

Fourth International

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

Volume 7 No. 2

Price 25 pence

Winter 1971-72

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Revolution and counter-revolution

LUKACS:

a political itinerary

Marxist theory and class consciousness

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EDITORIAL

The International Committee and the struggle for power

'THE LAWS of history are stronger than the bureaucratic apparatus.' In these words of the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International in 1938, Leon Trotsky summarized the essence of the political preparation that would be necessary to 'resolve the crisis of revolutionary leadership'. At that time, the Second World War was only months away, made inevitable by the betrayals of Stalinism in Germany and Spain. The cream of the international revolutionary leadership, the great majority of it in the Soviet Union, was being ruthlessly physically destroyed by the Stalinist machine.

In the struggle to build the Fourth International on the theoretical foundations laid by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, the Stalinist apparatus has had to be fought with every ounce of energy for what it has always been, the principal counter-revolutionary force in the world. Not only did the Stalinists engage in direct collaboration with the imperialists during World War II, and in the capitalist coalitions which ruled Western Europe after the war. Not only did they themselves draw up with the imperialists and militarily establish the division of Europe and of Germany, they performed such an essential task (from the capitalist standpoint) in 'stabilizing' the post-war world that they were instrumental in reviving the fortunes of the long discredited social-democrats or reformists in the international labour movement.

The great importance to the imperialists since 1945 and today of men like Willy Brandt, Guy Mollet and Harold Wilson would be as nothing were it not for the fact that the boom conditions in which these men have thrived politically were established on the basis of the counter-revolutionary world role of Stalinism at the end of World War II. Without Guy Mollet and Jules Moch, the French reformists, the ten years of relative stability for French capitalism under de

Gaulle would not have been initiated in 1958. Without Wilson and his Labour predecessors, the British Tories would not have had the time and opportunity to change their political clothes and start the offensive they began in 1970 in Britain and Ireland. Without Brandt, constitutional crisis would have coincided with the revival of workers' militancy and economic recession in Germany. And in Italy, the social-democrat Saragat has been allowed room to work for endless government combinations while the Stalinist trade union leaders have restrained and diverted the succession of general strikes.

The social-democrats after 1945 were the main proponents of the economic policies of John Maynard Keynes. Having long since abandoned socialism, they deluded themselves that government manipulation could iron out the contradiction of capitalism and lay the basis for social peace. They were actually talking about a sufficiently high degree of 'economic growth' to assure that the workers were not thrown into common action as a class, and that bureaucrats of their own type would become a permanently necessary committee of management for a nicely-functioning system. The new historical personalities of this golden age were to be the administrator, the public relations man, the welfare expert, the 'whizz-kid', and at the rough edges, the 'trouble-shooters', and even the 'ombudsman'.

On the 'left' were the followers of Marcuse and every variety of revisionist who accepted that this was a new stage of capitalism or a 'neo-capitalism'. They were suitably morally outraged at the 'consumer society', as the victims of advertising, at the growth of a plastic world, at the restraints on 'freedom'. They made obscure references to the darkening of humanity's horizon and they had every fear that

what had happened in Stalin's Russia 'proved' that socialism was no better than capitalism.

President Richard Nixon's great historical place will be that, without understanding one word of all this, he was 'chosen' to give it the death-blow! On August 15, after reacting to the continuous and mighty pressure of the contradictions which had accumulated for the dollar giant, he formally closed a chapter of history. The dollar would no longer even 'theoretically' be exchangeable against gold, and fixed currency parities were dismissed. Behind this lay the awful fact that the claims against the dollar on an international scale had grown to four times the total stock of gold held in the United States! All the talk about 'de-monetizing' gold and the creation of new currencies is not a 'technical' discussion but a frantic turning away from this chasm opening up before capitalism's eyes: a chasm of non-value, of the sudden deathly verdict that what was wealth yesterday will mean nothing today or tomorrow. Bretton Woods is a dead letter.

Nixon's other measures have an immediate impact which pulls the bottom out from under all the reformists and the Stalinists who have provided the international conditions for their continued life. The 10 per cent surcharge on imports into the United States with powers to increase it, is an open and certain return to protectionism of the modern imperialist type. It means mass unemployment in every other capitalist country. The manufacturing industries of Japan and Germany particularly, suffer immediately. And here, where the past deeds of Stalinism and fascism had helped in 'domesticating' the labour force for the productive expansion of the boom, now the workers, far from being in any mood to accept the burden of the plunge into recession, are feeling the strength put into their veins by the years of full employment, and are forcing their unions into struggle, just as are the workers of Britain and France.

Domestically, Nixon is at last forced to heed those capitalist advisers who want an 'incomes policy', but it is brought forward in virulently nationalistic and reactionary form. The American trade unionist is promised price control in exchange for a wage standstill. This wage standstill, in combination with Nixon's other measures, is sold as an insurance policy for the products of American labour receiving their true reward in fair competition on the world market. The American worker is invited to share with his corporate employers the joys of showing the rest of the world who is really the master. Already the price control has collapsed, as was inevitable. And the American workers will fight in their unions with a strength of which their employers are mortally afraid, but still do not grasp even fractionally.

Keynesian policies, and the brokers' job

carried out by a generation of Social Democrats who lived on borrowed time, are dead. Britain and West Germany best exemplify the political implication. In these two countries—and the experience is being repeated in all other countries in different forms, because of the universality of the crisis and the depth of its political effect—the struggle for Marxist theory now takes place under conditions where the preparations of the revolutionary minority can be made to coincide with the unavoidable shocks to the lives and consciousness of the masses.

In the 1930s unemployment and depression, and above all the disastrous consequences of Stalinism, brought in the aftermath of MacDonal a consolidation of the extreme right wing (Attlee, Morrison, Bevin) in the Labour Party and this right wing carried through their counter-revolutionary task in the post-war settlement. The working class, betrayed again nationally and internationally by the Stalinists after 1945, left the proletariat no alternative other than to express its strength through the unions and through the Labour right wing electorally. But the working class's strength has been maintained. We approach the consequences of the slump now under way in a situation entirely different from that of the workers' movement in 1929-1931. On the one hand we have the objective factors producing a proletariat undefeated and recognizing that *all* its historic gains, its basic rights won in struggle, are involved in the defence of what has been won during the boom. And on the other hand, the subjective factor, the successful struggle for the continuity of the Fourth International, the principal content of which has been to develop and deepen our theoretical and practical understanding, that the construction of independent revolutionary parties of the working class is the key question of our whole epoch, is the only basis for the development of Marxism.

Thus we enter the struggle for power, inevitably engendered by the economic crisis, with a Trotskyist movement already armed in Britain with a daily revolutionary newspaper and internationally with the consciousness that Marxist cadres can and will be trained on the bedrock of the struggle for dialectical materialism.

As we go to press, the engineering workers of Western Germany record their massive majority for strike action for their 11 per cent wage claim. Capitalist opinion is insisting that to concede this wage claim would be to open the floodgates for the whole working class at a time when the employers cannot afford concessions. Why? Because, as the London *Times* expresses it 'international currency factors' and the US import surcharge, together with rising costs, have forced a profits drop in 1970-1971, for some major German companies of 80 per cent! In these circumstances the ruling class and its organs grow fearful for the stability of the West German coalition, and particularly for its

economic high priest, the Social Democrat Karl Schiller. Just as in England, they demand state intervention to prevent strike action, i.e. to prevent the beginning of a series of actions by the organized working class which would bring down the coalition. Meanwhile in Britain, the same *Times* lectures its readers on the necessity for a strong Labour Party! In each case the same object: to find every means of beheading the working class, so that however severe the capitalist crisis, the strongest capitalists will emerge supreme at the end of the day.

The International Committee of the Fourth International will now *realize* the tasks set in the Transitional Programme, to build mass parties based on Marxist theory. The hour has struck for the break in the workers' movement from Stalinism and reformism to Trotskyism. The implacable struggle of the International Committee for correct Marxist theory is now exemplified in the struggle against the position

of the POR* in Bolivia. The documents published here reveal beyond all question that a minority of the IC smuggles into IC formulations about united struggles against imperialism at the cost of Marxist theory. These formulations become the ideological justification for entering a bourgeois coalition in Ceylon, for capitulation to bourgeois nationalism in Cuba, and for the abandonment of any working class perspective in favour of 'students' power' and 'national liberation' politics. Bolivia, for which the documents here are published in full, was but the tragic culmination of this series of betrayals.

We therefore ask all our readers to study very carefully the international documents and at the same time to pursue the theoretical and philosophical questions broached in this issue of the *Fourth International*, as the conscious preparation for the future.

* Workers Revolutionary Party.

Statement by the International Committee of the Fourth International

In this issue of Fourth International we publish the contents of a public attack made by a minority of the International Committee of the Fourth International against the Socialist Labour League and the reply of the majority of the International Committee.

As the majority statement makes clear, the Bolivian POR (Revolutionary Workers' Party) is not a section of the International Committee. Only a full conference of the International Committee of the Fourth International has the authority to ratify the establishment and affiliation of a national section. The Bolivian POR's application for affiliation was to have been discussed at the International Committee's 4th Conference.

The immediate cause for the publication of this attack on the SLL was the public criticism made of the opportunist policy of Guillermo Lora and the POR during the August coup of Col. Banzer by Comrade Tim Wohlforth in the 'Bulletin'—paper of the Workers League of America. (The Workers League is an organization sympathetic to the ICFI. It cannot affiliate because of the reactionary Voorhis Act of the USA.)

Comrade Wohlforth's critique was republished in Workers Press (September 8, 1971). Lora's account of the events in Bolivia was serialized in the Workers Press (October 11 and 12, 1971).

1. A new period for the Trotskyist movement

■ The Fourth International, founded by Leon Trotsky in 1938, now faces the greatest change and the greatest challenge in its history. Capitalism's international economic crisis entered a completely new stage on August 15, 1971, when President Nixon administered the death blow to all the economic and political relations imposed by the ruling class, assisted by the Stalinist bureaucracy, in 1944-1945.

In the new conditions, the working class is everywhere driven into struggles for power, and the Trotskyist movement has now unprecedented opportunities for assembling and training the revolutionary working-class leadership. The conditions of defeat in which the movement was founded, the war which followed, and then the long years of post-war boom, means that the fight for the continuity of revolutionary Marxism was a fight against Stalinist repression,

against isolation and under conditions unfavourable for the development of Marxist theory.

Trotskyism suffered from revisionist attempts to liquidate the Fourth International, and since 1953, when Pablo and his group split from the Fourth International only the International Committee of the Fourth International has fought for the continuity of Trotskyism. Now the International Committee has the task of building parties in every country capable of leading the struggle for power.

The leap in consciousness, the development of revolutionary theory and practice, necessary to meet this responsibility, involves an ideological struggle within the IC itself.

On October 12, 1971, a minority of the IC, i.e., two sections: The Hungarian LSH and the French OCI, published a declaration denouncing the Socialist Labour League, the British section, and the Workers League USA (in political solidarity with the IC) for their criticisms of the Bolivian POR.

One of the signatories of the declaration is Guillermo Lora, Secretary of the POR, which is not a section of the International Committee. Its application for affiliation was to be considered at the next IC Conference (Fourth). The IC consists of British, Greek, Ceylonese, Hungarian, French and Canadian sections, together with the Irish and Mexican (LOM) sections admitted at the 1970 pre-Conference of the IC.

Lambert (OCI) and Nagy (Hungary) do not speak for the IC, and this present document is the reply to their minority statement by the IC majority.

The calling of a meeting in Paris advertising as Chairman, Stephen Just, 'Secretary of the IC for the reconstruction of the Fourth International', shows that the OCI has arrogated to itself the functions of the IC, rejected the IC, and nominated its own 'secretary' as opposed to the elected secretary.

This is a split from the IC and its politics. It is a split by a minority.

On September 22, the OCI issued a public declaration denouncing as 'enemies of the dictatorship of the proletariat, agents of counter-revolution and enemies, conscious or unconscious, of the Fourth International, all those who attack the POR (Bolivian)'. They refer to the SLL and the Workers League.

There is the International Committee of the Fourth International, resting on the foundation laid down by Trotsky in 1938, the first four Congresses of the Third International, and all the work of the IC since 1953, particularly the decisions of the 1966 Conference. And there is the bogus 'IC for the reconstruction of the Fourth International', represented by the OCI and the Hungarian section, who want to regroup with centrists against the Fourth International. This split, and not the Bolivian revolution and the Bolivian POR, is the basic issue.

2. The split at Essen

■ This became crystal-clear at the Essen Youth Rally in July 1971. There, representatives of the OCI, the Hungarian section

and the Mexican LOM, voted along with centrists and even right-wing organizations against the amendment to the main resolution put by the representative of the SLL and supported by representatives of a majority

of the IC sections (Ceylon, Ireland, Canada, Greece, SLL).

The issue was clear: the OCI and its associates voted against amendments stating that the only revolutionary international and

revolutionary parties are the Fourth International. In their opposition they naturally received the support of the POUM (Spain) and other centrists, as well as of the right-wing American National Students'

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The OCI and its associates opposed and voted down the following amendment (presented by the SLL and supported by the majority of the IC sections: Greece, Canada, Ceylon, Ireland):

'There can be no revolutionary party without revolutionary theory. Behind every opportunist development in the history of the workers' movement, and especially of Stalinism, has been the revision of Marxist theory. The continuity of the struggle for revolutionary Marxist theory in the past, the struggle of the Fourth International and the International Committee, was the only basis for the initiatives which led to this rally and for the struggle to build the international revolutionary youth movement. Revolutionary youth everywhere must devote themselves above all to the task of developing Marxist theory through the struggle against bourgeois ideology in all the forms it takes in the workers' movement. This is the only basis for combating the dangers of adventurism, activism and "pure" militancy with which revisionists and Maoists mislead the youth, and which can only lead to historic defeats for the working class.'

This was already a split, the real split. They do not want the FI built on the foundations of dialectical materialism and the politics of Lenin and Trotsky, but they want a centrist amalgam of all those who want to disarm the masses by talk about 'revolutionary united fronts' and 'expressing the will of the masses'. Their 'IC for the reconstruction of the FI' is their fraudulent attempt to use the revolutionary name of the IC of the FI for their own opportunist aims. They will never succeed in doing this.

The majority of the IC rejected their unprincipled manoeuvre at Essen. Now they have chosen to stake everything on the issue of Bolivia, as a smokescreen for the real issues which they will not discuss.

Running away from the real theoretical and practical questions of building the FI, they propose to intimidate the movement with shouting about solidarity with the POR of Bolivia. This was the old trick used by the SWP on Cuba in 1963: no theoretical discussion and no criticism of Cuba; they

The vote of the OCI and the Hungarian section at Essen against the IC majority was carried out in front of an observer of the American Spartacist group of Robertson. This has an historical significance which cannot be overstated.

At the Third Conference of the IC in 1966, the French and

son collaborated with Hansen and the revisionist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in wholesale slander of the SLL and the IC. In its resolution at the 1966 Conference, the IC, including the OCI, unanimously stated:

'... The IC not only dissociates itself from the activities and publications of the Spartacists (Robertson) group but insists that a Marxist party can be built only in opposition to it.' Robertson's politics since then have been opportunist on every question, and his group has worked in complete opposition to the International Committee. To admit Robertson's group as observers at Essen at this stage is in effect to junk the whole struggle for principles upon which the IC is based.

The OCI will reply that the invitation was issued on individual initiative by Comrade Berg, secretary of the AJS, and that they have condemned it. On July 9, after Essen, the OCI Political Bureau carried unanimously the following resolution:

'The Political Bureau regrets that the Robertson "Spartacist" group was invited as observer to Essen, without this decision being taken responsibly. The PB considers this individual initiative to be wrong and condemns it.'

This leaves unanswered the point that the OCI leadership is itself politically responsible for the opportunist politics of Berg.

Is it accidental that the OCI at Essen returned to an alliance, against Trotskyism, with a tendency such as the POUM, hostile to the very foundation of the Fourth International, and prepared to collaborate with the OCI only on the basis of abandoning the struggle for its foundation and continuity? Precisely at the point in the world crisis where everything depends on the conscious creation, on the basis of Marxist theory and programme, of revolutionary parties, where the struggle against liquidationism and against the revision of dialectical materialism comes to a head, at this point comes the split! The OCI runs clean away from this historic struggle and, in the name of 'expressing' spontaneous movements of the masses, joins sworn opponents of the FI, collaborates with the centrist ruffraff against the IC.



At no time did the OCI 'attempt to undermine the political credibility of the Stalinist leadership by critically supporting the demand of the Renault workers for a popular government by advancing the demand of a CP-CGT government'.

are involved in a revolution. Similarly, Pablo excluded political discussion with his theory of the imminent Third World War. And it must never be forgotten that the suppression of discussion on Cuba and Ceylon, used to effect the 'unification' of 1963, had as its direct consequence the entry of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP), while still a section of the Pabloite Secretariat, into the bourgeois coalition of Mrs Bandaranaike.

Hungarian sections voted with the rest of the IC delegations for resolutions affirming the revolutionary continuity of the Fourth International. Opposing this were two groups invited as observers to the Conference, Robertson's Spartacists and the French 'Voix Ouvrière' (now 'Lutte Ouvrière'). As opportunists and pragmatists they denounced the IC's struggle for continuity against revisionism.

