naturally an independent workers' and peasants' Ukraine might subsequently join the Soviet Federation; but voluntarily, on condition that it itself considers acceptable, which in turn presupposes a revolutionary regeneration of the U.S.S.R. (emphasis added: R. Bl.)."

And this democratic drawing together of the nations of the U.S.S.R. would in its turn constitute an integral part of a wider revolutionary process:

"The genuine emancipation of the Ukraine people is inconceivable without a series of revolutions in the West, which must lead in the end to a creation of the Soviet United States of Europe ..."

We can see, both in the light of this statement and of all the subsequent events that have validated it, how correct is the proposal of the European Secretariat of the O.C.R.F.I. to convene an open conference on the United Socialist States of Europe, with the national question as its central axis.

Shortly after Trotsky wrote the lines quoted above, Stalin marched into Eastern Poland, forcibly annexing its Western region to the Soviet Union. The Fourth International was theoretically and programmatically equipped to cope with the monumental problems created by the Stalin-Hitler Pact and the upheavals that it created in the sphere of the national question in Eastern Europe. He denounced the Kremlin's march into Poland, as having nothing whatsoever in common with Bolshevik methods of resolving the national question, even though the Kremlin speculated on national feeling in the Western (i. e. Polish) Ukraine to facilitate its military operations.

What predominated in the Red Army action was the agreement with Hitler to partition Poland, a shameful pact, of which the property overturns and the enforced unification of the Ukraine were the direct outcome, and to which, whilst the pact lasted, it was subordinated. In this sense, the same judgement must be made of the Kremlin's second partition - this time concluded with Hitler's imperialist enemies - at Potsdam. Bearing this likeness in mind, consider what Trotsky said of the 1939 partition of Poland and of the annexation by the Kremlin of the West Ukraine:

"In entering Polish territory, the Soviet armies knew before hand at what point they would meet - and as allies, not enemies - with the armies of Hitler (just as Stalin knew in advance at what point his armies would meet in 1945 those of his new imperialist allies - in the heart of a Europe and Germany which they had, behind closed doors, just as in 1939, already agreed to divide: R. Bl.). The operation was determined in its main points by the secret clauses of the German-Soviet Pact; the general staffs of both countries were to be found in constant collaboration; the Stalinist invasion is nothing (N. B., "nothing": R. Bl.) but a symmetrical supplement of the Hitler-ite operations. Such are the facts."

It is true that the property changes which accompanied the action of the Kremlin were progressive in themselves, though subordinate to the alliance with Hitler. This progressiveness was highly conditional, given the circumstances in which the overturn was carried out. However, in the sphere of the national question, the Kremlin's action had no progressive merit whatever, even though it brought about the unification of the Ukraine in a strictly territorial sense, and on the basis of nationalised property relations.

"Now the Kremlin covers its intervention in Poland with a penitent concern for the "liberation" and "unification" of the Ukrainian and White Russian peoples. In reality the Soviet Ukraine, more than any other part of the Soviet Union, is bound by the ferocious chains of the Moscow bureaucracy. The aspirations of various sections of the Ukrainian nation for their liberation and independence are completely legitimate and have a very intense character (as has been demonstrated in the post-war period: R. Bl.). But these aspirations are directed also against the Kremlin. If the invasion gains its end, the Ukrainian people will find itself "unified" not in national liberty, but in bureaucratic enslavement. For it is not a question of emancipating an oppressed people, but rather one of extending the territory where bureaucratic oppression and parasitism will rule." (Emphasis added: R. Bl.)

Bearing in mind that the Kremlin could advance that it was performing the doubly progressive task of social and national liberation, in the case of the West Ukraine (i. e. nationalisation of property and national unification) it is all the more remarkable that Trotsky found no merit whatever in the Kremlin's strategy.

"It is true that in the occupied regions the Kremlin is proceeding to expropriate the large proprietors. But this is not a révolution accomplished by the masses, but an administrative reform, designed to extend the regime of the U. S. S. R. into the new territories. Tomorrow, in the "liberated" regions, the Kremlin will pitilessly crush the workers and peasants in order to bring them into subjection to the totalitarian bureaucracy. Hitler does not fear this type of "revolution" on his borders - and, in his own way, he is absolutely right."

Changing what should be changed, we can again see the parallels as well as the differences, between the creation of the East Polish "buffer" in 1939 and its far larger counter-part after 1945. One thing is certain: it is not the property relations or the manner of their creation that imperialism fears in East Germany or the other "buffer states" today, but the rise of the political revolution against its allies in the Kremlin.

Indeed, imperialism can only draw satisfaction from the way in which the repressive national policy of the Kremlin undermines the property relations by alienating the masses in the national republics of the U. S. S. R. and in the buffer states. Trotsky saw very quickly how such a reaction would develop. When Stalin extended his action in Eastern Poland to Finland and the Baltic States, Trotsky observed, again with considerable foresight:

"It cannot be doubted that control over the military bases on the Baltic Coast represents strategical advantages. But this alone cannot determine the question of invasion of neighbouring states. The defence

of an isolated workers' state depends much more on the support of the labouring masses all over the world than on two or three supplementary strategical points ... The strangling of the peoples of the U.S.S.R., particularly of the national minorities, by police methods, repelled the majority of the toiling masses from Moscow. The invasion of the Red Army is seen by the population, not as an act of liberation, but as an act of violence, and thereby facilitates the mobilisation of world public opinion against the U.S.S.R.. That is why, in the last instance, it will bring more harm than advantages to the U.S.S.R.."

It should be evident from these citations that Trotsky accorded enormous political weight to the national question in the struggle against the Kremlin. Today it must carry yet more, when the Kremlin has under its rule, not only the numerous national minorities, large and small, of the U.S.S.R. but also, de facto, entire nations in the buffer states, and segments of nations (Germans, Kurds, Armenians, Azerbaidjanis, etc.).