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3. The fight for dialectical materialism

■ When the French delegation at Essen opposed the SLL

amendment on the struggle for Marxist theory, they set the seal on an opposition to dialectical materialism which was not at all new. One year earlier, in June 1970, at the international pro-

Conference of the IC, these differences became explicit. And for very good reasons objectively founded in the struggle. Anticipating the profound worsening of the economic crisis and the

struggle provoked by it, the SLL delegates stressed the urgency of the basic training of the youth in dialectical thinking.

What was most essential in the preparation of the sections was

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What was most essential in the preparation of the sections was

to develop dialectical materialism in a struggle to understand and to transform the consciousness of the working class in the changing objective conditions. This means the understanding and development of dialectical materialism as the theory of knowledge of Marxism.

Reflecting the attacks on dialectical materialism by the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia of the advanced capitalist countries, especially France and Germany,

and of E Europe, the OCI and Hungarian delegations declared that dialectical materialism was not a theory of knowledge and took up the position that only programme was the basis of the building of parties. Here is the very essence of revisionism which prepares the way for liquidating the party into centrism.

We insist once more, with all our force: only a basic struggle for dialectical materialism against all enemies of Marxism

and carried forward in struggle against the spontaneous consciousness of the working class, can equip the youth for the building of the Fourth International.

In the polemic with Burnham and Shachtman (1939-1940), Trotsky wrote:

'In the United States . . . where the bourgeoisie systematically instils vulgar empiricism in the workers, more than anywhere else, it is necessary to

speed the elevation of the movement to a proper theoretical level.'

The theoretical struggle at this basic level is essential for every section of the Fourth International. And against those who refuse to 'acquire and develop dialectical materialism', Trotsky wrote: 'This is nothing else than a renunciation of Marxism, of scientific method in general, a wretched capitulation to empiricism.'

4. The OCI and the French working class

■ This opposition to the basic theoretical struggle for the revolutionary youth has roots in the orientation of the OCI towards the French proletariat. At no time has the OCI been able consistently to put forward a policy and programme to bring it close to the mass of the French workers who vote for the Stalinists and are organized around the Stalinist-led CGT. Instead they have orientated towards those sections still supporting the social-democrats, primarily in the older industries.

They sought support outside of the orbit of the Stalinists instead of fighting for policies which would break the main body of workers from their mass party. One of the consequences is that the rapidly accumulating effects of the world crisis find the OCI paralysed in its political work in the French working class. Their hysterical outbursts on Bolivia, their frantic desire to find an issue to separate from the SLL and the IC—these are the reactions to the deepening crisis of a petty-bourgeois group which falls back on revolutionary shouting, not of a party which goes deeper into the masses to fight for a development of theory. This characteristic resort to radical phrase-mongering is, again, connected with the failure of the OCI to struggle on every level for dialectical materialism against the dominant forms of bourgeois philosophy, in this case French rationalism and its twin, pseudo-revolutionary rhetoric.

The Essen rally itself was conceived and carried through by the OCI as a diversion from the unresolved problems of their work in the French working class. An artificial formula was constructed which made W Germany the focal point of the workers' struggle in Europe, and then the OCI led their youth movement to a rally where less than 200 German youth participated, and real political work to build sections of the FI was replaced by demagogy and showmanship.

It could not and did not have the slightest effect on the workers of France or of Germany.

The SLL participated reluctantly, and only on the understanding that we received the preparatory document in time. It was received untranslated, only a few hours before our delegation left for Essen. The SLL and the majority of the IC sections, having moved their amendment, voted for the general resolution despite differences, only in order to preserve public unity of the IC during the period of preparation of the International Fourth Conference, at which the disputed questions would be discussed.

May-June 1968, with the French workers on General Strike, themselves striving for an alternative government, was the greatest testing time for the OCI. But what did the strike reveal?

It revealed the theoretical bankruptcy and political impotence of the OCI whose leadership — guided by a superficial impressionist analysis of de Gaulle's coup in 1958 — had exaggerated the strength and viability of the Fifth Republic, abandoned its revolutionary perspective and written off the revolutionary capacities of the French working class.

This defeatist conception, which extended even to the Vietnam war, was summed up in the rationalization of Lambert that the French working class was 'decisively defeated in 1958'. This pessimistic and essentially middle-class outlook expressed itself in all the organizational and agitational work of the OCI and the AJS before and after 1968. It is an undeniable fact that at no time during the General Strike did the OCI leadership advance a socialist programme. Nor did it attempt to undermine the political credibility of the Stalinist leadership by critically supporting the demand of the Renault workers for a 'popular government' by advancing the demand of a CP-CGT government. Instead, the OCI leaders tail-ended the working class and restricted the political scope of the strike by demanding a central strike committee. This was a complete evasion of the political responsibilities of revolutionary leadership.

Is it necessary to remind the

OCI leaders that one of the chief reasons for the definitive split with the Pabloites was their refusal to address political demands to the trade union bureaucracy and fight for a CP-CGT government in the French General Strike of 1953? Revolutionists do not abstain on basic political questions — only centrists and syndicalists do.

The Socialist Labour League had warned the French section of the dangers before 1968:

May 15, 1967: 'Now the radicalization of the workers in W Europe is proceeding rapidly, particularly in France. The election results there, the threat of a return to the political instability of the ruling class in the Fourth Republic, the mounting strike struggles, the taking of emergency powers — all these place a premium on revolutionary preparation. There is always a danger at such a stage of development that a revolutionary party responds to the situation in the working class not in a revolutionary way, but by adaptation to the level of struggle to which the workers are restricted by their own experience under the old leaderships, i.e., to the inevitable initial confusion. Such revisions of the fight for the independent party and the Transitional Programme are usually dressed up in the disguise of getting closer to the working class, unity with all those in struggle, not posing ultimatums, abandoning dogmatism, etc.' (Reply to the OCI.)

Even from this 1968 experience the lessons were not learned. In fact the abstentionist methods and omissions of the General Strike period were continued into the presidential elections of 1969.

In the referendum in March of the same year, the OCI had correctly campaigned for a vote against de Gaulle, in contrast to the abstentionism of the Pabloites. However, the gains from this correct turn were lost in the presidential elections, the class character of which was ignored by the OCI. Basing themselves on their fraudulent theory of the 'United Class Front', the OCI leaders used the

failure of the CP and Socialist Party to agree on a single candidate as a pretext for not supporting the CP candidate, Duclos, against Pompidou.

The task of revolutionaries was to raise the consciousness of Stalinist rank and file by critically supporting Duclos and pointing out that the main enemy was Pompidou. The OCI should have campaigned throughout the labour movement to demand that the CP candidate be pledged to a socialist policy against the banks and monopolies. To carry forward this fight, while calling for a massive vote for Duclos, was the best way to exposing the Stalinists and their programme of 'advanced democracy' and fighting for alternative revolutionary leadership. Any other course leaves the Stalinist control undisturbed. It was also necessary to expose the SP candidate whose party refused to vote for Duclos in the second ballot and supported the bourgeois candidate, Poher.

The OCI leaders did none of these things. Some members voted for Duclos, others for Deferre (SP) and others, including comrade Lambert, abstained. What was worse, the OCI attacked the Stalinists for having dared to stand a candidate in the elections despite the fact that the Stalinists in the previous presidential elections in 1965 did not do so and instead supported Mitterand, a bourgeois politician.

In 1965, the OCI did not even intervene: thus in France, as in Bolivia, the policy of the 'united class front' and the 'united workers' front' has become a means for disorienting the workers and strengthening the grip of the Stalinists and petty-bourgeois nationalists over the mass movement. The sectarian absence of any policy towards the Stalinists in France easily turns into opportunism, so that the OCI now writes in 'Informations Ouvrières' about the Clyde struggle in Britain without any criticism of its Stalinist shop steward leaders — in the same issue as their denunciation of the Socialist Labour League and Workers League as agents of counter-revolution!

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SOZIALISMUS JA
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 СОЦИАЛИЗМ ДА



The Essen rally

5. The capitulation to spontaneity

Just as the difference over dialectical materialism at the IC's pre-Conference was the necessary and conscious anticipation of the essential theoretical problems to be overcome in the impending revolutionary crisis, so Essen was the anticipation of the open split which these problems would produce on the International Committee.

The real split was already effected at Essen, when the OCI lined up with anti-Trotskyists in

a public vote against the majority of the IC. They ran away from the principled questions raised at Essen. They raise the question of Bolivia in a totally unprincipled way in order to keep around them their middle-class allies. We will never accept this running to the centrists, and we will oppose to the end the OCI and anyone else who does it. As the Secretary of the SLL wrote to comrade Lambert of the OCI on July 14, 1971, in reference to Essen:

'We have not spent all our lives fighting centrism to suddenly decide to capitulate to it

on the eve of the greatest class struggles in history.'

It is necessary to make one other major point on the split pronounced by the OCI. They carry out this split while a Congress of the IC is in preparation and due to be held before the end of 1971. Even though the events at Essen created conditions where day-to-day collaboration with the OCI became impossible, nevertheless it was agreed to proceed with the preparation of documents and arrange the Conference, as the only way of dealing with the differences. These documents are

now prepared. But the OCI and the Hungarian sections have chosen to split before the Conference. They act in the same tradition as the SWP, which in 1963 avoided the Conference of the IC and effected its 'unification' with the Pabloites.

At the very heart of the attacks of revisionism has been the attempt to liquidate the party into spontaneous and so-called 'objective' processes. This is the expression of an anti-dialectical method which denies the role of revolutionary consciousness in changing the material struggle itself under specific conditions.

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 SOCIALISME OUI
 СОЦИАЛИЗМ ДА

VIVE LA CLASSE OUVRIERE DE POLOGNE ET DE TCHECOSLOVAQUIE
 ДА ЗДРАВСТВУЕТ ПОЛЬСКИЙ И ЧЕХОСЛОВАЦКИЙ РАБОЧИЙ КЛАСС
 LONG LIVE THE WORKERS OF POLAND AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA
 LEBEN DIE POLISCHEN UND TCHECOSLOVAKISCHEN ARBEITER
 VIVA LA CLASE OBRERA DE POLONIA Y DE TCHECOSLOVACIA



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Thus Pablo held that given a changed world balance of forces in the post-war period a 'new reality' existed whereby the 'revolutionary process' would force the Stalinist Parties, the social democratic bureaucracies and the petty-bourgeois nationalists in a 'rough way' to make the revolution.

We now find this method developed once again by the OCI. We are told we are in a period of 'imminent revolution'. Within this period there is a 'revolutionary process'. Parties and leaderships then 'correspond' to this 'process'. We are even told of an overall process occasionally 'concretized' in something like the Popular Assembly in Bolivia, which proceeds 'through different stages and different forms towards the Universal Republic of Soviets'. The revolutionary party's task is to 'express these processes'.

This is nothing more than idealism in the form of French rationalism gone mad. We repeat what Lenin said: 'The truth is always concrete.' Only through a detailed and specific analysis of the actual development of the class struggle under the specific conditions of the capitalist crisis can we begin to relate our strategy to the actual changes in the consciousness and life of workers. This requires of us a conscious development of dialectical materialism as we struggle within the workers' movement. This struggle is at all times the

struggle to construct Trotskyist parties independent of centrism and Stalinism. Such parties and only such parties can lead the revolution. They can only lead the revolution in the bitterest of struggles against the counter-revolutionary Stalinist and social democratic betrayers.

Within this framework the OCI's position on the 'united class front' becomes a complete liquidation of the party and its subordination to the Stalinist and social democratic parties and union apparatus. Lenin and Trotsky saw the united front as a tactic and not a strategy as the OCI claim. They saw it as a relationship between mass workers' parties of a temporary character for the purpose of winning the masses to the Communist Party. The OCI has transformed this into an overall 'unity' of the class achieved on the basis of its present leadership, without the participation in the united front of our party. This 'united class front' more and more, in their theorizing and practice, takes over the role of the revolutionary party itself.

In the October 12 statement we find reference to 'the achievement of the unity of the class through the workers' United Front, motive force of the anti-imperialist United Front . . .'. This carries the liquidation one step further dissolving even the workers' united front into a broader 'anti-imperialist' one—

broad enough, no doubt, to include the bourgeoisie or at least its petty-bourgeois representatives.

In the 1950s, the OCI made an identical mistake in their policy in Algeria. The bourgeois-nationalist MNA of Messali Hadj was elevated to a revolutionary party not only in Algeria, but in France itself. The Pabloites supported one wing of the nationalist bourgeoisie, the FLN, and the OCI supported the other, the MNA. In Britain, the SLL had given critical support to the MNA, but broke off all relations with their representatives in Britain when the MNA approached the United Nations for intervention in Algeria.

The OCI continued its relations with Messali Hadj even until the open collaboration of Messali with de Gaulle. The OCI's position today on the 'united class front' and 'anti-imperialist' front, even after the defeat in Bolivia, shows that their 'correction' of the Algerian adventure has been purely formal, and that its theoretical roots remain firmly implanted in the OCI.

Related to this has been the OCI's position that it is not a party, and that the Fourth International does not really exist. It sees the national and international party in quantitative terms rather than from the point of view of the development of Marxist theory. This in turn led

it, on the eve of the May-June 1968 events, to not even have the post of secretary of its organization, so far had the capitulation to spontaneity developed.

On the question of the struggle in the colonial and ex-colonial countries, the anti-Marxist method of the OCI has had the obvious results, and not only on Algeria.

The OCI refused to campaign in support of a victory for the National Liberation Front, because of its Stalinist leadership, and called instead for the 'victory of the Vietnamese workers and peasants'. This led to a situation on the eve of the 1968 Tet offensive where comrade Berg openly stated an abstentionist position on Vietnam.

And now, after years of refusal to support the struggle of the Palestinian people for self-determination, and inability to take the side of the Arab revolution against Zionism and US imperialism, the OCI welcomes the Irbid 'Soviet' as some manifestation of a world process towards the Universal Republic of Workers' Councils! Inability to fight against the Stalinists and petty-bourgeois nationalists in a real fight for independent leadership in the anti-imperialist struggle, and at the same time an abstract demagoguery about the victory of the workers and peasants and the international striving for Soviets.

6. The Bolivian revolution

■ Bolivia is being used as a smokescreen to cover up the bloc with centrism against the International Committee. As if this were not criminal enough, in proceeding in this fashion, the OCI turns against the most fundamental lessons of our movement on the question of political principle and at the same time covers up for the worst sort of opportunism in Latin America.

We take back nothing from our criticisms of Lora and his role in the defeat of the Bolivian working class. How could we have proceeded otherwise than with an open attack? The road to coalition government in Ceylon was paved by such cover-ups time and again on the part of the Pabloite leadership. How could we draw the lessons we do from their betrayal in Ceylon and practise the same politics in relation to someone



Charles Berg

on the periphery of the International Committee? We cover over nothing. We build the Fourth International on the basis of political principle and complete honesty.

It was in fact the OCI which first publicly criticized the politics of Lora and the POR. The October 1970 issue of 'La Verité' carried a lengthy criticism of the thesis passed at the April 1970 Congress of the COB (Bolivian trade union federation). This thesis was the product of the joint collaboration of the POR and the Stalinist Bolivian CP. It was voted for by both parties and the Popular Assembly was later to base itself politically on this document. The OCI wrote:

... We are dealing with a text which after having made certain concessions to the idea of constructing socialism in Bolivia alone, takes on the one hand, a Stalinist type view of the Ovando regime, and introduces in the chapter on proletarian internationalism, a Stalinist

analysis. We have found in the COB thesis on the one hand passages of direct Stalinist inspiration, and on the other a serious omission concerning Czechoslovakia.'

The OCI concludes:

'Comrades, we tell you without evasion, moved by a profound and even anguished conviction, that if this really became the charter of the Bolivian workers' movement and represented its orientation and if the POR was to adopt it (or even for a long time keep silent on the fact that it is the result of a compromise and only has a very circumstantial value) then the thesis of the COB can constitute a noose around the neck of the Bolivian proletariat for it encloses it within the framework of Bolivia.'

Was the OCI at that time giving in 'to enormous pressures' as the OCI now says of the SLL and the Workers League? Was the OCI in making those criticisms identifying itself 'as enemies of the dictatorship of the proletariat' and placing itself 'on the side of imperialism and Stalinism'?

The truth is that in 1967 the OCI held the position that revolutions could not be made in the underdeveloped countries until such time as mass revolutionary parties were created in the advanced countries. So distant was the struggle in the underdeveloped countries from the thinking and perspectives of the OCI leadership until very recently that the basic resolution around which it wished the Fourth Conference to be organized 'For the Reconstruction of the Fourth International' hardly mentions Latin America and does not mention Bolivia at all. And yet the Bolivian question is now made the pretext for a split from the International Committee.

We cannot educate a new generation of cadres as revolutionaries with such factional and dishonest methods. We cannot allow the question of Bolivia to be used rather than assessed for the purpose of actually developing theoretically a new leadership in the underdeveloped countries.

We restate what we said about the history of the Lora group.

Lora was the major supporter of Pablo in Latin America in 1952. With Pablo's help he gave critical support to the bourgeois MNR Paz government. Here is how a member of his party reported the POR's position in the Fourth International at the time.

'The POR began by justifiably granting critical support to the MNR government. That is, it desisted from issuing the slogan "down with the government"; it gave the government critical support against attacks of imperialism and reaction, and it supported all progressive measures.'

This is just the way the LSSP began its move towards openly joining the Ceylonese coalition government.

The POR broke with Pablo, but it turned its back on the International Committee, refusing to take up a fight for the IC in Latin America though urged to do so. Lora from then on played only a national role. This is the history as we printed it in the Workers Press and 'Bulletin'. The OCI does not deny this.

We can add to this some more. Understanding the past background of Lora, a background of Pabloism, nationalism and opportunism, the Socialist Labour League refused to put up any money towards his fare and collaboration in bringing him to the 1966 International Conference as the OCI had proposed. When he appeared in Europe in 1970, the Socialist Labour League made it quite plain it would not favour his admission into the IC unless a full discussion was held on his whole history and an understanding reached on this basis. We do not have one policy for the LSSP and the Pabloites and another for Lora.

In our public statement we made this fundamental assessment of Lora's role in the Bolivian events:

'Lora, in collaboration with the Bolivian Stalinists and with the agreement of the Bolivian and international Pabloites, failed to fight at any point for the overthrow of the Torres military regime. Thus he, along with the rest of the Popular Assembly,

acted as a left cover for Torres while the right-wing elements in Torres' own army prepared and finally executed their coup.'

Then, after writing this, we received Lora's own account of the Bolivian events which we published in the Workers Press and in the 'Bulletin'. The OCI has yet to publish this account. Lora himself in this account states:

'At the same time everybody thought—including we Marxists—that the arms would be given by the governing military team, which would consider that only through resting on the masses and giving them adequate firepower could they at least neutralize the gorilla right.'

Lora thus admits to what we had accused him of. Never really fighting to overthrow Torres, he had, along with the Stalinists, counted on one section of the bourgeoisie to arm the working class for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie as a whole! Lora thus was carrying out the very same policy he carried out with Pablo in 1952. At no point did he raise the slogan 'Down with Torres'. This was, of course, Lenin's policy in the 'April Theses', while Lora stands with Stalin and the 'old Bolsheviks'.

Even after the defeat, Lora is unable to draw any lessons at all. He openly defends his reformist position in the pages of the OCI's 'Informations Ouvrières':

'The ultra-lefts and the Pabloites forget the teachings of Lenin and Trotsky: they draw up their "documents" in a simple-minded way and place Torres and Ovando-Banzer on the same level. These people refuse to understand the various shades that bourgeois nationalism can take in underdeveloped countries.

'Since they are removed from the class struggle they do not understand the difference between bourgeois-democratic demands of Torres and the methods of the fascists; that is the difference between going to prison legally or getting killed by a bullet in the back of the neck.

'Revolutionary tactics must begin with this difference. It is not a question of supporting Torres, but of crushing fascism to impose a workers' government.'

Revolutionary strategy does not begin with the differences between left and right wings of the military, but from the perspective of the overthrow of the whole bourgeois order. It does not base its policy on a bloc with the left bourgeoisie against the fascist threat, but on the understanding that there is no way to stop fascism without taking up the independent struggle for socialism.

Thus lessons which Trotsky repeated thousands of times, particularly in regard to Spain, are once again borne out in the paralysis and complicity of Torres in the right-wing military takeover and in the prostration of the working class before this takeover because of the misleadership of all the workers' parties, but especially the POR which claimed to be Trotskyist. In the end the workers of Bolivia got both the bullet in the head and the jail.

The policy of the POR was consistently opportunist from beginning to end. Under conditions of a mass revolutionary situation it acted as the left cover for Stalinism and bourgeois-nationalism. Nowhere did it decisively break from the CP. In fact it put forward a common candidate for the presidency of the Popular Assembly with the CP.

The policy of Lora had nothing whatsoever to do with the policy of Bolshevism, or Trotskyism. The construction of the Trotskyist movement in Latin America, as elsewhere, requires a decisive break with the narrow national outlook and a return to internationalism and the struggle to develop Marxist theory. The POR and Lora repeat the policies of the POUM in Spain in 1935-1938 and are in no fundamental way different from them. Their relations with Torres and the COB parallels those of the POUM with the Republican Government and the CNT. The OCI's support for the POR now makes clear the political meaning of their bloc with the POUM at Essen.

7. The way forward

■ The essence of the struggle of the International Committee since 1953, has been the conscious construction of independent revolutionary parties of the Fourth International. Revision-

ists have always attacked this fundamental conception, Pablo with his 'new reality', 'mass pressure' and 'the revolution in all its forms', the LSSP with its 'united left front'.

Now the OCI, using the formula, 'imminence of revolu-

tion', elaborating a schema of natural stages through which the working class passes on the road to power, distorting the tactic of united front of the working class, has taken the road of liquidationism laid down by these revisionists.

The split comes now, when the stand at the point of transition from one phase of the class struggle to a higher one, the stage in which Trotskyist parties are called upon to win leadership in the struggle for working-class power. In this

transition it is inevitable that a decisive clash, and a split, becomes necessary with all those like the OCI who rejected the struggle for dialectical materialism and refused to break from the old propagandist conceptions. This hostility to theory always leads to centrism and opportunism.

The record shows clearly that on all the disputed questions, and above all on the importance of theoretical development and training, the Socialist Labour League and the IC majority tried patiently to correct the course of the OCI, and never proceeded precipitately or in such way as to provoke a split.

The decision of the OCI to join the centrists at Essen against the International Committee and their manoeuvring and demagoguery on Bolivia, constitute a decision to reject and oppose the struggle to build independent revolutionary parties of the Fourth International. We call upon all Trotskyists in every country to reject completely the OCI line and to fight on the principled positions of the International Committee.

The Fourth Conference of the International Committee will meet in the first weeks of 1972. There it will be necessary to make a balance-sheet of the

struggle against revisionism and the fight to establish the Trotskyist cadre throughout the period since 1938. A new period opens up, a period in which the Fourth International is called upon to lead struggles for workers' power. The perspectives of this struggle in the advanced capitalist countries, in the colonial countries, and in the fight for the political revolution in Europe, the Soviet Union and China, will be discussed and decided.

The draft resolution for this Conference is now complete, and the discussion now begins in all sections of the International Committee.

WORKERS' LEAGUE, USA
(sympathetic to the IC of the FI).

REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST LEAGUE OF CEYLON.

WORKERS INTERNATIONALIST LEAGUE OF GREECE.

LEAGUE FOR A WORKERS' VANGUARD OF IRELAND.

SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE, BRITAIN.

October 24, 1971.

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By **Cliff Slaughter**

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Statement by the OCI Central Committee

THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE of the OCI, section of the International Committee for the reconstruction of the Fourth International, having examined the situation in Bolivia, on the basis of all the documents available, and in particular on the basis of the report of the development of the revolutionary struggle drawn up by comrade Guillermo Lora, secretary of the POR of Bolivia, reaffirms completely its absolute solidarity with the POR, Trotskyist party, member of the International Committee for the reconstruction of the Fourth International, in its struggle waged in Bolivia for the workers' and peasants' government and for soviet power.

The Central Committee of the OCI recalls that the International Committee characterized the period opened by the General Strike of May-June 1968 and the process of political revolution in Czechoslovakia as the period of the imminence of revolution, that is the period when class confrontations will take place posing the question of power.

The CC states that the process of class struggle in Bolivia completely fits into this perspective. In Bolivia it is, in fact, around an organ of a soviet type that the worker and peasant masses organized themselves in their struggle against the domination of yankee imperialism and the miserable Bolivian bourgeoisie.

Like the soviet in Irbid in Palestine, like the workers, councils in the Baltic ports in Poland, the setting up of the Popular Assembly expresses the fundamental trend of the period, the will of the proletarian and peasant masses to enter into the struggle for power.

The CC of the OCI, member of the International Committee, salutes the heroic struggle carried out by the Bolivian POR in a situation where all the forces of imperialism sought to break this deep aspiration of the Bolivian masses to destroy the bourgeois masses and the rela-

tions of production of capitalist property to build workers power.

The CC of the OCI states that in the coup d'etat organized by the CIA and the military dictators of Brazil and Argentine and facilitated by the action of the Torres government is the proof that the policy carried by the POR was fundamentally based on the interests of the Bolivian proletariat and of the world proletariat.

The facts confirm this: at each stage of the process, the political struggle of the POR enabled the masses to preserve their independence of the class from Torres and to outdo all the manoeuvres aiming against to subordinate them to bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalism.

It is the policy of the POR which enabled the maintenance right to the end of the form, raised to the level of power, of the United Class Front of the political and trade union organizations, expressed in the Popular Assembly.

It is the unity in and around the Popular Assembly, organ of dual power, which under the leadership of the Trotskyist party, the POR, dominated the whole revolutionary process before and after the confrontations of August 20 to August 23.

The Moscow bureaucracy recognised this; they condemned their party in their press for having capitulated before the POR.

The POR gave to all the petty-bourgeois currents the example of an armed struggle based on workers' militias and completely integrated in the movement of workers in struggle for their emancipation.

It is consciously that, through the voice of the 'Washington Post', yankee imperialism stated that, on the first day of the fascist uprising in Santa Cruz, the Bolivian situation was far more serious than that in Chile, that it confronted the United States with a more dangerous state of affairs than even the Cuban revolution of 1959,

because the Bolivian masses had taken up the struggle for a 'workers' government'.

The CC of the OCI declares that the Bolivian revolution is an integral part of the E Berlin uprising of 1953, of the Hungarian workers' council revolution, of the movement towards political revolution of the Czechoslovak people, of the struggle of the Polish workers, of the May-June 1968 General Strike in France, of the struggle of the English proletariat against the Tory government, of the General Motors strike in the United States, of the struggle of the Spanish proletariat against Franco, of the struggle of the Argentinian proletariat against military dictatorship, of the struggle of the world proletariat to destroy the domination of imperialism and that of the Stalinist bureaucracy which coalesces with it.

It is this which determined the intervention of imperialism and which explains the hatred of the Bolivian revolution shown by the world bourgeoisie, by the Moscow bureaucracy and its Stalinist parties, and by all petty-bourgeois parties.

The CC of the OCI, member of the International Committee, states that those who attack the Bolivian POR, attack the party which was the instigator and motive force of the Popular Assembly, that is the organ which concretized the struggle of the Bolivian proletariat to build its own power and which opened the road towards the dictatorship of the proletariat in Bolivia. All those who attack the POR through this, represent the enemies of the dictatorship of the proletariat. They take the sides of imperialism and Stalinism. They are agents of counter-revolution and are enemies, conscious or unconscious, of the Fourth International.

The CC of the OCI, member of the International Committee, notes that those who attack the POR and expose their total incapacity in understanding the meaning of the struggle of the Bolivian masses, are the same people who characterized Ho Chi

Minh as a revolutionary, the man who covered up the murder of the Trotskyist leader Ta Thu Tau those who subordinated the Palestinian resistance to Nasser, then to the petty-bourgeois leaders of the Palestinian resistance, who tried to justify, by talking of so-called counter-revolutionary threats, the intervention of the Kremlin bureaucracy in Czechoslovakia.

They take their rightful place in the camp of slanderers of the heroic struggle of the POR of which numerous leaders fell in the civil war paying the heavy price of the struggle for the international proletarian revolution.

The CC of the OCI, who took up the struggle in 1951-1952 to maintain the continuity of the Fourth International, that is the link with the struggle of Lenin and Trotsky and of Bolshevism, against the attempt of those who with Pablo agreed to liquidation in the face of the Stalinist bureaucracy, states that the Pabloite Unified Secretariat has once again taken a stand against the POR and the Fourth International, as they did in 1953, at the time of the E Berlin uprising and the French General Strike, as at the time of the second intervention in Hungary in 1956, and as at all crucial moments in the class struggle, on the side of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Today, when the whole of the perspectives on which the struggle of Leon Trotsky were founded become clear and concrete more and more as the linked crisis of imperialism and bureaucracy accelerates, and when confrontations posing power multiply, the CC of the OCI affirms that it will continue with all the necessary firmness the struggle taken up 20 years ago, because it is the struggle for the victory of the world proletarian revolution, for the universal power of soviets, for the building of revolutionary parties, sections of the Fourth International in each country, and the rebuilding of the Fourth International, the indispensable instrument for victory.

September 19, 1971.

Statement by the OCI Central Committee

THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE of the OCI, section of the International Committee for the reconstruction of the Fourth International, having examined the situation in Bolivia, on the basis of all the documents available, and in particular on the basis of the report of the development of the revolutionary struggle drawn up by comrade Guillermo Lora, secretary of the POR of Bolivia, reaffirms completely its absolute solidarity with the POR, Trotskyist party, member of the International Committee for the reconstruction of the Fourth International, in its struggle waged in Bolivia for the workers' and peasants' government and for soviet power.

The Central Committee of the OCI recalls that the International Committee characterized the period opened by the General Strike of May-June 1968 and the process of political revolution in Czechoslovakia as the period of the imminence of revolution, that is the period when class confrontations will take place posing the question of power.

The CC states that the process of class struggle in Bolivia completely fits into this perspective. In Bolivia it is, in fact, around an organ of a soviet type that the worker and peasant masses organized themselves in their struggle against the domination of yankee imperialism and the miserable Bolivian bourgeoisie.

Like the soviet in Irbid in Palestine, like the workers, councils in the Baltic ports in Poland, the setting up of the Popular Assembly expresses the fundamental trend of the period, the will of the proletariat and peasant masses to enter into the struggle for power.

The CC of the OCI, member of the International Committee, salutes the heroic struggle carried out by the Bolivian POR in a situation where all the forces of imperialism sought to break this deep aspiration of the Bolivian masses to destroy the bourgeois masses and the rela-

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Since the General Strike in France and the process of political revolution in Czechoslovakia, the political power of the working class is posed at the centre of each struggle of workers and youth throughout the world. In the face of decaying imperialism which offers only misery, unemployment, fascist barbarism and a war of extermination, in the face of the bureaucracy which threatens to destroy the conquests of the glorious Revolution of October 1917, which puts a brake on and dislocates their struggles, all the resistance and demands of the workers, all their will to live requires the direct and immediate struggle to take power, to impose a workers' government.

Never before has the conquest of power by the proletariat been such a clear, achievable and urgent task!

The creation of the Soviet in Irbid by the oppressed Palestinian masses, the committees and councils formed by the Polish working class, the Bolivian Popular Assembly concretize these struggles converging on this immediate goal, proceeding, although through different stages and different forms, towards the Universal Republic of Soviets.

It is in Bolivia that this march forward of the working class towards its power reached its highest level, rich in experience, expressing and concretizing the deepest aspiration of the whole of the international working class. At the head of the Bolivian workers was the POR, armed with the programme of the Fourth International, steeped in dozens of years of determined struggle for the proletarian revolution against nationalism, against Stalinism, against Pabloite revisionism and against all forms of petty-bourgeois ideas, such as guerrilla-ism, deeply entrenched in the most combative section of the Bolivian proletariat. Because this Party prepared this struggle, it was prepared for it, and was able to seize the occasion and, at each revolutionary process, it developed the conditions for the working class to take power. We can see, in the development of the Bolivian revolution, not only the aspiration of the workers throughout the world for their government, but also mainly the

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lessons and experiences on the means and methods to achieve this. The achievement of the unity of the class through the workers' United Front, motive force of the anti-imperialist United Front, materialized in the Popular Assembly, organ of power. The POR of Bolivia, member of the International Committee for the reconstruction of the Fourth International, worked for this unity to create the indispensable conditions for the taking of power.

This experience of a struggle for a workers' and peasants' government, under the leadership of a Trotskyist party, a vital experience for the international working class, brings to life the universal lessons of the 1917 October Revolution. It is the most worthy commemoration on the eve of its next anniversary. This is then the positive reply to the Hungarian revolution of workers' councils, which 15 years ago, sought in vain for its organized political leadership. Here is the Trotskyist demonstration of a struggle to give a centralized and organized strength to the struggle of the whole of the proletariat marching towards power against the French Stalinists who betrayed and dislocated the 1968 General Strike, and fought the attempt of the OCI to achieve such an organized centralization.

Today the French CP carries out a slander campaign against the POR with the aim of turning the proletariat away from the carrying out of its revolutionary tasks.

The international apparatus of the Kremlin finds in this work the greatest of support from the campaign of the obedient Pabloites (Ligue Communiste, Lute Ouvrière) against the POR in struggle.

No one can be mistaken. All the open and concealed enemies of the dictatorship of the proletariat and its Party, today pour out mountains of lies and slanders against the POR of Bolivia. The Stalinists who, at each point and on an international scale, fight the class independence realized in the Popular Assembly, which was firmly maintained by the POR, glorify the class collaboration in Chile, condemn not only the POR, but the Bolivian Communist Party which, in the Popular Assembly, was forced to accept the United Front.