In analysing this aspect of the political revolution, we must see what is similar and what is dissimilar in the situations of 1939 and 1943-1947. The Kremlin's invasion of East Poland (then of Finland and the Baltic Republics) was carried out in the very depths of the trough between the revolutionary wave of 1934-1937 and that which began in 1943. What predominated, in Finland and the Baltic States more than in Poland and the West Ukraine, was the police-style overturn of the Kremlin, and not the action of the masses. The post-war overturns, on the contrary, were undertaken after the masses had themselves entered the political arena in their own names and in their own right, even though the advances of the Red Army gave an added impulse to this revolutionary overturn, to a greater or lesser extent, depending on the circumstances. In 1939 the Kremlin was therefore prepared to undertake almost at once measures which brought the social structure of the occupied territories into line with that of the U.S.S.R..

However, the opposite was the case in the period following the upturn of 1943. In 1939 the Kremlin leaned on the masses to crush its capitalist-landlord opponents in Poland. But in the period of the advance of the Red Army into Eastern Europe, the Kremlin leaned on the least discredited of the old ruling classes to combat the proletarian revolutionary pressure developing below. In each country the Kremlin tried to restore the bourgeois order, not only in the hope of ingratiating itself further with its imperialist allies, but because it correctly sensed that radical measures against capitalist property and the capitalist state, taken at the flood-tide of the upturn, would rapidly develop their own momentum and almost at once bring the masses into conflict with the Kremlin apparatus itself.

Only in 1947 and after did the Kremlin begin to impose from above, and by its classic police methods, the large-scale property overturns that gave these regimes the character of "deformed workers' states", when the first surge of the upturn had begun to ebb in both Eastern and Western Europe. Like the measures of the Kremlin in 1939, these measures had no revolutionary purpose. They were rather designed to bring the social as well as the political systems of the buffer states into harmony with that of the U.S.S.R., after all attempts to secure a working relationship with the remnants of the old ruling class had failed, in the face of the offensive of U.S. imperialism which began with the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Aid.

Thus we can see what is different, and what is the same, in the two sets of overturns. But there are other factors also to be taken into account. Why did the masses in the buffer-states-to-be greet the Red Army to one degree or another as liberators, when in 1939 Trotsky with full justification branded its invasions of Poland, the Baltic States and Finland as acts of oppression?

Again the national question intrudes itself. Between the two incursions of the Red Army into Eastern Europe was the Nazi invasion, conquest plunder, exploitation and pogrom over all Eastern Europe up to the gates of Moscow, Leningrad and Stalingrad. Even in the mutilated and oppressed Ukraine, national sentiments found their expression in support for the Kremlin as the "lesser evil". The plundering and atrocities of the Nazis made its rule almost humane, by comparison (but only by comparison). The same turn took place in Poland, especially in that part which had not been under Kremlin occupation in 1939-41, and in the Baltic Republics. In countries such as Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria, and even more so, in Czechoslovakia, betrayed to Hitler by the imperialist "democracies", national feelings were directed entirely against the retreating Nazi occupiers.

The proletariat of an oppressed nation not only has a class consciousness, but a national consciousness that is entirely progressive, in that it is directed against those forces standing in the way of the free development of the class struggle and the establishment of equal relations between the nations of the world. Given the context of the war between Nazi Germany and the U.S.S.R., the workers and other oppressed classes of East and Central Europe revealed a sure national as well as class instinct when they aligned their struggle with that of the advancing Red Army forces, preparing as they did in Poland and elsewhere, to establish their national as well as class independence from their temporary allies at the first sign of treachery from the Kremlin.

Only if we give the national factor its due weight - and in the framework of the historical context outlined above - can we truly appreciate its rise to the prominence it has today in the political revolution both in the U.S.S.R. and in the buffer states. The suppression by the Kremlin of the revolutionary wave in East and Central Europe after the war represented not only a class betrayal, but a national betrayal of the masses. This betrayal has been committed not once but twice in the Ukraine, the Baltic States, Poland and White (Byelo) Russia. Hence the special passion attached to the national question in these states.

Having helped, in the interests of its own self-preservation, to lift the lid off German imperialist national oppression in Eastern Europe in 1943-1945, the Kremlin almost at once forced its own bureaucratic lid back on again, in the period which coincided with the property overturn of 1947-1948 and the Tito-ite purges of 1949-1952. Therefore the property overturns are associated in the minds of some of the masses, and by no means the most backward of them, to a certain extent, with their national subjugation by the Kremlin. This must be understood if the correct road is to be found to the political revolution, which has as one of its central aims the defence of the collective property relations created in the early post-war period. This defence can only take on real meaning for the masses, including the most advanced workers, if it is conducted on the basis of an equally firm defence of the rights of all oppressed nationalities. Any other policy (such as that advanced by Pablo of "centuries

of deformed workers' states" - and, therefore, nationally oppressed workers' states) will drive the masses into the arms of reaction, threaten the property relations and intensify the national oppression of the Kremlin.

We should point out another distinction between 1939 and 1943-1947. The Kremlin justified its invasion and occupation of East Poland on the ground that it brought about the national unification of the Ukraine and White Russia, portions of which had been under Polish rule. It has, however, made no such claims to justify its repressive national policy in East and Central Europe since the war. Quite the contrary. In the Ukraine, it simply restored the status quo of 1939-1941; a united Ukraine, under Kremlin domination, i. e. Great Russian domination. The same holds for White Russia, where the population, like that of the Ukraine, can draw precious little satisfaction from the knowledge that their national republics are represented at the level of independent delegations in the General Assembly of the United Nations. The Baltic Republics, annexed in 1939 and again in 1945, do not have even this sop to their national dignity.