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rents spit out their hatred of the Bolivian POR because it vigorously resisted sectarian adventures, firmly guiding the struggle of the popular masses towards the workers' government. Particularly active in the petty-bourgeois Front against the POR, the Pabloites find their place with all their nuances, the 'Lutte Ouvrière', the so-called Ligue 'Communiste' of the Unified Secretariat, the renegades of the Fourth International, those who glorified petty-bourgeois leaders —Stalinists like Gomulka as well as Yassir Arafat—who carried out an unprincipled agreement with representatives of the bourgeoisie in the 'Vietnam Committee'. These same petty bourgeois attack the POR, who were able to express the revolutionary process in Bolivia. They capitulate in Latin America as in France and everywhere in front of so-called spontaneist currents of the petty bourgeoisie to participate in the Stalinist attack against the revolutionary upsurge of the masses who, in each country, pose the dictatorship of the proletariat, the democracy of workers' councils.

It is precisely because the Bolivian events concentrate at their highest point the march towards power of the international working class, posing as the most important thing all the decisive questions in the conquest of power, as well as the activity of the Trotskyist Party at the heart of this world process in an epoch of upheavals and sharp turns, that the unresolved problems come out of the crisis of the Fourth International which in 1950 Pablo, Mandel, Frank, etc., wanted to destroy, finding their expression also in the heart of the International Committee.

Only the petty bourgeois find this surprising.

The history of the Fourth International, since its foundation by Leon Trotsky in 1938, was difficult struggle for its maintenance against immense forces grouped together to destroy it. Only the Fourth International, through its programme and through its untiring struggles, has always fought for the class independence of the proletariat, for the world proletarian revolution against imperialism and Stalinist class collaboration. That is why it was, and is today the centre of sharp attacks by all the enemies of the proletariat. The Fourth International is decisive

in the outcome of the world class struggle as it is in the continuation of Bolshevism, of the October Revolution. The Trotskyists who, since 1950, resisted the policy of capitulation in front of the bureaucracy which is the essence of Pabloism, the Trotskyist organizations which, in 1953, set up the International Committee, they alone ensured the continuity of the Fourth International and thus preserved the conditions for its reconstruction indispensable to the building in each country of the leading Revolutionary Workers' Party, national section of the Fourth International.

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Today, the leadership of certain organizations of the International Committee, like the Socialist Labour League and the Workers' League, lacking clarity precisely on the question of the strategy of the conquest of power and the reconstruction of the Fourth International, have given in to enormous pressure in attacking the POR.

The three delegations, meeting in Paris, considering that the discussion is legitimate, as much between the sections adhering to the IC as inside each of its sections, they condemn the method used by the Workers League and the SLL who publicly condemned the Bolivian section of the IC.

It is for this reason that the delegations of the OCI and of the Organizing Committee for the E European countries agree with the request made by comrade G. Lora, demanding that the IC be called to a plenary meeting in the most rapid delay to take a stand on the report on the Bolivian revolution and the tasks of the reconstruction of the Fourth International which the leadership of the POR has prepared.

Paris, October 12, 1971.

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Bolivia: Bitter lessons of defeat

By TIM WOHLFORTH: Reprinted from the 'Bulletin', weekly organ of the Workers' League of America, August 30, 1971.

THE RIGHT-WING militarists, with the support of the fascist Falangists and the old nationalist leader Paz, have taken over in Bolivia ending the Torres regime and the Popular Assembly. No information has been forthcoming on the fate of revolutionaries in Bolivia, particularly the militants of the POR.

Brutal as the old Barrientos military regime was, which took the life of Cesar Lora and other militants of the old Trotskyist movement as well as hunting down and murdering Guevara, this new fascist-supported military regime can be expected to carry through even more brutal murders of revolutionaries.

It is necessary to make an assessment of how this coup was permitted to take place, what it reveals of the Popular Assembly, and the role particularly of those within it who claimed to be Trotskyists. The construction of a Trotskyist movement in Latin America will depend on absorbing the bitter lessons of this latest bloody episode in the tumultuous history of Bolivia.

There is no time to lose in drawing these lessons. What has happened in Bolivia can be followed shortly in Peru, in Chile and even in Argentina. The crisis of capitalism is so intense and the working-class movement in Latin America so determined that the crisis of leadership is posed with acute sharpness. In every country of Latin America it can

be said that capitalism rules only because of the paralysis and confusion of those elements which call themselves Trotskyists. This is the bitter lesson of Bolivia. Nothing, absolutely nothing can be constructed in Latin America unless this lesson is learned.

Strongest

Outside of Ceylon, Bolivia has had the strongest Trotskyist movement of any colonial country in the world. Trotskyism has been a major factor among Bolivian tin miners for a decade and a half now. The key figure of Bolivian Trotskyism has been Guillermo Lora, who lost his own brother under Barrientos and whose whereabouts at this moment is not known, must share a responsibility in the recent rightist coup.

Lora, in collaboration with the Bolivian Stalinists and with the agreement of the Bolivian and international Pabloites, failed to fight at any point for the overthrow of the Torres military regime. Thus he, along with the rest of the Popular Assembly, acted as a left cover for Torres while the right wing elements in Torres' own army prepared and finally executed their coup.

In so doing Lora was carrying forward a political course begun over a decade ago, from which he has consistently refused to veer. At every point this course has received support within the Fourth International or forces claiming to represent the Fourth International. Though less known

On the weekend of August 21-22 the ten-month-old regime of General Juan José Torres was overthrown by a CIA-backed coup led by Colonel Banzer—head of the military academy. Banzer had the close support of the bourgeois MNR—National Revolutionary Movement—and the Bolivian Socialist Falange—an extreme right-wing semi-fascist movement.

Torres came to power when a right-wing army coup against President Ovando misfired and he found himself the 'reluctant hero' of the Bolivian masses and leader of a Bonapartist regime whose margin for manoeuvre was increasingly restricted by the rapidly escalating class struggle in town and countryside. In order to protect his regime from the army's conspiracies Torres moved warily to the left. In May he set up the 'Peoples' Assembly' to act as a safety valve for the masses. This body, composed of 240 members, 60 per cent of whom were nominated by the trade unions and 40 per cent by other left-wing organizations, did not have any statutory powers. Its resolutions were not binding but it began to exercise a very important and growing influence on the social and political life of the people.

The crunch finally came when the Assembly—despite resistance from Torres—demanded the setting up of a 'People's Army' as a counterweight to the regular army. Before the Assembly could discuss this proposal at its next scheduled meeting, which was due to have been on September 7, the army, air force, Rangers and CIA struck. Hundreds of students and workers were killed and Torres took asylum in the Peruvian Embassy from whence he has now fled to Peru. The heroic working class of Bolivia has lost an important battle, but not the war against the reactionary capitalist class of Bolivia and their imperialist backers. Despite the treachery of the Stalinists and revisionists the Bolivian workers will succeed in assimilating the lessons of August and build a mass revolutionary leadership on Trotskyist foundations.

than the evolution of the LSSP (Lanka Sama Samaja Party) in Ceylon, the role of Lora and the POR has been no less treacherous and important.

In 1952 Paz, the leader of the bourgeois MNR, a party much like the Bandaranaike SLFP (Sri Lanka Freedom Party) of Ceylon, took over the government while the armed miners took over the mining areas creating the elements of a dual power situation. Under these conditions Lora and the POR called for Lechin and the COB (Bolivian trade union movement) to be admitted into the Paz bourgeois government and gave this government critical support. Instead of fighting to break the trade unions from the bourgeois nationalist government Lora fought for them to enter the government. Instead of calling for the overthrow of this government and its replacement by a workers' government, Lora called for critical support for this government.

This position received the full support of Michel Pablo, Mandel and other leaders of the Fourth International in that period. They wrote in their magazine:

Ride back

'The POR began by justifiably granting critical support to the MNR government. That is, it desisted from issuing the slogan "down with the government"; it gave the government critical support against attacks of imperialism and reaction, and it supported all progressive measures.'

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It must, however, be noted that Lora contributed his share to deepening this crisis by throwing his weight behind Pablo. Like many in the LSSP, Lora had areas of agreement with the SWP (Socialist Workers Party) and the others in the International Committee. But he did not proceed from questions of international concern and perspectives. The easiest course was to go along with Pablo. This he did. This way the Latin American sections of the Fourth International were thrown behind Pablo who subsequently, through his collaborator Posadas, was to do his best to break up and liquidate these forces.

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Bolivia: Bitter lessons of defeat

By TIM WOHLFORTH: Reprinted from the 'Bulletin', weekly organ of the Workers' League of America, August 30, 1971.

THE RIGHT-WING militarists, with the support of the fascist Falangists and the old nationalist leader Paz, have taken over in Bolivia ending the Torres regime and the Popular Assembly. No information has been forthcoming on the fate of revolutionaries in Bolivia, particularly the militants of the POR.

Brutal as the old Barrientos military regime was, which took the life of Cesar Lora and other militants of the old Trotskyist movement as well as hunting down and murdering Guevara, this new fascist-supported military regime can be expected to carry through even more brutal murders of revolutionaries.

It is necessary to make an assessment of how this coup was permitted to take place, what it reveals of the Popular Assembly, and the role particularly of those within it who claimed to be Trotskyists. The construction of a Trotskyist movement in Latin America will depend on absorbing the bitter lessons of this latest bloody episode in the tumultuous history of Bolivia.

There is no time to lose in drawing these lessons. What has happened in Bolivia can be followed shortly in Peru, in Chile and even in Argentina. The crisis of capitalism is so intense and the working-class movement in Latin America so determined that the crisis of leadership is posed with acute sharpness. In every country of Latin America it can

be said that capitalism rules only because of the paralysis and confusion of those elements which call themselves Trotskyists. This is the bitter lesson of Bolivia. Nothing, absolutely nothing can be constructed in Latin America unless this lesson is learned.

Strongest

Outside of Ceylon, Bolivia has had the strongest Trotskyist movement of any colonial country in the world. Trotskyism has been a major factor among Bolivian tin miners for a decade and a half now. The key figure of Bolivian Trotskyism has been Guillermo Lora. Lora, who lost his own brother under Barrientos and whose whereabouts at this moment is not known, must share a responsibility in the recent rightist coup.

Lora, in collaboration with the Bolivian Stalinists and with the agreement of the Bolivian and international Pabloites, failed to fight at any point for the overthrow of the Torres military regime. Thus he, along with the rest of the Popular Assembly, acted as a left cover for Torres while the right wing elements in Torres' own army prepared and finally executed their coup.

In so doing Lora was carrying forward a political course begun over a decade ago, from which he has consistently refused to veer. At every point this course has received support within the Fourth International or forces claiming to represent the Fourth International. Though less known

On the weekend of August 21-22 the ten-month-old regime of General Juan José Torres was overthrown by a CIA-backed coup led by Colonel Banzer—head of the military academy. Banzer had the close support of the bourgeois MNR—National Revolutionary Movement—and the Bolivian Socialist Falange—an extreme right-wing semi-fascist movement.

Torres came to power when a right-wing army coup against President Ovando misfired and he found himself the 'reluctant hero' of the Bolivian masses and leader of a Bonapartist regime whose margin for manoeuvre was increasingly restricted by the rapidly escalating class struggle in town and countryside. In order to protect his regime from the army's conspiracies Torres moved warily to the left. In May he set up the 'Peoples' Assembly' to act as a safety valve for the masses. This body, composed of 240 members, 60 per cent of whom were nominated by the trade unions and 40 per cent by other left-wing organizations, did not have any statutory powers. Its resolutions were not binding but it began to exercise a very important and growing influence on the social and political life of the people.

The crunch finally came when the Assembly—despite resistance from Torres—demanded the setting up of a 'People's Army' as a counterweight to the regular army. Before the Assembly could discuss this proposal at its next scheduled meeting, which was due to have been on September 7, the army, air force, Rangers and CIA struck. Hundreds of students and workers were killed and Torres took asylum in the Peruvian Embassy from whence he has now fled to Peru. The heroic working class of Bolivia has lost an important battle, but not the war against the reactionary capitalist class of Bolivia and their imperialist backers. Despite the treachery of the Stalinists and revisionists the Bolivian workers will succeed in assimilating the lessons of August and build a mass revolutionary leadership on Trotskyist foundations.

than the evolution of the LSSP (Lanka Sama Samaja Party) in Ceylon, the role of Lora and the POR has been no less treacherous and important.

In 1952 Paz, the leader of the bourgeois MNR, a party much like the Bandaranaike SLFP (Sri Lanka Freedom Party) of Ceylon, took over the government while the armed miners took over the mining areas creating the elements of a dual power situation. Under these conditions Lora and the POR called for Lechin and the COB (Bolivian trade union movement) to be admitted into the Paz bourgeois government and gave this government critical support. Instead of fighting to break the trade unions from the bourgeois nationalist government Lora fought for them to enter the government. Instead of calling for the overthrow of this government and its replacement by a workers' government, Lora called for critical support for this government.

This position received the full support of Michel Pablo, Mandel and other leaders of the Fourth International in that period. They wrote in their magazine:

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and lending to the United Secretariat his support. The fusion took place on what appeared to be common agreement over Cuba and Castro.

Subordinate

The unification was not to last long as Moscoso sought to implement this agreement by subordinating the POR to guerrilla activities in the countryside. Lora insisted on an orientation based on the tin miners and other sections of the Bolivian working class and a split ensued.

Following this split Lora established contact with the International Committee announcing his agreement with the IC's international perspectives, especially its position on the centrality of the struggles of the working class in all countries. But Lora never made any serious attempt to assess his own history and on this basis make a fundamental development towards a break with his own past.

With the rise of Torres and the Popular Assembly the old positions of Lora re-emerge. Once again the country is faced with a dual-power situation and the possibility of civil war. Once again Lora refuses to face up to it, to pose the necessity to break with Torres, to form a workers' and farmers' government, to fight it out directly with all sections of the military and capitalism.

Instead he combines with the Communist Party around a COB resolution which states:

'The present process is contradictory: while the government is taking certain anti-imperialist and progressive measures on the one hand, on the other hand it is adopting pro-imperialist measures contrary to the national and popular interests. The proletariat supports whatever is positive for the emancipation of our people and at the same time criticizes and fights the measures which are against the masses' interests, fighting to impose new anti-imperialist measures which will lead us to a true revolution on the road of national emancipation and socialism. This is our tactic in the present process, and this is without forgetting the final goals of the working class.'

This section of the resolution, we understand, was written by the Stalinists, but the POR voted for the document as a whole anyway. In any event their position was not qualitatively different from that of the Stalinists. Together with the Stalinists the POR supported the position of threatening a General Strike and military action in defence of Torres!

The Pabloites, including Mandel and the SWP, must assume their responsibility in this situation. First of all it was the SWP which developed the theory of coming to power with 'blunted instruments' in Latin America,

encouraging liquidationist and anti-theory tendencies throughout the region. In a period when what was needed was a sharp theoretical struggle to develop a leadership for the coming class movement, the SWP encouraged adventurism and guerrillaism and all sorts of unprincipled combinations with Castroites, Maoists and Stalinists.

In 1969 Bolivia was a central

feature of the struggle within the United Secretariat. The majority around Mandel-Frank-Maitan, which supported a strategy of guerrilla warfare, held up Bolivia as the one country in the world and Moscoso as the man for the job, where a breakthrough would be made through setting up guerrilla foci.

The SWP opposed this but offered no real alternative to this

perspective. Then one year later Bolivia does become a 'focus' but of proletarian not guerrilla warfare. Mandel and Co quickly drop Bolivia shifting their attention to Argentina. Such is the reaction of such elements to the movement of the working class!

However, most important, the SWP lets them do this. It also dropped Bolivia from its polemics with Mandel and Maitan only to,



Students trying to resuscitate a fellow student severely wounded by aircraft fire. He died later.

in the recent period, start speaking of the Popular Assembly in the same uncritical terms as Lora. Clearly the movement of the working class in Bolivia upset the SWP as well. How could it propose an orientation to the students on the basis of Bolivian developments where the question of working-class power, of socialist revolution itself was posed? It, too, had to do its best to see to it that the struggle in Bolivia did not go beyond the bounds of Torres.

Gerry Foley, writing in the July 19, 1971 'Intercontinental Press', expressed the complete approval of the SWP precisely of the relationship between the Popular Assembly and Torres. He writes:

'Arming to defend the democratic rights of the workers, the unions apparently gave critical support to the Torres regime—"support" that perfectly suits Lenin's definition: "as the rope supports a hanged man".'

And later on:

'By and large, the programme of the Assamblea seemed confined to demanding that the Torres government carry out its promises to the working people of the country. The measures it recommended flowed clearly and logically from this position.'

Is it necessary to point out that Lenin was referring to support to social democratic parties and not to bourgeois governments and certainly not to military dictators?

Fundamental

The potential for building the Trotskyist movement in Latin America is now extremely great. What is fundamental is that now the struggle of the colonial peoples coincides with the struggle of workers in the advanced countries. This struggle now includes the powerful American working class as well as that of Europe—particularly following Nixon's new economic policies. At the same time the dangers involved are as grave as the potential is bright.

We cannot forget the terrible



Workers' and students' militia in La Paz, the Bolivian capital, being rushed to the battle-front at the height of the battle.

price the working-class youth of Ceylon have paid for revisionism in the form of the LSSP. In the Sudan the CP's support to another 'progressive' general has led to its massacre. We now fear for the very lives of the militants of the POR in a situation created by the refusal of the POR's leadership to confront the central lessons of the historic development of the Marxist movement.

It is not possible to build a revolutionary movement on any other basis than principle. To do otherwise in this period is to invite new defeats, new massacres. To take up the principled struggle for Trotskyism based on all the lessons of the struggle against revisionism can lead to the development of mass revolu-

tionary parties throughout Latin America, to the successful overthrow of capitalism, of imperialism.

Never concerned

Like the LSSP leadership, Lora never concerned himself with questions of the international movement, its theoretical battles, its difficulties. He felt that as long as he rooted himself in the working class and adhered to the theory of the permanent revolution and Transitional Programme as he saw it he would be able to play a revolutionary role in Bolivia.

But this perspective can only be developed on an international scale and through the struggle

against its opposite, against the attempts of revisionism to destroy it. It is precisely through confronting all the difficulties of the movement—the isolation, the petty bourgeois pressure, the confusion, so much confusion—that theoretical development can take place. Without such development succumbing to the national bourgeoisie is inevitable.

The lessons of Bolivia reinforce our conviction in what we wrote on the recent convention of the SWP. There is no proletarian orientation outside of the struggle to construct the Fourth International. The Fourth International can only be constructed on the firm principled ground of a true and honest assessment of its own history.

What happened in Bolivia?

Guillermo Lora



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ON AUGUST 18, the awaited and announced coup d'état by the right wing of the army broke out, having as civilian support the dismembered FSB of Mario Gutierrez (one section headed by Riveros who claims to be a leftist) and the MNR, the faithful servant of US imperialism in the so-called Lima Pact.

The Minister of the Interior Jorge Gallardo Lozada made the official announcement and added that a state of emergency had been declared. ('El Nacional', La Paz, August 20.)

The Revolutionary government announces that the fascist coup is underway headed by Mario Gutierrez, chief of the Falange Socialista Boliviana and

minority groups of the right of the MNR.

'In the face of rightist subversion, whose coupist scheme has been perfectly detected, a national emergency is declared and we call together the revolutionary and people's organizations to mobilize around the Revolutionary Government in order to defend the conquests of the Bolivian people and to destroy the fascist counter-revolution. The government is in control of the situation in the countryside and stands firm on the postulates of October 7, together with the people.'

Previously it was predicted that the putschist *gorilismo* [the right-wing bourgeois militarists] would initiate counter-revolutionary operations in the periphery of the country, having as an axis the military troops stationed in the East. In fact, the subversive movement extended itself rapidly to the divisions of Riveralta, Camiri, Bermejo, as far as Tarija. These fire pincers—powerful pincers certainly, because part of the army was engaged in it—were pressing and closing in on La Paz more and more, not so much in the eyes of the population but on the military hierarchy.

The defections of the garrisons

of Cochabamba and Oruro turned the situation of President Torres into an unsustainable one, making it impossible for him to recapture Oruro, which was strongly surrounded by the Rangers, of Challapata.

The military insurrection began by raising the flag of a furious anti-communism. This must be understood as the struggle against the decision of the mass and revolutionary organizations to establish a socialist regime and a government of workers and peasants; against the strengthening of the Popular Assembly as an organ of power of the masses and of the proletariat which realizes the slogan of the worker-peasant government; against the danger to the state that majority working-class participation in COMIBOL would mean and the single university under the direction of the proletariat. Said in another way, *gorilismo*, when discovering that the accelerated advance of the revolutionary process posed its immediate crushing, saw itself forced to consummate a preventive counter-revolutionary coup.

MILITARISTS

The campaign aimed at justifying the coup concentrated on the programme of the proletariat,

referring only tangentially to General Torres and his government. The real struggle was and is between the national majority and *gorilismo* and in it Torres played a role of little importance.

Torres kept on balancing on the head of a pin for nine months, thanks to the extreme pressure established between the extremes in struggle, which accumulated forces without daring to initiate the attack. There is information that indicates that the US embassy lacked confidence in the Torres military regime because it had practically ceased to govern. In one way or another, the factions in struggle made efforts to use the government as a spearhead against the adversary.

The regime born on October 7, 1970, could not at any moment concentrate in its hands total or at least predominant control over the armed forces. It was exhausted in the efforts it made to win over the conspiratorial generals in exchange for the concessions, greater each time, that were made to them to the point that at every moment they could move with complete liberty. After each frustrated coup d'état the *gorilas* in most cases simply had their jobs changed (there are cases where they were not

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deprived of their commands) and in exceptional cases were sent into exile.

PLAN

The counter-revolutionary plan consisted of taking from Torres all military support, and on the eve of the 19th, the President was, with difficulty, obeyed by 20 per cent of the military commands. Inspired in the experience of October, **gorilismo** worked firmly and patiently to reach a correlation of forces that would be clear and indisputably favourable to them, so as to capture all political power without a battle and without firing a single cartridge, this in order to prevent the masses from taking over the streets and giving an unforeseeable course to the events. This preoccupation also reached the military chiefs in Torres' camp, who showed signs of fearing the masses more than the right wing of the army.

From the first moment of the fascist revolt in Santa Cruz until Torres' leaving Palacio Quenado three short days elapsed.

It was sufficient time for the masses to take to the streets. The hundreds dead and the 500 wounded constituted eloquent and tragic proof of this.

At 11 p.m. on the 20th the Political Command, the body of the Popular Assembly charged with the leadership of the mass movement between sessions of the Assembly, met and decided to call on all the exploited to take to the streets to actively combat the **gorila** conspiracy. The military command was expanded to include representatives of the political parties belonging to the Assembly.

DEMONSTRATION

On the afternoon of Friday the 21st a massive anti-fascist and anti-imperialist demonstration was held. The workers responded positively to the call made by the Political Command and the COB (Bolivian Trade Union Confederation). The march lasted approximately four hours.

Originally it was agreed to have the rally in front of the Popular Assembly (formerly the Legislative Palace). However because of Lechin's conciliatory spirit, the Government Palace was used instead. The speakers were far below the spirit which moved the demonstrators and none pointed out clearly the objectives for which we must fight and die.

Torres and Lechin were frequently booed, and the latter, speaking under the whip of his adversaries, sought to look radical, with slogans of expropriation of the properties belonging to the fascist conspirators. Torres again showed signs of his servile follow-the-leader-ism before the mobilized masses. The demonstrators shouted: 'J.J. (Juan Jose)

Hit 'em Hard!' and the President responded like a little boy, 'I'll hit 'em hard.'

LECHIN

The demonstration, between the laughter and the hissing, again demonstrated that Lechin was a totally worn out and surpassed figure. The newspaper 'Ultima Hora' (August 23) which totally supports him, wrote:

'Lechin spoke amid booing and demands that he make his position clear. This veteran manipulator of crowds with his revolutionary oratory was unable to impose his domination. He stated concepts perhaps different from those he hoped to utter succeeding in asking for the unity of all left forces and the taking over of the property and businesses

governing military team, which would consider that only through resting on the masses and giving them adequate firepower could they at least neutralize the **gorila** right.

This position was completely wrong. It did not take into account that Torres preferred to capitulate to his fellow generals before arming masses who showed signs of taking the road to socialism and whose mobilization put in serious danger the army as an institution.

The course taken by events initiated at the end of 1970, the incapacity demonstrated by the military leadership of gaining the confidence of the exploited, of purging the army of the extreme right and of finding a left solution to the political

demands of the lower strata of the armed forces.

Nevertheless, the rise and radicalization of the masses made an impact every day more and more on the masses of the army, probably in greater measure of an impact on the mass of the army, every day, probably in greater measure the younger officers, in this way beginning its distintegration which was common to all the bourgeois institutions and to the established order itself.

The growth of the revolutionary wave undermines the base of the armed forces (the soldiers are, for the most part, workers, peasants and middle-class elements with political and union experience) and ends up destroying them little by little, more than by defeating them in formal battle. The soldiers flee or disobey the orders of their superiors, who must be careful of those who fight in the streets and their subordinates. Then the people have within their reach their natural arsenal. This is what already occurred on April 7, 1952.

In the night of the 20th the Political Command centered practically all its discussion on the problems of arms. Until then President Torres and his ministers had offered, one time or another, to give arms to the people, a promise that awakened excessive illusions in certain sections of the workers.

Understanding that the fascist conspiracy was advancing through all the land and the menace of its victory became more serious every moment, it was agreed to send a final committee (Lechin, Mercado, Lora, Lopez, Reyes, and Eid) to the Government Palace to let the President know that if he did not keep his promise to deliver arms, the Popular Assembly would follow its own path. Torres in order to justify his negative answer, said that if he were to disarm the soldiers in order to deliver the guns to the workers, the officers would respond by rebelling.

We could not say if, at any moment, the President seriously thought about delivering arms to the workers. It seems that he utilized the promise as blackmail against his opponents to the right and the left. What is evident is that he found himself sharply pressured by the military not to do it.

ORURO

The rumours circulated insistently that the military hierarchy threatened Torres with rebellion if he delivered the arms. It was on this occasion that Torres made known his plan to recapture Oruro, an operation which, according to him, would be consummated at 6 o'clock in the morning, August 21.



General Torres.

of those who supported the conspiracy.'

Here he appeared as an ailing Belzu.

The anti-fascist march had a smiling face, explainable if it is taken into account that all were sure that the enormous size of it had already by itself crushed the fascist conspiracy. A few hours later it would be clearly seen that the military rebellion could only be crushed by picking up the gun.

WRONG

In October of 1970 the working class occupied the political scene without arms, as a simple mass. By then it was clearly understood that in order to be able to defeat **gorilismo** it was indispensable to put a gun in the hands of the politicized worker. At this time everybody thought — including we Marxists — that the arms would be given by the

impasse, forced a limited strata of young officers, ranks, and lower level officers to even come to the conclusion that if the destruction of the army were necessary for socialist victory there would not be reason to oppose it.

An anonymous proclamation of ranks and lower officers produced confusion and not a few believed that the army was totally divided between ranks and officers, and that the troops would disobey any order given to fire on the people. Now we know that things occurred differently. The proclamation which originated in the Air Force at La Paz had little repercussion in the rest of the armed forces. The government, whether or not it had anything to do with this act, looked for ways to take advantage of the proclamation and encouraged the economic



Colonel Banzer: Gorillismo leader.

He asked for aid to send clandestine emissaries who could contact the workers, at that time concentrated at San Jose and surrounded by military forces. The operation was given the name 'Centipede — Flying Eagle'. The leftist delegates from Oruro, among them Emilio Perez, were satisfied with this solution.

In the middle of the deliberations of the Political Command, two members of the POR showed up who represented the miners of Siglo XX and Huanuni, who remained quartered in the vicinity of Vinto, unable to defeat the rangers who guarded Oruro. These workers had only dynamite, and although the sensible thing to do would have been to retreat to their bases to await arms, since there existed little possibility of getting them, they remained in their precarious positions waiting for the arrival of loyal troops.

Later it was learned that the regiments sent by Torres to rescue the strategic point of the plateau promptly went over to the rebels. Due to the masses finding themselves disarmed, the real battles were engaged not in the streets, but among the military commands who utilized the regiments of soldiers like chess pieces.

Even though the regiment in charge of recapturing Oruro had



Workers armed only with sticks of dynamite faced fully-armed troops.

defected, the state radio 'Ilimari' kept on sending coded messages to that city to the effect that 'Operation Centipede — Flying Eagle' was to be consummated at nightfall. As a result of this criminal lie the workers assaulted the city and were virtually massacred by the army troops.

On the 21st, approximately at 10 o'clock the Minister of the Interior, J. Gallardo, and the Minister of Public Health, Javier Torres Goitin, appeared in person at the COB, where the Political Command and its Military Command (they had been called into permanent session) were working, to make it known that the Castrillo regiment had rebelled, that within a few minutes the Great Headquarters of Miraflores would be attacked in order to capture it. The plan consisted in having the Colorado regiment, commanded by Major Reuben Sanchez and the quartered regiment in San Jorge provide ground cover for the people which would press massively against the fortress.

In the 'Confederacion de Fabriles' 400 Mauser and Garant rifles were given away, many of them in bad shape, and 2,000 rounds of ammunition.

Lechin called by radio for all the masses to meet with their arms in the plaza of the stadium.

Right away more than 2,000 people met. That Saturday was a day of great tension. La Paz was shaken by the explosion of dynamite the night before by the miners of Milluni.

The Minister of Government had promised that his troops were going to occupy Laikacota hill, which divides Miraflores from the centre of the city and has great strategic importance. But Castrillo's troops set machine gun nests in there. The Military Command stationed itself close to the Siles Stadium in order to be able to direct the military operations. But it could not do so effectively because of lack of reliable information about the situation in general.

It depended exclusively on Radio Illimari, which gave misleading reports for tactical reasons, and from information that was given by means of police radio. Another small stock of old Mauser rifles arrived at the stadium that soon disappeared amid the thirst for weapons. Other small quantities of munitions were received.

MASSES

The masses attacked the Ministry of War and brought out large amounts of guns, the majority of which were useless. In the streets near the stadium there were workers and students and, in smaller numbers, other elements from other social classes. The majority of these forces belonged to the political parties of the left.

The idea did not occur to those who were there, and less to the leaders of the Political Command, to attack the Great Headquarters. The firepower of Castrillo was too strong. The objective was to wait until the loyal troops forced the fortress to surrender and then the attack would occur. Those who at noon marched towards the stadium were sure that they were going there to organize themselves and to finish off the operation led from the Presidential Palace.

The truth was that the regiment from San Jorge did not move. At about 6 or 7 o'clock the Ministry of the Interior asked the armed people to go to Triangular Park about 200 metres from the Great Headquarters. The masses ignored the request because that would mean sending them right to their deaths. Gallardo said it was a way to increase the pressure on the Great Headquarters.

The people who were near the stadium were attacked from Laikacota hill by the rightist snipers who were posted in the buildings of the area. Many fell dead and wounded, victims to the combined fire.

Workers and students decided to capture Laikacota. When the mission was almost a success they were asked to leave the hill because, it was said, planes were going to attack the rightists who held the hill.

The truth was that at 5.35 the Air Force, which had withdrawn its support to the government and sent an ultimatum to Sanchez to lay down their arms at about 3.00, flew around the battlefield to attack the Colorados regiment and the civilians. At last the workers and students succeeded in silencing the guns of Laikacota.

Only later was it known that at 1.30 p.m. General Roque Teran, the Commander in Chief of the army, went to the Presidential Palace to announce to Torres that he should flee. Roque was captured by the popular militias, but they only asked him for arms, thinking that he was still loyal to Torres. 'But the meeting between the two gave no results and there followed a bitter discussion.' (From 'Ultima Hora', August 23.)

The same Roque had to carry out the uncomfortable mission of discussing with the troops of the Colorados and asked them to stop the fire. When the Colorados refused to stop, he then took his jeep and at the same moment fire from the machine guns was heard. Captain Terrazas and another officer died when they tried to cover Roque. Roque suffered a wound in his leg and was taken to the Military Hospital ('Ultima Hora'). In that way was punished the one who betrayed his General Captain.

THE ACTION

Men and women willing to smash fascism were posted in marginal areas (Alto San Pedro, Villa Victoria, Auga de la Vida, Calvario) and were throwing dynamite.

At noon the Andino regiment and the Viacha motorized regiment were back in La Paz after deserting in Oruro.

At 4.30 young people and miners went to the Minister of Defence to look for arms. They had been told they were going to get arms there. Result: more deaths and wounded.

TANKS

At 8.45 Torres left the Presidential Palace, the same one who until 7.00 was urging the masses to keep fighting to the end. The August 24 press confirmed that the former president did not even take the time to resign from his post, and was in the Peruvian embassy with others of his officials, including General Sanchez.

The tanks of the Tarapaca regiment, which sowed terror and desolation in the streets of La Paz, entered at 8.00 p.m. in the heights of the city (Munaypata and Villa Victoria). The State Radio broadcast unrealizable instructions to sabotage the march of the tanks. When the tanks were near the Plaza Murillo, Radio Illimari stopped transmitting and Torres fled. At the same time the few elements that were left in Miraflores from the Political Command (Lechin, Alandia, Lora) met for the last time, ignoring the real situation. Rumours kept coming in that the Great Headquarters had surrendered.

Three tanks took possession of the Plaza Murillo and four others went to Laikacota, whose fire caused the majority of deaths. Machine-gun fire and dynamite blasts lasted until the next morning. The air force continued its cleaning-up operation, always having Laikacota as their objective.

In Santa Cruz the decree that created the military triumvirate which took the place of Torres was made public. (Jaime Florentino, Merdula, Hugo Banzer, Andus Selica). But it had no life except on paper. On August 22 Hugo Banzer swore himself in as the new president and different ministers were chosen from the MNR and FSB, which, together with the Army, form the Nationalist Popular Front.

UNIVERSITY

The first hours of the morning of the 22nd the University of La Paz was militarily occupied and it was said that inside it remained around 20 armed students. The following day a mediation board was chosen (Archbishop of La Paz, diplomats, Red Cross, students) to seek a way out for those refugees in the University.

At noon about 500 students blocked Village Avenue and agreed to meet in assembly. Many were sitting in front of the tanks to stop them from returning to the University.

The Army ordered the students to dissolve themselves as a group. They said that a shot was heard from the upper floors. The airplanes, tanks and soldiers attacked the students, killing seven persons and wounding over 27. The students said that their compañeros were murdered in cold blood and others were arrested.