Elsewhere the Kremlin has intruded directly into formerly independent or semi-independent states - Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Bulgaria - further exacerbating their already acute national problems. It has tried to intervene in two more; Yugoslavia and Albania. In the case of Germany, it created a new national problem, by actually dividing what had previously been a unified nation. Since the Kremlin's domination in East and Central Europe flies directly in the face of the national rights, feelings and aspirations of the masses and everywhere arouses national resistance to its rule, unlike in East Poland in 1939, the need arose for the Kremlin to cloak this national oppression in the guise of "proletarian internationalism" and a broader, though bogus, "ethnic" solidarity. Thus was born in the course of the war Stalin's Pan-Slavic doctrine, which preached after the style of the Romanovs, the common interests of all Slav people, under the leadership of Moscow. Thus were also born the Cominform (1947), Comecon (1949) and, finally, the Warsaw Pact (1955). The first of these organisations was dissolved in 1956, not as a concession to the national feelings of the buffer states, but as an open gesture to imperialism, on a par with Stalin's liquidation of the Comintern in 1943.

Meanwhile, the grip of the Kremlin on the political life, economies, culture and armed forces of the buffer states has been exercised through the last two. It was, therefore, not merely as a "left" cover, but because the national rule of the Kremlin really oppressed the buffer states, that the bureaucracy had to invoke slogans of proletarian internationalism to justify its crushing of the political revolution in East Germany, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, and form the Cominform. Given its policy of national oppression, no other pretext was left open to it.

It is therefore far from adequate simply to denounce this feigned internationalism as a fraud. It is necessary to advance boldly those slogans and demands which place the national aspects of the Kremlin in the buffer states (and, of course, in the U. S. S. R. itself) in the forefront. The political revolution cannot be reduced to a "pure" struggle of workers against bureaucrats, as it has already proved in practice.

It can take, and has already taken, the form of a struggle of Ukrainian historians against Russian bureaucrats, of Soviet abstract painters against bulldozers driven by the K. G. B. of German workers against Red Army officers, of Polish students against Jew-baiting party officials, of Russian Baptist preachers against K. G. B. atheists, of poets against the Ministry of Culture.

All these struggles, as well as many more, go to complete the sum total of the process that will culminate in the political revolution. Anyone who tries to reduce this truly kaleidoscopic fusion, diffusion and mutation of social movements, doctrines, ideals, illusions, utopias and passions, to a bare confrontation between workers and bureaucrats, is hopelessly lost to Trotskyism and the Fourth International. Such a person, whatever his intentions, can only assist the Kremlin in its constant efforts to prevent these many streams from merging into a single torrent that will sweep the apparatus away.

It is for these reasons that we place such emphasis upon the national question and the method which Trotsky applied to it, both in this document and in our general activity connected with the political revolution and the struggle against Stalinism. For this method provides the key to unlock many other problems apart from that of the national question.

THE RELIGIOUS QUESTION AND THE POLITICAL REVOLUTION

Stalinism not only equals but can excel fascism in the savagery and barbarism of its political methods. Like fascism, it cannot tolerate the existence of the most modest democratic liberties without putting its own rule at risk. Capitalist Bonapartism, unlike fascism, stops somewhat short of eliminating bourgeois democratic freedoms and the independent organisations of the proletariat (for example, Bruning, Papen and Schleicher in Weimar Germany).⁽⁴⁾ But Stalinist Bonapartism does not and dares not stop half way. It must leave not a brick of the structures of proletarian democracy and of democratic liberties standing. Hence the strategic importance of all the democratic issues which in many advanced capitalist countries were solved a century and more ago.

Since the analogy between Stalinism and fascism is a legitimate one at the level of political methods and regime, the religious question in the U. S. S. R. can be approached by way of an article which Trotsky wrote on the persecution of the Church in Nazi Germany:

"Naturally there can be no question of supporting the Church. For us, it can only be the question: do we or do we not support the political struggle of the Catholics and Protestants and to act as such? This question is to be answered in the affirmative. That we do not commit ourselves for religion and church, but stress our opposition to religion and church as far as possible, is self-evident."

The question we must ask and answer is; is there a political struggle for religious freedom in the U. S. S. R. and, if so, what should our attitude be towards it? Would support for such a struggle contain the danger of lending

support to restorationist tendencies in the U.S.S.R.? Would it involve a compromise of principle in the struggle for the Marxist materialist world outlook, against religious and other forms of idealist thought?

Before we can answer these questions, it is necessary to appreciate the contradictory nature of religion. Trotsky, Lenin, Luxembour, Engels and Marx certainly appreciated it. The corner stone of the Marxist attitude to religion is summed up in these lines of Marx:

"... religion is the self-consciousness and self-feeling of a man who has either not yet found himself or has lost himself again ... it is a fantastic realisation of the human essence, because human essence has no true reality ... Religious distress is, at the same time, the expression of real distress and the protest against real distress. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of a spiritless situation. It is the opium of the people."

There is distress indeed in the U.S.S.R., oppression in every aspect of human existence and activity. Since this oppression is carried out in the name of communism and of the October Revolution, is it any wonder that it generates a resistance which often finds an initial expression in religious dissent, even amongst sections of the community which have been liberated from the grip of the Church by the Revolution?

A profound question of principle is involved here: the right to religion, no less than the right to reject religion; the right to make religious propaganda, to seek to win adherents to the faith, no less than the right to make anti-religious propaganda, to win believers away from the faith. These rights were proclaimed by the Bolsheviks before the 1917 revolution, and were upheld in the early years after it. There is nothing in religious belief which necessarily impels its adherents towards the restoration of capitalism. History revolves around the struggle of classes. It is not an ideological struggle between believers and atheists though, in the class struggle, the proletariat will only emancipate itself on the basis of the materialist world outlook of Marxism expressed in programme, strategy and tactics. And in this struggle, more believers will be found on the side of reaction than in the ranks of the revolutionaries. But to deduce from this that Marxists have no business defending the rights of believers would be quite wrong.

The struggle for the RIGHT to religious belief (as distinct from the belief itself) has always had a profound democratic content, and, in certain situations, even a revolutionary content. In Nazi Germany it could not fail to be directed against the fascist apparatus, which, like its Stalinist counterpart, sought a monopoly of power in every sphere:

"The fascist state idol will not and cannot tolerate any competition. National socialism intends to absorb the religion and to deify its state. But because the frantically re-arming fascist state oppresses the petty bourgeois more and more, the latter cannot give up the mystic compensations of the Church for the sufferings by the state. Socially speaking, it is only a division of labour between church and state. But every devout philistine is inwardly torn by this division of labour, which has developed into a potential political conflict. Two souls, alas, dwell in his bosom."

And what was Trotsky's attitude to this conflict? Not neutrality between the persecuted Churches and the fascist state, and even less neutrality between those who struggled to defend their right to their beliefs and the pagans and atheists of the Gestapo:

"It is necessary to stoke up this conflict and to direct it, in the first place, against the state."

Without equivocation, the life-long atheist Trotsky declared himself for "the rights of Catholics and Protestants ... to consume their religious opium without endangering or impairing their existence." Trotsky understood, as we must understand in relation to the U.S.S.R., that the struggle for this right would develop rapidly into a political battle, involving a challenge to the monopoly of the state in fields other than religion.

"It is a question in the first place of freedom of conscience, then of equal rights regardless of creed, then of the right of forming organisations ... It is only necessary to find real and effective methods to intervene in the struggle, to stir up the religious-democratic opposition, to broaden it and to assist the young Catholics, especially the workers, in their struggle (and not, of course, the Nazi police, which wants to destroy these religious organisations). Thus in Russia we always defended the struggle of the Armenian Church for its autonomy. We did the same in the struggle of the different peasant and petty bourgeois sects against the government Orthodox Church. And at times we did it with great success."

There is not a word of this extract which cannot serve to guide our orientation towards the religious opposition in the U.S.S.R.. In many ways it has a far more profound democratic content than did the Christian opposition in Nazi Germany. In Germany both the Churches had been deeply compromised by support for the Nazis, both before and after their seizure of power. Both Churches were heavily committed to the preservation of the capitalist order, both in doctrine and activity. They both accepted with the greatest reluctance the Weimar Republic, born in revolutionary sin.

In the U.S.S.R. the religious currents struggling against the Kremlin have a different past. Only the Orthodox Church stood full square with the old regime. Of all the Soviet churches, the Orthodox is the apologist for the Kremlin. Its reactionary traditions die hard. Not one of the many religious groupings which today resist state and Orthodox persecution has put in question the conquests of the October Revolution. On the contrary, the religious freedom movement has been compelled to take up the programme of the Bolsheviks on the religious question in the course of its struggle against the Kremlin, and here is its special significance as distinct from that of the religious freedom movement in the Third Reich. On the religious question, the Reform Baptists, to cite one case, are far more consistent Leninists than their "Leninist" persecutors, and no less so than the sectarians in Britain and elsewhere who scoff at the plight and their struggle.

The first Constitution of the Soviet Union, promulgated in July 1918, contained the following clause:

"In order to ensure genuine freedom of conscience for the working people, the church is separated from the state, and the school from the church; and freedom of religious and anti-religious propaganda is recognised for all citizens."

Here, as in other walks of life, the revolution brought to the oppressed peoples the most far-reaching liberties, in the field of religion no less than in the national question. Many of the formerly persecuted sects rallied to the Bolsheviks on the basis of their stand on the religious question - one of the many exotic mutations occasioned by the combination of the democratic with the proletarian revolution in a backward, but imperialist country.

Thermidor cut deeply into these new liberties, just as it did in other areas. In 1929 the clause on religious freedom was revoked and the right of religious propaganda erased from the Constitution. What remained was the right to believe, and the right to anti-religious propaganda. This violation of a fundamental human right and of a component of the communist programme, was enshrined in the "Stalin" Constitution of 1936, which declared:

"Freedom of religious worship, and freedom of anti-religious propaganda, is recognised for all citizens."

Atheism had been raised to a state doctrine, which it never was under Lenin. The basis for this change of policy was not the fidelity to materialism of Stalin. It was the growth of Soviet Bonapartism into state totalitarianism; a development paralleled by a similar process in Nazi Germany, with a similar result for religious rights.

As in the sphere of the national question and the crushing of workers' democracy generally, Stalin's offensive against religious freedom met with little resistance, as a result mainly of the world-wide retreat of the revolution then under way.

But just as surely, with the renewal of the revolution, the religious as well as the national opposition found the courage to lift its head, taking up in doing so the demands of the Bolsheviks on the religious question.

The actual origins and course of the struggle of the religious opposition against the Kremlin's anti-Bolshevik Church policy demonstrates that the fight for freedom of conscience is an inevitable and entirely progressive component of the programme of the political revolution. Both in its broad outlines, and many of its details, the struggle of the Christian dissidents for religious freedom resembles that of the millennial sects at the very dawn of the capitalist era, when social, political and economic protest was couched in the mystical language and utopian visions of the Protestant sects. Perhaps it is not purely accidental that the ancestors of the Anabaptists and the Fifth Monarchists are today in the very forefront of the struggle for democratic liberties in the U.S.S.R. - namely, the reform Baptists, and the Pentecostals.

The movement arose after a protracted struggle for democracy within the official Baptist Church, the All Union Council of the Evangelical Christians and the Baptists (A.U.C.E.C.B.). Founded in 1944 (at a time when Stalin had temporarily eased his anti-religious policy) it later took under its wing a Pentecostal faction (1945) and some Mennonites (1963). Together with the Kremlin-backed Orthodox Church, the Baptists were the only Church allowed to function on an all-Union scale - a factor of some importance. Equally of significance was the fact that this all-Union status enabled them to form international links with Baptists in other countries (the Baptist World Alliance) and of course the World Council of Churches.

Since the Kremlin jealously guards its monopoly of organisations at every level and in every field (scientific, cultural, sporting, as well as trade union and political) it found it necessary to begin a drive against the Baptists to subordinate their international as well as national activity and connections to the domestic and world requirements of Stalinist policy (a function the compliant Orthodox hierarchy, heavily infiltrated with KGB agents, has performed for decades).