More than 200 students were put in jail after this assembly.

FASCISTS

'Since noon groups of people called by the State Radio were getting together to show their

support to the new government of the Nationalist Popular Front' (From 'Presencia', August 23.)

Groups of Movimientistas (supporters of the MNR) set up their general headquarters on Colon Street, in front of the Tesla cinema. They made the rounds of the streets of the city on motorcycles distributing propaganda calling on everyone to join the meeting. The Falangists carried out an assault on the Confederation of Secondary School Students on Yanacocha St to install their offices.

The crowd concentrated in the Murillo Plaza was not small but there were no university students or workers. They began to group around the MNR and FSB layers of the middle class (small merchants and proprietors, public employees, unemployed, entrepreneurs) who want an institutionally and socially stable regime with guarantees for them and greater opportunities for economic advancement. The slogans that began to be thrown up satisfied their desires, verbally: An end to anarchy and abuse; to assert order; work and discipline; respect for private property; banishment of communism and of violence and their replacement with law, etc.

BANZER

Colonel Hugo Banzer, with all sincerity, even though in imperfect and stammering Spanish, clearly defined his political position: 'I shall follow the steps of Busch, Villarreal and Barrientos,' he said. In a defiant tone he let it be known that he will continue to be a gorilla and his biggest and dearest dream is continuing the fascist politics of Barrientos. Banzer is already to the right in relation to the Torres government. Even though both speak of nationalism, this is no more than particular expressions of the petty-bourgeois nationalist process initiated in 1952.

OPPORTUNISTS

The action of Movimientista Tema Pelaez and the Falangist Mario Gutierrez were much more damaging, revealing for everyone. It was evident that they were dealing with two opportunists.

Their speeches were frequently interrupted by hisses and some hours before, when they tried to enter the palace, they were sworn at and rotten oranges were thrown at them.

Meanwhile, during the high-sounding speeches of the leaders, the militants of the two parties in the filthy alliance exchanged punches. In fear that the fragile alliance would be broken into a million pieces, they have desig-

nated to ministerial posts some nonpartisan technicians (even though they were ultra-conservative elements politically speaking) so they can act as buffers in the internal government struggles.

Given these conditions, the army would continue to be the decisive force. The party base of the regime is being totally split.

PAZ

Seven years after his overthrow Paz comes back to the country under apparently surprising circumstances. Overthrown by Barrientos and Ovando for not being able to bridle the turbulent toiling masses of workers, he is brought by these same Barrientistas to peddle everything contrary to what he said and did when in power.

It was not in vain that he remarked, in an emotional tone, that he returned to the fatherland now not to make the errors

of the past. Which were those errors? His leftist blunders? His ties with labour, which dragged him into what today is called chaos and anarchy?

Returning he formed an alliance, that he wished strong and eternal, nothing less than with Falangism, which was an expression of the vulnerable interests of bossisms, of the great miners and of the industrialists who struggled bitterly against the communist deviations of the MNR.

The alliance between the Falangistas and Movimientistas makes one ask which of them has really taken the position of the other. The positions assumed by Gutierrez in the last years, the intransigent struggle against the left that arose in his own party, the conspiracy on the side of gorilismo demonstrate that the FSB continues to be the political expression of reaction. It is the MNR that went over the positions of the Falangists. Paz returned to the country as

one of the surest servants of the State Department of the USA and it is this fact that forces him to bloc with the Barrientistas and Falangistas.

ILLUSIONS

Paz is now an eminent exponent of counter-revolution. His main weapon is revolutionary nationalism which has been totally overcome by the Bolivian objective situation, by the radicalization of the masses and by the evolution of the class consciousness of the proletariat. This nationalism which in 1952 could appear revolutionary and stir up many illusions in the masses is now unmistakably reactionary.

Paz knows fully that the masses are convinced that he betrayed his old preaching and has become a rightist; this is why he emphasizes that his nationalism is of the left.

Surely the movimientista chief dreams of returning to the presidency in the next elections. Nevertheless, Banzer says that it

is premature to speak of elections. He also says he does not know how long he shall retain power at the moment, since 'first I must attend to my obligations to the "people" through the government.' (From 'Ultima Hora', August 24.)

At the same time he said there exists no sign of the Paz garrison demanding elections for May 1972, even though there is obvious proof that the resolution adopted by 500 officials of the army was to this effect.

They repeat what already occurred in 1964, the professional politicians are sure the victorious generals will surrender power easily. Already we know that the things occurred and will occur in another manner.

Gutierrez and his movimientista friends speak of pacifying the country and of stopping the persecutions but immediately the military announced they would destroy the leftists. The battle between revolution and counter-revolution is posed this way.

RESOLUTION OF THE POLITICAL COMMAND

THE LATEST events in the country give evidence, once more, that gorilismo, fascist reaction and the servants of imperialism, utilize coups d'etat, terrorism and every means in their vain attempts to crush the revolutionary movement and the working class. The Political Command, in the name of the Popular Assembly, reiterates that its fundamental objective is the construction of socialism and that this can only be achieved through the complete crushing of fascist gorilismo and of reaction, a crushing that entails the destruction of its economic power, disgracefully intact in many sections.

The fascist coup that has come advancing and proclaiming with beating drums and the national catastrophe that it so desires has a preventive character with reference to the inevitable majority workers' participation in COMIBOL and the sure victory of the Bolivian people and working class, which will be the definite victory of socialism. The defence of our cause which is the cause of the men and women which inhabit this land, obliges us to reject with all energy and decision the fascist provocation.

In this crucial moment we believe it is our duty to point out that the reaction can comfortably conspire, utilize part of the apparatus and the resources of the state, due to the doubts, weakness and dangerous oscillations from the right to the left of the Torres government. The Bolivian people can neither agree with nor complicate itself in such conduct and makes known that any concession to fascist gorilismo, any agreement with it, amounts to a sharp blow to the revolutionary process, a betrayal of national interests and a marked service to imperialism.

On account of the above, the Political Command, leadership of the revolutionary and anti-imperialist united front, calls on all Bolivians, men and women, the workers and advanced intellectuals, the soldiers and revolutionary military youth, to stand up for combat, to win the streets, to crush definitely and totally coupist gorilismo, the stone age right wing and the servants of imperialism.

The Political Command calls on all Bolivians to defend their revolution, which is their own future; to save the country from

all that is arrogant and to tear up the counter-revolution by the roots.

BOLIVIANS: The people are at war to the death with fascist gorilismo. As in any war the central objective consists in defeating and crushing the enemy.

The exploited confide only in their organizations and their own force, and it is around these that they must mobilize.

LA PAZ, August 21, 1971

STUDENT-FACULTY STATEMENT

THE Student-Faculty Assembly and students from Universidad Mayor de San Andres who met on August 23 decided:

1. To declare that university autonomy is one of the basic principles in our institutional Bolivian life, a right that we cannot give away.

2. University autonomy that was gained in a democratic act in 1932 and which appeared in the Political Constitution of the state is violated wherever there is a change in the government that decides to overlook the university authorities and when armed forces break into the university areas and buildings.

3. The UNSA will be intransigent in the defence of university autonomy.

4. The student assembly decided that until the authorities that were chosen in 1970 or the new authorities are recognized by plebiscite to be realized soon, it assigns the control and administration of the University to the deacons and delegates of the schools of Law, Medicine and Pharmacy.

5. To ask the government of the republic for immediate withdrawal of all troops and police from the areas and university buildings.

6. Demand guarantees and liberty of all students and professors who are in jail or are being prosecuted.

7. Ratify its full support to the platform of the 1970 revolution.

8. Declared mourning for those who were killed in the events of the last days.

LA PAZ, August 23, 1971



The Political

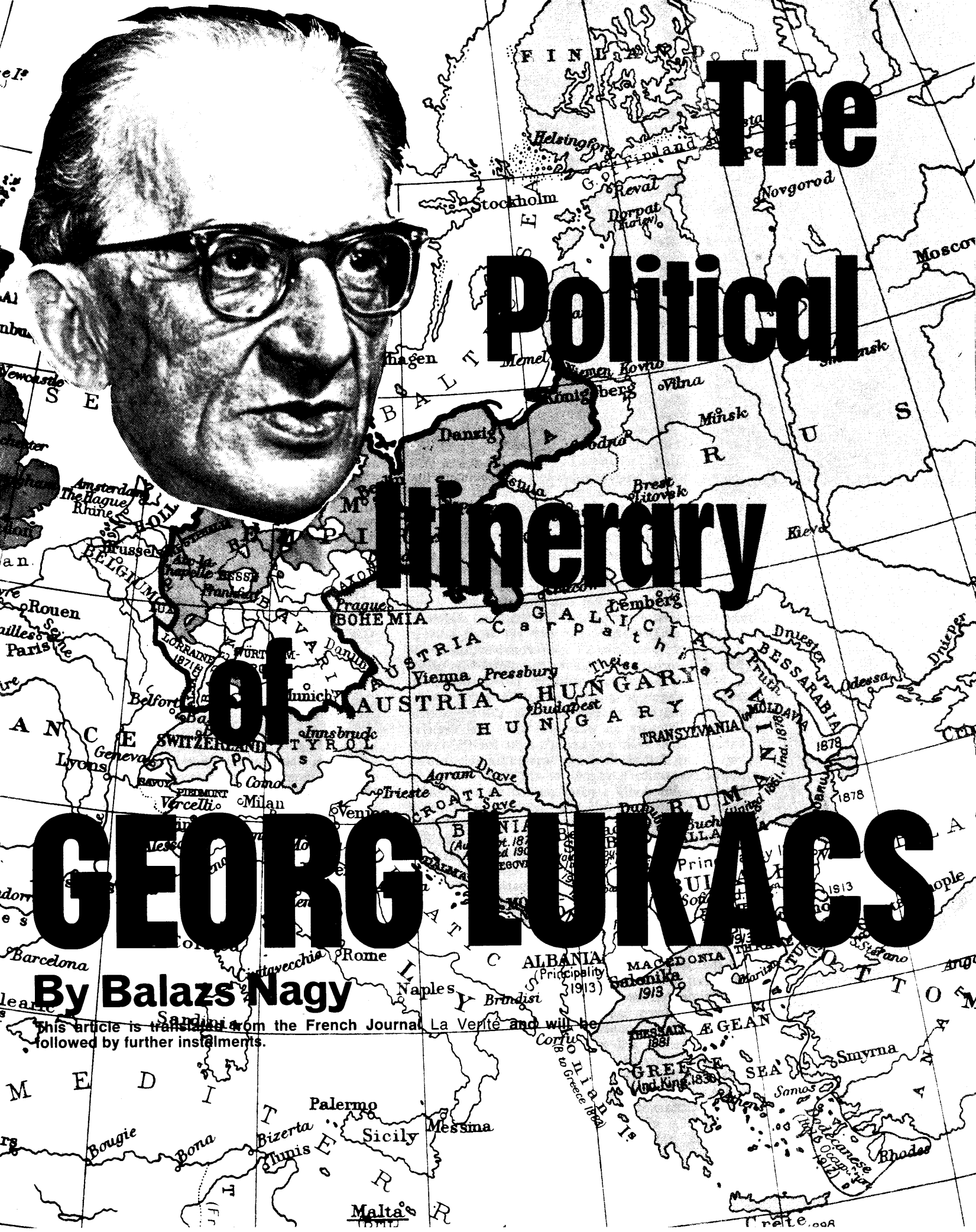
Itinerary

of

GEORG LUKACS

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This article is translated from the French Journal La Verité and will be followed by further instalments.





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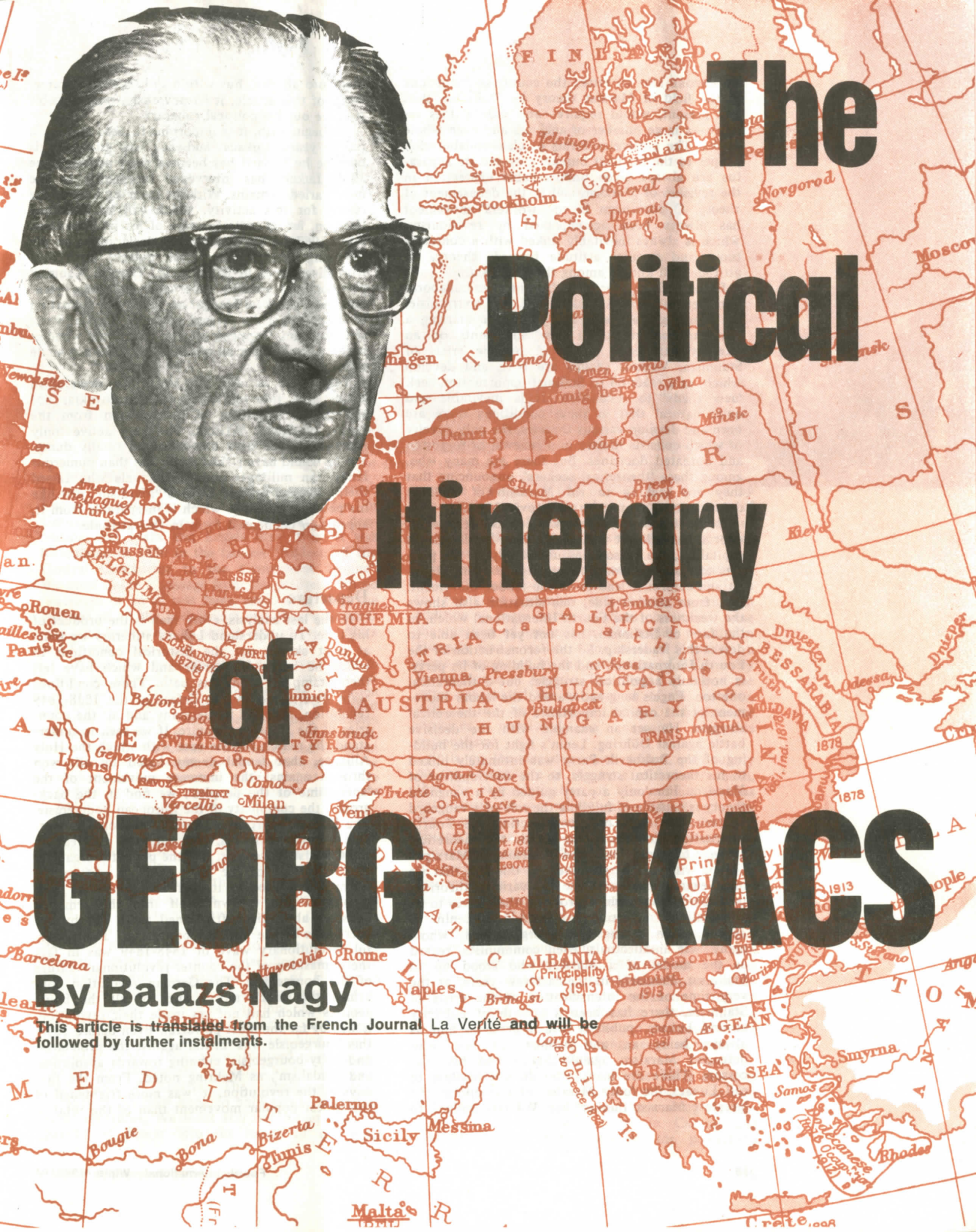
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TO EXPOSE AND TO FIGHT the countless distortions in the field of Marxist theory by Stalinism, past and present, would require—and indeed does require—a large number of analyses and even whole books. The particular forms of class-collaboration proper to the Stalinist bureaucracy and its apparatus are always given unmistakable expression in the revision of Marxism and in the debasement of theory. Opportunism in the workers' movement has always been accompanied by revisionism, which is always inevitably linked with a contemptuous and cavalier attitude towards theory, an attitude well known among the Stalinists.

Faced with an ever more blatant class-collaboration between the Stalinists and the bourgeoisie, the working class and the youth are starting a powerful movement for new alignments on an international scale, nourished by the crisis of Stalinism. Various groups are born and develop which, as a reaction to Stalinist opportunism, seek 'new roads' to revolution. It is inevitable and quite natural that in these conditions there are born and develop various theories, the only novelty of which consists mostly in a renewal of forgotten and outdated doctrines. But there are many who, among these 'theoretical seekers', announcing that they are seeking to rid Marxism of Stalinist deformations, manage to rediscover Marx.

If the international working class, despite its efforts, has still not won the decisive battle against capitalism, the reason lies undeniably in the policies of class-collaboration practised by the Stalinist and reformist leaders of the labour movement. But, from another side, this situation also shows the weakness of the Fourth International which, in the face of Stalinism, has not yet been able to defeat this leadership. So the reconstruction of the Fourth International, and the building of its party, is not only a political struggle, but a theoretical one too. Engels long ago warned the labour movement of the capital importance of the theoretical struggle. He set an example with the decisive battle against Dühring. Lenin's fight for the building of the Bolshevik Party was intimately linked to his theoretical struggle, to the development of Marxism. For 'only a party guided by a vanguard theory is capable of fulfilling the role of a vanguard fighter'. Our task of reconstructing the Fourth International obliges us to pursue the theoretical struggle for the defence and deepening of Marxism.