This it did in several ways. Genuine democratic elections being anathema to the Kremlin, even for positions in a Church (for the example could very quickly catch on in other more sensitive fields) the government department responsible for Church affairs (its very existence contravenes the Bolshevik policy of separation of Church and State) forbade the elections of officials to the leading bodies of the AUCECB. Posts were filled by appointments, carried out on the recommendations of atheists. As early as 1960 protests were heard inside the Baptists' organisation against this denial of democratic as well as religious liberties; the issue being control over one's own organisation (here the trade union question suggests itself at once).

The faction that later became the Reform Baptists, organised itself to change the constitution of the AUCECB, to secure the democratic election of its leaders, and to free their Church from State interference. Other demands included the right of any Church member to give a sermon, at the discretion of the local Church community, and not only those so designated by the central (state appointed) leadership. The demand was also made that prayer meetings should be made legal in private houses, and not just formal places of worship (where the KGB could send its informers with ease).

The Kremlin at once understood the full revolutionary-democratic content of these demands, and their wider implications. In 1961 arrests of reform Baptists began, the persecution being most savage in Ukraine. The official Baptist **leadership** collaborated with the Kremlin's drive against the reformers, even to the extent of issuing an edict warning Baptists against the winning of new converts to the faith.

When all attempts to reform their Church proved futile (its bureaucracy was no less adept at packing conferences than its Kremlin patrons) the democratic faction directed its appeals to the CPSU leadership itself, sending a letter of protest to Brezhnev in 1965. The reform Baptists, whether they liked it or not, were now engaged in a political struggle for democratic liberties against the same apparatus that was denying them to the Soviet working class, artists, writers, scientists and national minorities.

A year later, on 16 May 1966, 500 Reform Baptists demonstrated outside the Party Central Committee building in Moscow, demanding to see Brezhnev personally. They were soon violently dispersed by KGB emn, police and troops, and assaulted at random by KGB men in mufti. Large-scale round-ups of Reform Baptist leaders then followed at once, and then a succession of trials.

The arguments advanced by the Reform Baptist leaders in court provided all the proof that is needed to show how the religious freedom movement poses a

direct challenge to the Kremlin. One defendant, Borushko, used Lenin's authority to outwit the prosecution:

"I don't consider that we broke the law (in holding an unregistered service). According to one basic law, the decree of Lenin, point 5, 'Free celebration of religious rites is guaranteed, insofar as they do not disturb public order and do not infringe the rights of citizens of the Soviet Republic.' Our meetings in flats do not cause a public nuisance and are not connected with any infringement of the rights of other citizens. So the 1929 law (of Stalin: R. Bl.) contradicts Lenin's decree in this matter."

Another issue which intruded at the trial was the right of the Reform Baptists - and therefore of any individual or organisation - to publish and control its own publications and to distribute them. In the course of an exchange over this issue, the Judge remarked:

"Just imagine what it would be like if everybody in this country began to preach what he liked and wherever he liked, no matter whether people listened to him or not. What would happen if everybody preached his own beliefs and got a crowd of followers around him . . . ?"

Just imagine indeed! The right to preach - conquered in revolutionary struggles and wars than spanned three centuries and more of European history, will in the USSR only be reconquered with the triumph of the political revolution! The battle between Rome and Luther, Stuart and Puritan, is being re-enacted on the soil of the first workers' state, between mystics and a regime that was first to conquer space. And in this struggle, we are, unreservedly, on the side of the mystics against the atheists. And what other theory than the permanent revolution can explain how it comes about that the Reform Baptists defend themselves with quotations from Lenin and the Bible?

Here too, as in the instance of the persecution of the national minorities, the Kremlin reveals its fascist face. One hounded Pentecostal was told by his interrogating KGB officer:

"There will soon be none of you left - we will grind you to dust or deport you to the far north to join the polar bears. They're building camps for you up there, and they'll test the atom bomb on you."

Kidnapping of children of believers (non-Orthodox) by the KGB is a common practice. Here is a heartrending account of one such Nazi-style operation:

"A car drove up to the school where the (two) children (aged 9 and 11) were pupils. A policeman and several people in civilian clothes took the children directly from the classroom and, although the frightened children began to scream, they quickly bundled them into the car. Their father, who was working a short distance away, heard the screaming and came running to rescue his children. He was pushed away while heartbreaking cries came from the car. The father held on to the car, but they beat his hands. The driver of the car said later that the children screamed the whole way to Vitebsk and that, unable to bear it, he had driven the car at top speed. When they

"arrived at Vitebsk, the exhausted children had stopped screaming but were weeping quietly. Their parents wrote several times to Moscow, but the children were not returned to them . . ."

Where is the difference between these methods and those of fascism?

And whilst this barbaric practice of child kidnapping goes on, Western Church dignitaries and Stalinists conduct their 'dialogue', and KGB stooges in robes represent the Kremlin at the World Council of Churches. We repeat, what we support in the struggle of the Reform Baptists and other religious dissidents is not their faith, nor their Churches, but their struggle to defend their right to both; to practice their religion without fear of persecution, and to win converts to it if they can. At the same time, we protect the interests of the working class - and of true believers - by upholding the total separation of Church and State as did the Bolsheviki, and the Soviet Government in its early years.

Again, we should understand that like the national question, the struggle for freedom for religion does not run counter to that of the working class against the bureaucracy. Many believers are workers, and their number among the youth is on the increase. Nor is it an issue confined to the USSR alone. It came to the fore in the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, when one frequently raised demand was that for the release of Cardinal Mindszenty, jailed on trumped up charges during the "Titoite" purges of 1949. The Workers' Council of the 'Red' Csepel steel works - the core of the council movement - not only demanded the withdrawal of Soviet troops, free elections and the 'independence of trade unions and the right to strike' but 'the placing of the education of the youth on a religious moral basis' - a demand which can only be understood in the light of the moral decay and official corruption that had taken place under the old Stalinist regime, with its frame-trials, organised police informing, torture chambers, concentration camps, police resignation of the arts and all thought - and all in the name of 'Marxism'.

The Labour movement needs to be much more active than hitherto in campaigning for the release of persecuted fighters for religious freedom in the USSR and the buffer states. We must raise no less frequently the call for the release of the jailed Baptist leader Vins, than we do for Bukovsky and Moroz. We are for the right to pray no less than the right to strike. Previously it was thought that only the great bourgeois revolutions were concerned with freedom of conscience. In the USSR, it will be conquered in the course of the political revolution against the Kremlin bureaucracy.

THE STAGE REACHED BY THE POLITICAL REVOLUTION

We have tried to show that revolving around the central axis of the developing struggle of the proletariat against the apparatus in the USSR and the buffer states is a growing and ever more diverse constellation of social and political movements, each of which has been generated by resistance to the Kremlin's repressions in a specific sphere. No sector of Soviet society is left untouched - scientists demand secrecy of research and of correspondence, writers and artists, freedom of culture. The list is almost endless. Dissent has penetrated into the depths of the Soviet armed forces (it should

not be forgotten that two of the most prominent critics of the Kremlin have been linked to the armed forces - Grigorenko and Yakir). The Baltic mutiny of last November undoubtedly has its parallels with the Potemkin mutiny of 1905, even to the extent of Red Airmen defying orders to blast the rebel ship out of the sea.

Secretarians have bewailed the fact that whereas in its earliest stages, the anti-bureaucratic struggle was dominated by leaders subscribing to one or other version of Marxism (Grigorenko, Litvinov, Yakir, etc.) today, the movement has lost its way, swung to the right, and is now an agglomeration of democrats, nationalists, and even mystics. Yet we see this as proof of the strength and continued rise of the movement towards the political revolution. The deeper the current of opposition digs into the depths of the most oppressed layers of Soviet Society - the national minorities, the religious sects - the more this deepening will be reflected in the political character of the movement. Its richness and diversity is proof of its power, its breadth, its vitality, its confidence to go forward.

Within that spectrum of opinion we, as rebuilders of the Fourth International, fight for the rights of all, but also, for our own positions and programme. The one does not, and need not, come into conflict with the other. Religious freedom can only be won in the USSR under the banner of atheistic Marxism, the programme of the Fourth International.

The very diversity of the opposition currents in the USSR indicate to us that the political revolution is in the firm ascent, and as part of the world revolutionary process, will go forward to final victory.

What we must begin to determine, on the basis of the analysis presented, is the precise stage reached by both. We are of the opinion that the political revolution, both in its general development, and through its concrete manifestations in countries such as Poland, is in advance of the social revolution in the capitalist countries, just as, within the latter, the tempo and rhythm there varies enormously from country to country (Portugal and Spain on the one hand, Britain and the United States on the other). And just as in the latter case, this order can be rapidly reversed, today's vanguard can be thrust back either by a defeat, or by being overtaken by today's rearguard. But not all is flux. There is a historically, materially determined pattern to the stages through which the European and world revolutionary process has been and is unfolding. Since the war, it should be noted that the highest level of mobilisation and political consciousness of the proletariat has been achieved in the buffer states, with Hungary as the most advanced (see Appendix I for the programme of the revolution and its workers' councils).

The most bitter, violent and passionate class battles have also been waged in East Europe, from East Germany in 1953 to Poland in 1970-71 and again in June 1976. The only civil wars waged on European soil have been those between the Kremlin and the workers and oppressed nations of East Europe. These battles are an expression of the movement of the whole European working class towards revolution, towards the united states of Europe - but we should understand why their most concentrated expression, and their most ruthless suppression, has been in the area of the continent dominated by the Kremlin.

France in 1968, Portugal in 1974, Spain in 1975 and Italy in 1976 all indicate that this pattern is by no means fixed; that by a convoluted route, the proletariat of West Europe is integrating its struggle into that of the workers and oppressed nations of the East, and of the USSR.

All the great bourgeois revolutions began with a split in the old ruling class. Even the Russian Revolution of February 1917 contained this element. The same law applies for the political revolution in the Stalinist-ruled states. In Germany in 1953, Poland and Hungary in 1956 (and again in Germany with the Bloch and Wollweber factions), Czechoslovakia and Poland in 1968, Poland again in 1970-71 and, as a special case, Yugoslavia in 1948 and China in 1963-67. The appearance of these rifts should never be taken to indicate that the faction used by the workers in the initial stages of the revolution can substitute itself for the Fourth International - this was the position taken up by Pablo in 1953. (5) What they do announce is the approach of the break up of the Kremlin's political and social domination of the USSR and the buffer states, a process that inevitably transmits itself to the Stalinist parties in all the capitalist states. In 1968, the break between the Czech CP (with the exception of the small quisling Husak faction) and the Kremlin found its immediate, but highly distorted reflection, in the Stalinist World Trade Union Federation, which split along the lines taken by the respective national CPs on the Kremlin's invasion. Thus the political revolution, the expression of the world struggle of the proletariat inside the workers' states, because, by its very nature it strikes its most direct blows against the Kremlin and its national agencies, in turn throws the world Stalinist movement into crisis. It thereby undermines the ability of the Kremlin to collaborate with imperialism in preserving the world status quo. These reciprocal relations between the two components of the world revolution - the social and political revolutions - if understood grouped in the proper sense, will provide the correct international foundation for the struggle against Stalinism as well as social democracy in the British workers' movement. Hence the strategic significance of our dissidents activity and our policy for the united socialist states of Europe. All these aspects of our activity and programme seek to give conscious expression to an already advanced historical process. On this basis it will be possible to go forward to the reconstruction of the Fourth International and the building of the revolutionary party in Britain.