It is with this perspective and this aim that we must examine and criticize the various 'theories', particularly those which proclaim themselves to be anti-Stalinist, referring to Marx and Lenin. A special place belongs to Georg Lukacs, whom many 'left' intellectuals, even communists, regard as the model of a Marxist who stood up to Stalinism. Precisely in the last few years, at the very time of the intensification of the crisis of Stalinism, there has been a growth of publicity around Lukacs, publicity which presents him as always being an anti-Stalinist, as one who defended Marxism against Stalin and his successors. There are many who do not hesitate to call Lukacs the 'only Marxist' of our epoch, the 'greatest Marxist thinker' etc. We feel obliged to

look into all this, but within the restricted framework of this article, it is, obviously, only possible to trace out his political itinerary.

To begin with, it is important to note that if, in recent years, Lukacs' audience has grown, it is because he himself has become more active. Since 1964, Lukacs has intervened incessantly in the most varied domains. Without speaking here of the reason for this activity, which will be examined later on, let us indicate some of his interventions. Since 1967, he has made public declarations on the following subjects: the Greek putsch; birth control; discoveries in physics; St. Thomas Aquinas' philosophical system; cybernetic machines; planning reforms; new Hungarian films; the formation of the galaxies; the present power of the Stalinists; structuralism, 'happenings', etc. One could wonder, is there any subject on which Lukacs has not made a declaration?

Yes, there is. He has made no declaration against the intervention in Czechoslovakia, nor against the expulsion of Solzhenitsyn from the Union of Soviet Writers. The very active 'only Marxist' of our time has remained totally dumb. Yet he would have risked much less than numerous Hungarian militants and intellectuals who raised their voices in protest. Lukacs' 'Marxism', just like his political itinerary, which is inseparable from it, appears in condensed form in this attitude.

Departure

In the last analysis, every man is the product of his time. To understand Lukacs' itinerary we must at least sketch out the historical conditions in which he began his career and which have left their stamp all along his path. These conditions were determined by the defeat of the 1848-1849 revolution, a defeat in Germany and all the countries of the Hapsburg empire. If we seek to understand the reason for the ease with which the Holy Alliance, that feudal enemy hated by all, won through against the immense movement of the 'springtime of the peoples', we find in the background the complicity of the European bourgeoisie. The English bourgeoisie, basing itself on a favourable balance of forces, and inflicting a defeat on the Chartist movement, was the powerful organizer of the victory of the Holy Alliance. As to the German bourgeoisie, it had abandoned its own revolution and thrown itself into the arms of Prussian absolutism, frightened as it was by the barricades of the Parisian proletariat. The powerful revolutionary wave of 1848-1849 was in fact the unmasking of the counter-revolutionary nature of the bourgeoisie. The German revolution confirmed this much more, since of all the bourgeoisies which had not yet made their revolution, it was by far the most powerful. Even before 1848, this bourgeoisie was 'brutal against the proletariat and petty-bourgeoisie, cunning towards absolutism and feudalism', as Mehring noted. From the first days of the revolution, it 'was more frightened of the tiniest popular movement than of the total of



Paris 1848: frightened the German bourgeoisie into the arms of Prussian absolutism

all the revolutionary plots of all the governments'. Engels' *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany* is the analysis of this betrayal. The conclusion that Marx and Engels drew from it was formulated in 1850 in the famous 'Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League'. We must quote a passage from the Address, whose ten pages or so of text have, until now, been the bugbear of all the revisionists and class collaborators who have tried to cast it into oblivion. Marx and Engels wrote:

'Whilst the petty-bourgeois democrats want to end the revolution . . . quickly if possible, our interests and tasks lie in making the revolution permanent, until all the more or less established classes are swept aside, the proletariat conquers power, and the unity of the workers is so advanced, not only in one country but in all the dominant countries of the world that competition among the workers of these countries ceases, and at least the decisive productive forces are concentrated in the hands of the working class.'

In Hungary, much more backward than Germany or even Austria at the time, the very weak nascent bourgeoisie was under the leadership of the middle nobility, the leading class of the 1848-1849 revolution. But if the German bourgeoisie, feeling the working class on its heels, could in 1848 only be counter-revolutionary, the middle nobility in Hungary was, so to speak, 'naïve'. It had seen nothing comparable to the revolt of the Silesian weavers who in 1844 terrified the German bourgeois. Thus the backwardness of Hungarian conditions becomes the revolutionary virtue of its middle nobility. The emancipation of the serfs, the introduction of parliamentarism and democratic rights, could be more far-reaching than in Germany since they were realized particularly against the landowners, protected by the foreigner, the house of Austria. The rebellious middle nobility could only hope to hold power thanks to these measures. We must still not forget that the passing of power into the hands of the most

resolute fraction of this nobility was decided by the activity and uprising of the poor population of the capital. And this nobility remained 'revolutionary' to the extent to which it was to act under the pressure of these masses.

In seeking the reasons for such an attitude, which distinguishes a Kossuth so favourably from the Frankfurt Assembly chatterboxes, we must, in addition to more backward class conditions, raise the question of nationalism. The middle nobility in Hungary was a victim of the crisis of feudalism, a crisis exacerbated by the subjection of the country to the House of Austria. The 'illegal' attack of the latter aggravated the nationalism of this nobility, rich in the traditions of secular independence struggles, nourished by nascent bourgeois nationalism.

It is on the decades which follow, particularly on the atmosphere at the time of Lukacs' youth, that the characterization of this nobility and its nationalism throws indispensable light. Engels saw the significance and importance of revolutionary Hungary's war of independence in its immediately European character. But if the revolutionary war of independence objectively had this European character, its leading class was above all characterized by its national narrowness combined with a stupid sense of legality. It was a nationalism fed on glorious traditions, with more nostalgia than dynamism, drawing from the past rather than turned towards the future. As the nobility was historically condemned, its nationalism looked on the past with a pride and melancholy full of irritation and impatience for the present. Such a nationalism could play a certain progressive role in 1848-1849, despite its strong, reactionary stench. But what about its future?

The combined strength of the Holy Alliance crushed the revolution. This defeat became in turn the source of a new delay in the country's evolution. The re-established order in Central and Eastern Europe was based on the powerfully



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The revolution was the last historical gasp of the middle nobility. Rebellious in 1848, it then renewed its alliance with the aristocracy and, after the reconciliation with the Hapsburgs, the whole nobility was charged with maintaining order over the peasantry and emergent working class, and also over the nascent nations of the Serbs, Croats, Slovaks and Rumanians. On the other hand it obtained a relative political autonomy under the henceforth Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Under this monarchy capitalist development, although distorted, restricted and deformed, was nevertheless a real process.

However, although embedded in the state apparatus, in the municipalities, thus continuing to play a leading political role, the middle nobility was in fact losing ground. Capitalist development was mocking its existence. Set in an overdone, limited and provincial nationalism nostalgic for a past gone for ever, this proud nobility placed itself outside of that development. It looked on industry, trade, the whole of capitalist evolution as something unworthy, especially as it was itself being ruined at the hands of the bankers and usurers, since it lacked capital. The life of its members, socially useless, clashed with that of their own 'society' in which these ruined nobles led an existence reviving the glorious past, a life of hunts and balls, even more costly than was the state administration in the hands of this closed caste. This was the fate of the ruined nobility over



Thomas Mann
Tonio Kroger's dilemma Lukac's quandary

the vast territory of a Europe fettered by feudal vestiges and where capitalism was developing as it had in Prussia. The Hungarian 'djentri' had something in common with the sad heroes of Gogol or Goncharov.

Like industry, trade was regarded as unworthy of the nobility, and they completely and voluntarily left it to 'unworthy' beings, primarily to the population of German stock who were the agents of German and Austrian capital. The old national pride, the kingly contempt for the foreigner, were confounded by the 'djentri' with hatred towards industry and trade, rendering nationalism even more vacuous, sterile and aggressive, and making industry and trade 'anti-national'. The hatred of 'society' for the rich foreigners was even greater, their social exclusion more complete than that of the 'djentri', and the political regime was entirely dependent upon them. The ideas of the 'glorious' ruling class penetrated all of Hungarian society; it influenced the peasantry, it created a particularly stifling atmosphere, an unsupportable aggressive nationalism, a spirit of servility skilled in distinguishing between the castes. But at the same time, the traditional ruling but impoverished group only lived thanks to the injections of gold from these 'unworthy' bourgeois. And 'unworthy' they were, nourishing no less a hatred towards these useless 'djentri', the bankers, industrialists and even more the big grain merchants or usurers dreamed only of becoming members of 'society', of obtaining credentials of nobility. Among these pariahs, the Jews, scarcely emancipated and often traders or usurers, were the most thorough outcasts. To be a Jew at that time in Hungary was to suffer all the contempt, aggression and discrimination that the dominant nobility of traditional Hungary showed towards that afflicted race. The Hungarian bourgeoisie was much more dominated by the feudal political order than in Germany. More dominated envious hatred of the moneyed men towards the 'djentri', and the condescending and contemptuous



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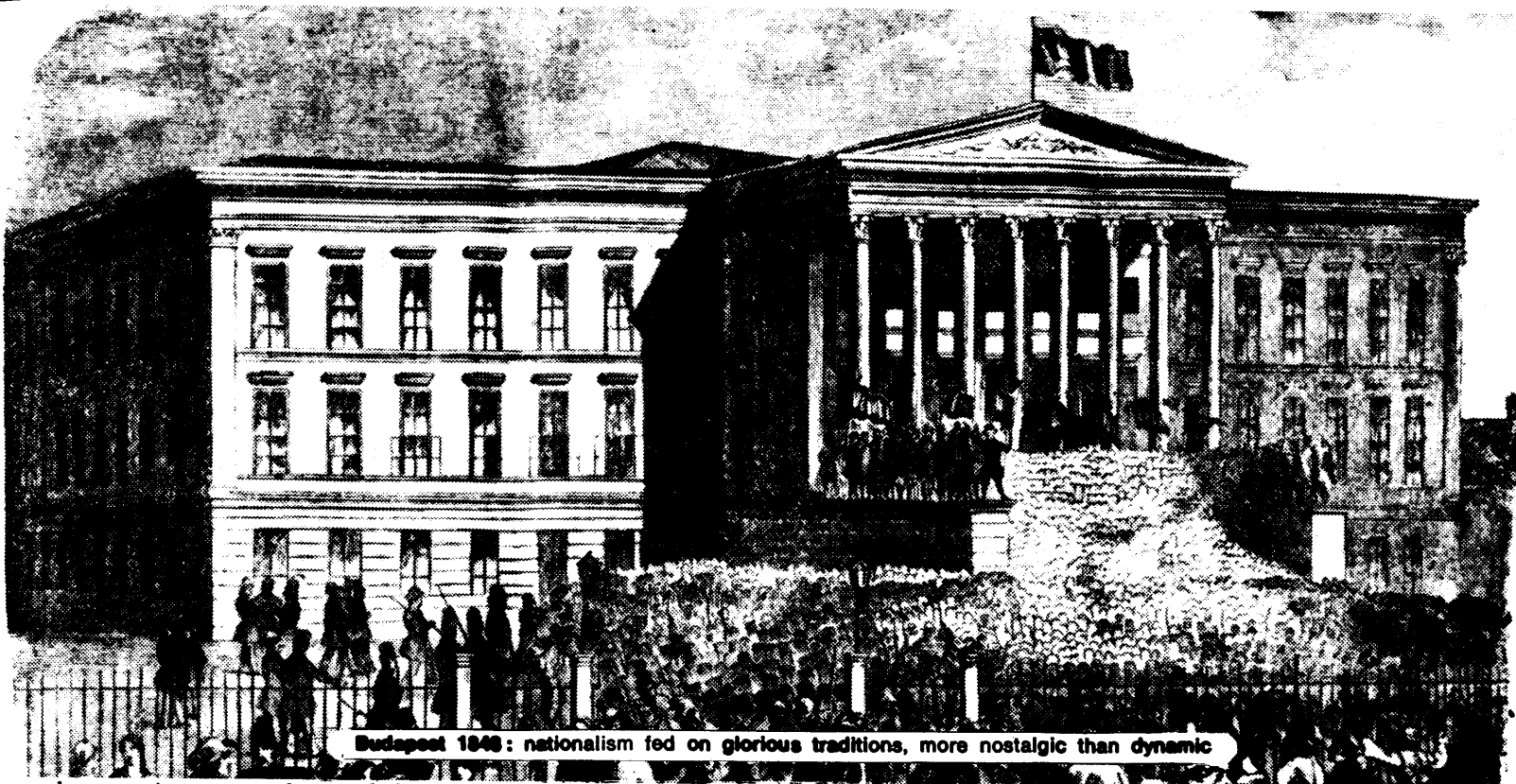
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Budapest 1848: nationalism fed on glorious traditions, more nostalgic than dynamic

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He was born in Budapest in 1885 of a recently ennobled Jewish family. To be born into such a milieu, full of contradictions, forces every mind to open its eyes, creates tensions and rebellions. His consciousness was awakened very early. As he wrote himself in his final autobiographical account (in 1969), from the age of puberty he was against his Hungarian milieu, against the 'world of Jews and djentri', he was a 'fighter impregnated with the feeling of being a foreigner'. He himself tells how, at that age, he had already generalized on his rejection of the family milieu through to the rejection of patricians and bourgeois and all of Hungarian society. Knowing the stifling atmosphere of the everyday life of all 'good families' one can fully understand and approve this juvenile revolt.

He sought refuge in contemporary foreign literature. At 14 to 15 he avidly read Ibsen and Strindberg, Hebbel and Hauptmann, Flaubert and Verlaine. These attempted escapes from his milieu, Lukacs tells us, were stressed by exaltation of international modernism against Hungarianism, 'narrow conservatism'. In his short autobiography written in 1933 ('My Path to Marxism', in Georg Lukacs *Writings on Ideology and Politics*, Luchterband Verlag, 1967) he notes that while still at school he read both the Communist Manifesto and the writings of Thomas Mann at about the same time. He himself writes that it was the novels, Mann's 'novellas' which impressed him.

Sixty years later he was to write of Mann:

'I was still a schoolboy when I had the first impressions of his work. The problem of Tonio Kröger primarily determined the main themes of youthful works.'

What, then, is the problem of Tonio Kröger?

He is the 'isolated bourgeois', whose problem is the impossibility of reconciling art with bourgeois life, whilst at the same time wanting both that life and art itself. Mann throughout his life, with great artistic force, expressed the fundamental dilemma of the bourgeoisie in the period of its decline. Not of a bourgeoisie in general, but precisely one which had failed in its revolution, and was no longer capable of fighting absolutism. Mann, from his book *Buddenbrooks* (1900) through *Tonio Kröger* and *Royal Highness*, to *The Magic Mountain* describes, analyses and interprets the decadence of the bourgeoisie. In a masterly manner, his novels express the anguish of the bourgeoisie. He bases himself on sympathy for that class sliding down the slope of history. He turns to the past with a certain nostalgia, to a time when the bourgeoisie was strong and full of life. In his works the proletariat is completely absent, non-existent. And since the writer maintains the incompatibility of reconciling (bourgeois) life with art and is unable to see the working class, he is deeply pessimistic. From this pessimism are sometimes born attempts to regenerate the bourgeoisie.

Here we grasp the meaning of that 'internal analysis of Mann's writings, which occupied me throughout my life', of which Lukacs speaks. His interest in literature and particularly drama grew. He personally felt the attraction and tension of contradictions, their tragedy expressed in drama and also in the works of Thomas Mann. The basis of these contradictions, reflected in contemporary literature, is that ultimately there is no longer any place in life for Life. In terminology familiar to the period, the bourgeois intelligentsia expressed the impossibility of realizing a human life in the



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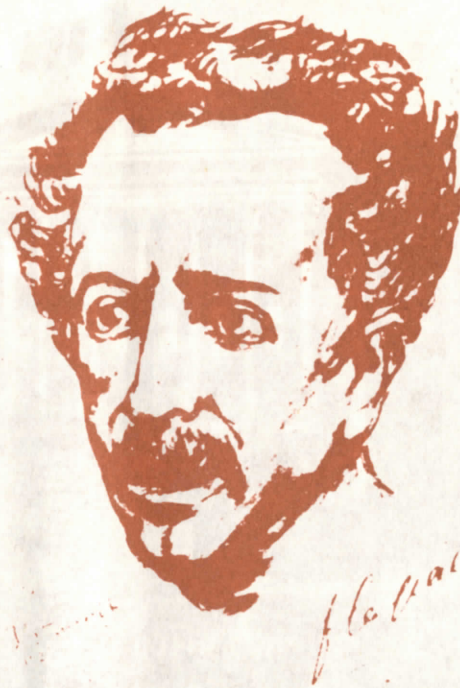
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Influenced first class organization in 1868

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But theatrical activity was only an intermediary. He was already writing reviews for a journal, and then began to study philosophy. It must be stressed, as he does himself, that with this turn foreign influences, particularly German, increased—especially that of Kant. At university he was still studying Marx's work. He read *Capital*, *The 18th Brumaire* and Engels' *Origin of the Family*. His first 'Marxism' he characterizes as follows:

'This study immediately convinced me of the correctness of some of the main points of Marxism. In the first place the theory of surplus value, the conception of history as that of class struggles, and the division of society into classes influenced me. However, as is usually the case with bourgeois intellectuals this influence was limited to economics and above all to "sociology". I held that the materialist philosophy, in which I made no distinction between materialism and dialectical materialism, must be transcended from the point of view of the theory of knowledge. The neo-Kantian theory of "the immanence of consciousness" was in perfect harmony with my class situation, my world outlook at that time.' (*My Path to Marxism* op. cit.)