THE POLITICAL REVOLUTION AND THE RE-BUILDING OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Because Marxism strives to become the conscious expression of a unified, but differentiated and uneven historical process, it contains these same elements within itself, distilled in their pure theoretical form. Precisely because the Marxist movement is international (that is because it expresses consciously the international tendency of world economy and the class struggle which arises upon this material foundation), it is not uniform, either in its mode of action or its tempo of development.

The centre of gravity of the international workers' movement, expressed at its highest level through the four internationals (1864-1873; 1889-1914; 1919-1933; 1938 onwards) has shifted back and forth between the main countries and nations of the world according to the strategic twists and turns

in the evolution of the international class struggle: England in the First, Germany in the Second, the Soviet Union and Germany in the Third and France and the USA in the Fourth. History shows that the process of crystallisation and maturation of the vanguard is not only a rich and uneven process at the national level, but even more so internationally. When the international vanguard seizes power and is given by history the task of constructing anew the revolutionary unity of the world proletariat, this complicates matters still further.

Just as the backwardness of Russia thrust its proletariat further forward than any other section of the world working class in the period of upturn, so in the period of decline which followed, this same Russian backwardness, expressing itself through the rise of the bureaucracy in the Stalinist faction, transmitted itself through the Comintern apparatus to the most advanced sections of the world proletariat, most notably that in Germany.

Cross-fertilisation has always been one of the main modes of development of both Marxism and the broader workers' movement internationally. As the case of Russia indicates, this cross-fertilisation can be both progressive and reactionary. Russian Marxism stood on the shoulders of its tutors in order successfully to reach out for power, only to succumb, in the wake of the German defeat of 1923, in isolation, and to drag down the whole international with it.

The "Russian" influence on the world workers' movement and the Fourth International has been almost entirely negative, from the period of the crushing of the Left Opposition until very recently. Of course, the Kremlin desires that it should be so. The bureaucracy has with some success prevented the Soviet and Eastern European workers, not only from acting in concert with the workers of the capitalist states, but from contributing to their understanding of the tasks facing the international working class and the development of a common programme, tactics and strategy to solve them. They have hermetically sealed off the Soviet proletariat and intelligentsia from their counterparts in the capitalist countries, all contact being regulated through the Kremlin and its various international agencies.

Yet, from the little that we know of the struggles of the Soviet and Eastern European workers against Stalinism, and excluding the attempts at revolution in 1953, 1956, 1968 and 1970-71 (which are well documented), it is evident that not only the Western proletariat but also the most advanced elements of the vanguard, those who seek to re-build the Fourth International on the basis of the Transitional Programme, have much which they can profitably learn from the class struggle in the workers' states.

1953 marked a turning point. Just as the Paris Commune etched in the blood of the Communards what was the dictatorship of the proletariat, and transformed Marx's schema into living, historical reality, so the East German workers' uprising performed the same function in relation to the political revolution, the contours of which were outlined and anticipated by Trotsky nearly two decades previously. Then followed Hungary, and the picture was complete, just as the Russian Revolution of 1905 affirmed and established the basic pattern of all proletarian revolutions in the 20th century with the rise of the first workers' councils.

It has been one of the tragic experiences of our movement that, at the precise moment in history when the fundamental truth of Trotskyism was being confirmed anew in East Germany, and the opportunity was provided to develop a world-wide offensive against Stalinism through relentless orientation towards the maturing political revolution, Pablo disrupted and broke up the Fourth International with his policy of capitulation to the Kremlin. The cataclysmic events of 1956 found the forces of the Fourth International, not only split into two hostile camps, but even those who had broken from Pablo proving unable either to understand fully or to exploit the dramatic turn expressed in the Khrushchev speech and the Polish and Hungarian upheavals of 1956.

One of the factors militating against such a development was, not only the split of 1953 and the disarray which it produced in every section of the Fourth International, irrespective of whether its majority adhered to Pablo or the International Committee, but the relative ebb of the class struggle in the West. But by 1968, when the political revolution was taking its next giant step forward, everything had changed, not only in France, but internationally.

The advance of the class struggle in the capitalist countries has opened new horizons for the most developed elements in the dissident movement in the USSR and the oppositions in the buffer-states (notably Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia). Having received an impulse from the revolutionary upturn in the West, these vanguard elements in their turn now find themselves strategically placed to fertilise politically and in other ways the activity and thinking of the vanguard in the West. Even if as yet only on a small scale, confined to exchanges between a handful of persons, the international unity of the world proletariat, fractured by the rise of Stalinism, and then the division of Europe and of Germany, is being restored at the highest levels.

Many who are in the thick of the struggle for the political revolution would not regard themselves as such. We have in mind, for instance, the reform Baptist leader, or Moroz, the Christian Ukrainian historian. But others are driven along a political road of struggle which draws them very close to those engaged in the re-building of the Fourth International, even if they tend, at this stage, to see it as being best represented by the more "liberal" Stalinist parties, such as the Italian. That was confirmed by the initiative and success of the OCI⁽⁶⁾ in the campaign to secure the release of Leonid Plyushch, and on a more modest scale, in the development of our own group on the same questions in this country. It is not a simple process by which the Trotskyists bring aid and political guidance to the dissidents, as the vulgarians would have it, but rather of a reciprocal relationship and process of cross-fertilisation, the common foundation of which is the world class struggle, which finds its diverse but unified expressions in the anti-bureaucratic struggles in the Stalinist states no less than in struggle for the overthrow of capitalist rule in the West.

The evolution of the various opposition currents in the USSR and the buffer states has enormously enriched our conception of what constitutes the political revolution. It is no exaggeration to say that these currents are helping, each in its own special way, to restore to Communism what has been debased within it by the rise of Stalinism and its impact upon even those who resisted it, namely the revolutionary humanist content and purpose of Marxism.

To the extent that the apparatus progressively replaced the masses as the makers of history, so was official "communism" dehumanised and converted into another ideology. From being the conscious expression of mankind's striving towards self-emancipation, through the methods of class struggle, revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, Comintern "Marxism" became, in the hands of the Kremlin, the theoretical justification for tyranny in the USSR and the preservation of the capitalist status quo the world over.

The terrible weight of Stalinism, symmetric with fascism, took its toll even in the leadership of the Fourth International. In advancing his perspective of "centuries of deformed workers' states", Pablo was, in effect, consigning mankind for the indefinite future to a world in which human liberties, the development and enrichment of culture, the free and equal development of nations, would each be crimes against the existing order. Pablo's capitulation to Stalinism was, in the last analysis, a denial of the revolutionary humanism which is at the core of Marxism and which has motivated all its greatest exponents.

We should ask ourselves, in this context, whether the Comintern has ceased for itself the title, "Human Rights Committee" and whether it should do so without exception, lay such great emphasis on the ethical and moral aspects of their struggle. We should try to determine what the latter two stand closest to the positions of the Fourth International of all the dissidents with whose views we are familiar - "dissidents" intended for the building of a revolutionary international to embrace "all humanist forces".

If we are not sensitive to the profoundly intense moral impulse which drives forward the dissidents' movement, we are certain to repel its very best elements. Neither is it a simple matter of trying to translate into the accustomed Marxist categories the highly individualist and ethical conceptions which we encounter in our collaboration with the dissidents' movement. When Plyushch and Fainberg speak of the ethical basis of their resistance to Stalinism, and when, for that very reason, the religious dissenters speak of it, they are talking to ears who have ears to listen and brains to understand that the Marxism which they know is deficient in this respect, that it has become dehumanised. Our last year's training in the SWP-WRP taught us to reject all moralistic arguments as either ultra-leftist reactionary or, at best, utopian. Yet Trotsky wrote an entire book devoted to an exposition of Marxist morality and ethics, in "Their Morals and Ours".

Stalinism emptied Marxism of its revolutionary moral content and substituted for it bureaucratic cynicism. Fascism and now Realism, adapting to Stalinism, have been obliged to accept the morals of Stalinism, with what results we all know. In the course of the development of the political revolution, ample opportunities will present themselves to the OCRFI and its sections to establish closer links with its vanguard and to lay the basis for future sections of the Fourth International in all the Stalinist-ruled states. All our experience in this activity so far has convinced us, however, that the vanguard of the political revolution will be won to the programme of the Fourth International and its rebuilding, only if we combine firm defence of principle - i. e. the defence of the USSR and the buffer states from imperialism - with extreme flexibility and sensitivity on those issues that are activating the opposition at its present stage of development. Our concern for the humanistic

moral aspect of Marxism is no innovation. Trotsky understood well that Stalinism constituted a reaction against Bolshevism in these no less than in other spheres:

"Stalinism has become the scourge of the Soviet Union and the leprosy of the world labour movement. In the domain of ideas Stalinism is a cypher. But by way of compensation it disposes of a colossal apparatus, which exploits the dynamics of the greatest revolution in history and the traditions of its heroism and its conquering spirit. From the creative role of revolutionary violence in a given historical period, Stalin, with his congenital empirical narrowness, has deduced the omnipotence of violence in general. No one, not excluding Hitler, has dealt socialism such deadly blows as Stalin. This is hardly astonishing, since Hitler has attacked the working class organisations from without, while Stalin does it from within. Hitler assaults Marxism. Stalin not only assaults but prostitutes it. Not a single principle has remained unpolluted, not a single idea unsullied. The very names of socialism and communism have been cruelly comprimised, from the day when uncontrolled policemen, making their living by a "communist" passport, gave the name socialism to their police regime. Revolting profanation! The barracks of the GPU are not the ideal for which the working class is struggling. Socialism signifies a pure and limpid social system, which is accommodated to the self-government of the toilers. Stalin's regime is based on a conspiracy of the rulers against the ruled. Socialism implied an uninterrupted growth of universal equality. Stalin has erected a system of revolting privileges. Socialism has as its goal the all-sided flowering of individual personality. When and where has man's personality been so degraded as in the USSR? Socialism would have no value apart from the unselfish, honest and humane relationships between human beings. The Stalin regime has permeated social and personal relationships with lies, careerism and treachery."

If Trotsky, pioneer of the theory of Permanent Revolution, organiser of the October Revolution, founder of the Red Army and of the Fourth International, could nevertheless find a common language with the present-day opponents of Stalinism, and share their moral revulsion at its crimes, then so can - and must - we.

Footnotes - STALINISM AND THE POLITICAL REVOLUTION

(1) In a recent article entitled "Carter's Fifth Column", Michael Banda, the WRP General Secretary, denounced the Soviet Dissidents as "a semi-legal Frankenstein monster whose body is in Russia but whose head remains in Washington." Banda apparently believes the dissident movement to be an "insidious disease" which the bureaucracy is incapable of taking up a correct struggle against. Banda, of course, had much experience of the "insidious disease" within the ranks of the WRP, which has been swiftly dealt with by the time-honoured Stalinist method of expulsion without discussion.

For the WRP, a self-proclaimed Trotskyist group, to be siding with the bureaucracy against the dissidents, is scandalous. With political opposition growing in the entire Eastern Bloc, there is a growing need for Trotskyists, and indeed any socialists, to take the lead in supporting the struggles of oppositionists in Eastern Europe. The WRP had sided with the bureaucracy, the real "Frankenstein monster".

(2) See Ivan Dyzuba's book "Internationalism or Russification". Pathfinder Press.

(3) Ukrainian Communist Party leaders.

(4) See Trotsky's "Germany 1931-32". New Park Publications.

(5) Michel Pablo was a leading member of the Fourth International in 1953. He was the protagonist of a policy of "deep entry" in the Stalinist Parties, and envisaged that sections of the Russian bureaucracy could restore workers' democracy to the Soviet regime.

(6) Organisation Communiste Internationaliste. French Trotskyist group, affiliated to the Organising Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International.