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It is now possible to summarize and characterize Lukacs' starting-point. If our examination of the milieu and awakening of his consciousness seems to the reader lengthy, and perhaps superfluous, it is nonetheless essential. This is because certain profound characteristics of Lukacs'



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What is particularly striking is that his awakening and then his evolution and researches were purely intellectual. He came to study Marx and, later, even to know his works only through study and reflection. He revolted against his milieu, and sought the answer not in struggle but in reading and reflection, trying thus to find both the explanation and the solution for his position and that of society. In his attitude there was not even a break between theory and practice, but a pure and simple non-existence of the latter. However, the essence of his reflections is outstandingly rich in social content. His autobiographical comment, in which he explains that through his immediate milieu, he broke with the whole of Hungarian society, is revealing. Written almost 70 years later, he does not even see to what extent he 'forgets'—in his youth and still today—that this 'Hungarian society' was itself made up of classes. It was in vain that 'the conception of history as a history of class struggles, and the division of society into classes', influenced him. For him, it is only theory without practical application. There is nothing surprising in the fact that even at the time these autobiographical notes were published, the Lukacs of today does not notice that this conception is not that of Marx, and has nothing Marxist in it. Marx and Engels clearly explained that they borrowed it from the historians of the French Revolution: Thierry, Michelet and Guizot. This conception appears at the summit of bourgeois 19th century thought. Marxism goes radically further: it teaches the historical mission of the proletariat in this class struggle, a mission written into the laws and nature of capitalist society.

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Hungarian Revolution of 1956

formation of the trade unions, it fought for decades, in a struggle rich in lessons, to tear itself from the liberal bourgeoisie and form its own political party. It was in 1868 that the first political class organization was formed, under the heavy influence of Lassalle's ideas. After its destruction by the police, the Marxist, Leo Frankel, one of the leaders of the Paris Commune, returned to his country of birth and founded the first really socialist Hungarian workers' party. Movements of the working class in the towns merged with great peasant revolts. Under the pressure of the bourgeoisie and the state, Frankel again being in emigration, this new party succumbed to opportunism. But in 1890 the Social Democratic Party was formed. Powerful strikes and demonstrations in the towns and the countryside, shook the regime. Lukacs had the chance to see that the class struggle is not a theory, but a reality that theory only grasps and fertilizes.

Of course, the awakening of the consciousness of intellectuals often proceeds by reflection and not by the daily experience of class struggle. It is not a question of reproaching the young Lukacs with this characteristic of development. But whether beginning from day-to-day experiences or through reflection, once they have arrived at Marxism the worker and the intellectual are merged in this common struggle in which theory and practice fuse in a constant interaction. What is to be noted with Lukacs is that this intellectual imprint of his starting-point remains present throughout his life, marked by a split between theory and practice.

His approach to the labour movement in the course of the First World War is characterized by discussions in different groups and lectures but at no time does he participate in a trade-union or political movement of the working class. It is remarkable that in all his autobiographies written from 1933 to 1969 (we know of at least three) he explains in minute detail, although sometimes with

some omissions and discrepancies, his intellectual movement towards Marxism, but never explains how he approached the labour movement. And even when he states that, on the eve of the war and during the first years of the war, anarcho-syndicalist and Sorelian ideas influenced him, he just does not think of explaining whether or not he did something in practice for these ideas. This complete break between theory and practice was later 'softened'. But its foundation remained. Thus, later, as a member or leader of the Communist Party, he sees this party in itself, completely detached from the labour movement as a whole. The living dialectic between, on the one hand, the labour movement and class struggle, and on the other the Party, the vanguard, escapes him completely.

The dialectical unity between the Party as an emanation of the class and its struggles and as a leader of that class will never be grasped by Lukacs. For him, the Party leads, it is something finished, perfect, because Marxism conceived as a totality of finished categories guides it. This is precisely the realization of the Spirit in History of which Hegel speaks. And one of the reasons, if not the most important one, for this idealism is the separation of theory and practice.

When he joined the Communist Party, he did not only see it as a party in itself, detached from the labour movement, but rather as a sort of life-buoy for culture through the building of socialism. This statement is in no way a reproach to Lukacs. It only shows that for him, even when practice appears close to theory, there is no organic link between them. In fact, for a Marxist, the party of the class leads the emancipation of the proletariat and by that, permits the salvation of all humanity, culture included. Consequently, the theoretical preoccupations of a Marxist are intimately linked to that struggle (practice) and not to the problems of culture. There was only one period in Lukacs' life, from 1919 to 1930, when theory and practice

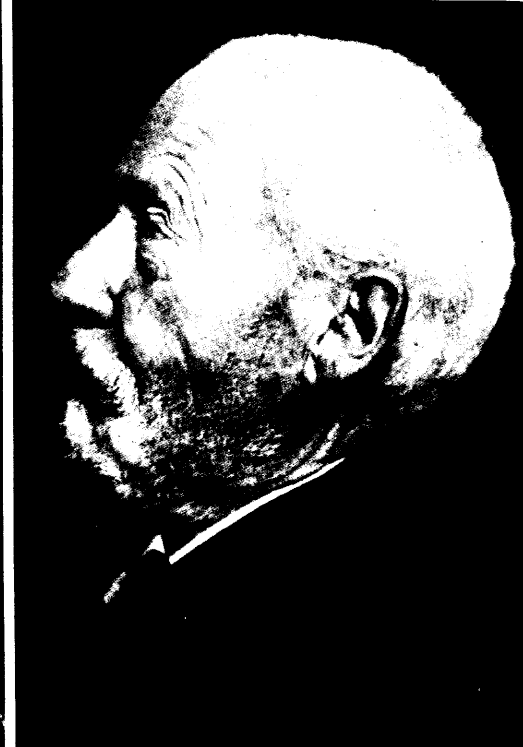


Immanuel Kant

Kant
an early influence



Simmel



'Philosophy of Life School'

Dilthey

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The fact that with Lukacs, even Marxism becomes a sort of system with fixed categories, found particularly in his 'Aesthetics', clearly shows the break between theory and practice. The Hegelianism for which he has been correctly reproached finds its origin there.

A particularly eloquent example of the relation between Lukacs' theory and practice is his participation in the struggle of the opposition before the Hungarian revolution of workers' councils. In June 1956, the Petöfi Circle organized a public debate on the theme, 'Present problems of Marxist Philosophy'. One of the noteworthy participants was Lukacs, whose contribution constituted the centre of the debate. But instead of analysing, with the weapon of dialectical materialism, the fundamental problems of a struggle which was to sweep the entire country, he only spoke of the situation of Marxism in Hungary, taken as a science apart. And even from this standpoint, he made not the slightest effort to show the irreconcilable opposition between Marxism and Stalinism, for the simple reason that he did not want to see it himself. In his contribution, as in several of his writings, Stalinism in this respect consisted only of a dogmatism, with no other content, stifling the living method of Marxism. He never poses the main problem, even if here and there he touches on it, of whether Stalinism falsified, deformed and perverted that method itself, dialectical materialism. And since he does not pose it, he tries even less to reply to it in an overall and positive manner. Thus, in the Petöfi Circle debate, the axis of his contribution was the necessity to develop Marxism in the form of applying it to particular sciences.

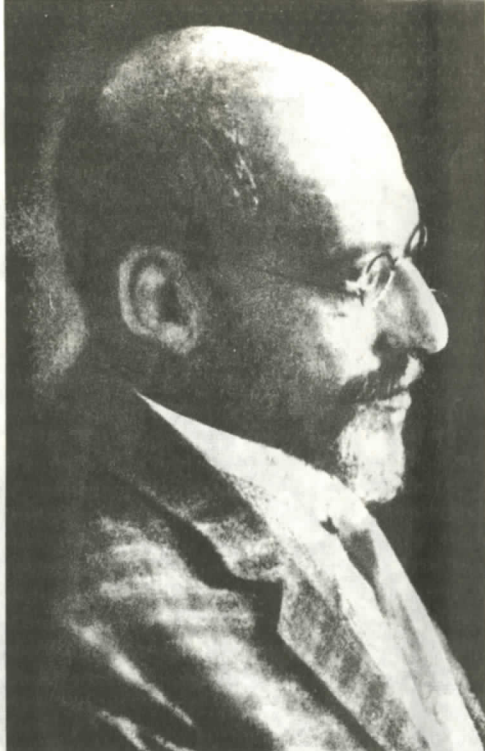
For 'today, there is no Marxist logic, no Marxist aesthetics or Marxist ethics, Marxist pedagogy or Marxist psychology, and so on'.

So Marxism becomes a sort of philosophy to be applied to the various sciences. Its development thus becomes an intellectual task realized only by intellectuals in their studies. And since, in this way, his 'Marxism' loses its *raison d'être*, as a science of the proletarian class struggle, guiding that practice and gathering sustenance from it, it ceases to be Marxism. It quite naturally gives way to the idealist Utopia of wanting to create, from prefabricated elements, a 'Marxist' pedagogy, ethics, etc. Marx and Engels finished with philosophy as such. Lukacs recreates it. And the key to its resurrection is the separation of theory and practice, whereas its liquidation by Marx, summarized in the *Theses on Feuerbach*, on the contrary, united them.

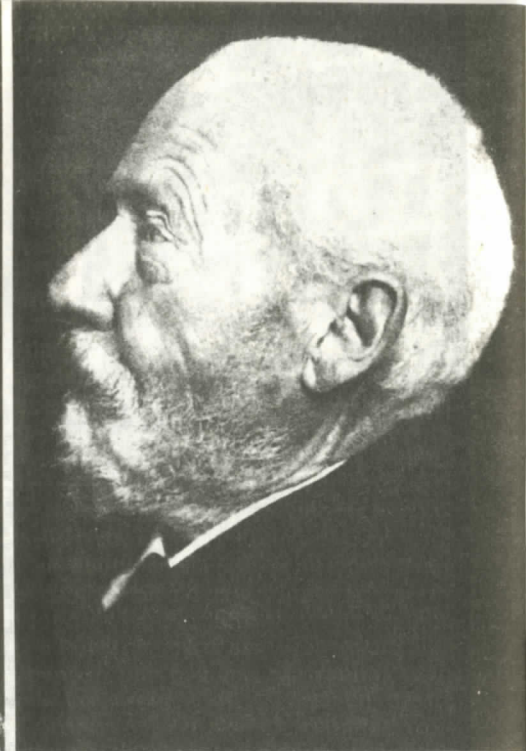
It follows that this rupture, if it distorts theory, is also a danger for the practice. The latter becomes crippled. Deprived of a theoretical support and sustenance which are firmly linked to practice, it is characterized in Lukacs by accommodation, sometimes reticent sometimes not, to all situations. He was criticized by Lenin in 1920 and he rapidly made a self-criticism. Then in 1923-1924, the Communist International criticized his book *History and Class Consciousness*; just as quickly, a self-criticism. In 1929-1930 another criticism, and another self-criticism by Lukacs, then more criticisms, but Lukacs always knows how to withdraw, never hesitating to sacrifice his companions. Let us not forget that he is one of the few survivors! In 1956 he follows the revolution and joins Imre Nagy's government; he is one of the seven leaders founding the new Communist Party during the revolution. But later all the leaders of the revolution are executed or imprisoned, including the founders of the new party, except Kadar—and Lukacs. For Lukacs a theoretical position is only a theory with no link with the struggle, and can



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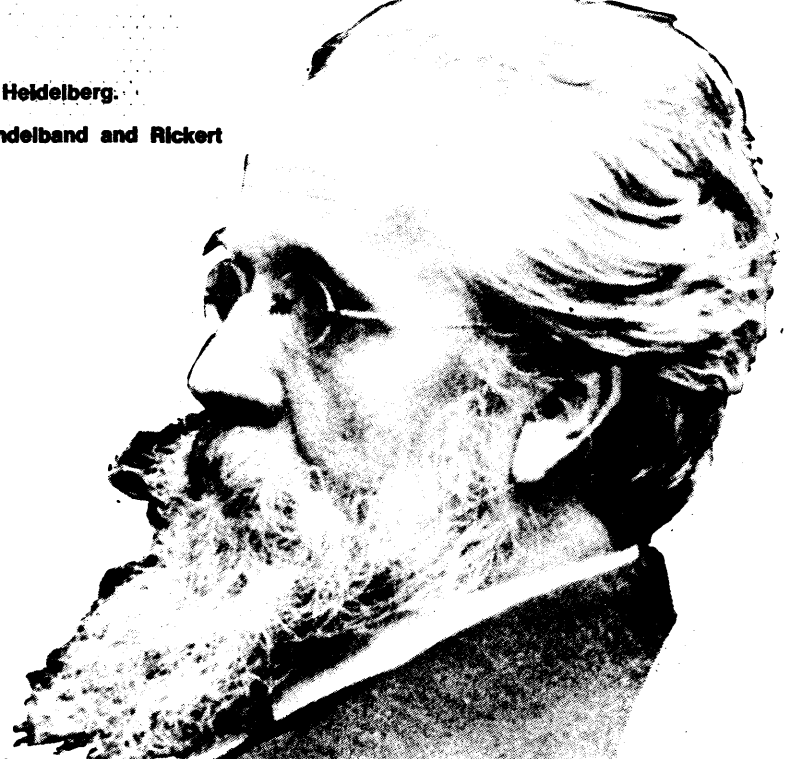
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At Heidelberg.

Professors Windelband and Rickert



'Baden School' of Neo Kantians—a theoretical counterbalance to the theory of Permanent Revolution

therefore be easily modified or abandoned. What is important is to survive, and always be on the winning side. Lukacs is always in the camp of the exterminating bureaucracy, even if previously he was to be found in the camp of the 'oppositonists'.

Another profound characteristic of his youth accompanies Lukacs up to the present. It is closely linked to the first. This is his attitude to the fundamental antagonism between proletariat and bourgeoisie.

Coming out against his environment, he did not turn to the proletariat, but, as we have seen, towards lectures and intellectual research. More exactly, as he expresses it, to 'international modernism' against 'conservative Hungarianism'. This 'modernism' is contemporary literature, expressed particularly in the work of Thomas Mann and in German neo-Kantian philosophy. In order to define Lukacs' relationship to the bourgeois-proletarian antagonism, an examination, even a rapid one, of the class content of this philosophy and literature is necessary.

Engels summarily characterized the German university philosophers of the second half of the 19th century as philistines, as 'posthumous abortions of German classical philosophy'. The essence of neo-Kantian philosophy lay in purging Kant of his materialist inconsistencies by rejecting materialism. Basically, the various neo-Kantian schools in Germany represented a theoretical front of the bourgeoisie against the dialectical materialism of the proletariat. The 'Baden School' of neo-Kantians, with the Heidelberg professors Windelband and Rickert, sought to transcend Kant by rejecting the Kantian recognition of the materialist *Ding an sich* (Thing in itself). This school busied itself above all with intellectual and cultural values. The other school, that of Marburg, tried to reconcile Kant's critique with modern logic and to apply his ethics to social problems.

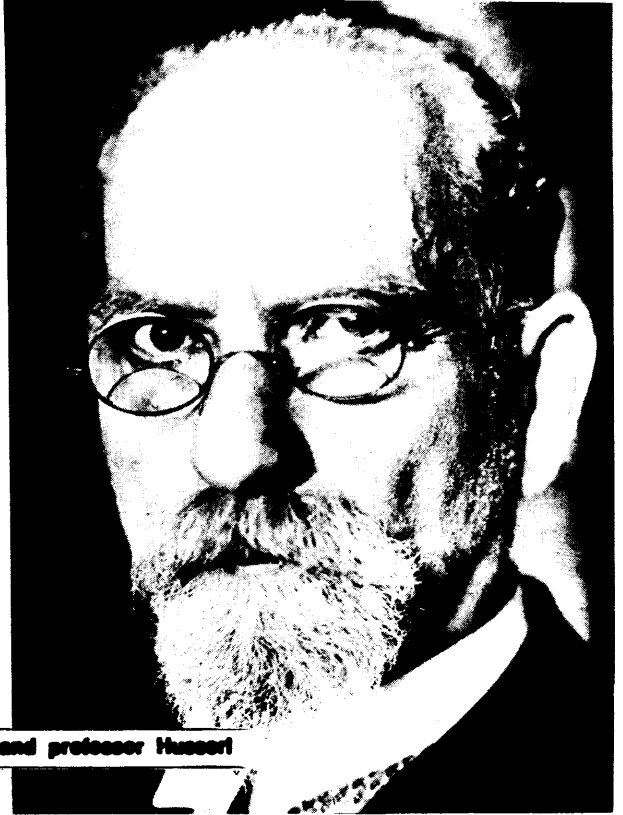
This philosophy expressed the situation and specific interests of the bourgeoisie at a well-

defined period of its evolution. Just as the latter, faced with a proletariat strengthening its struggle and organizations, was sheltering in the arms of absolutism whilst debating against it, so neo-Kantian philosophy was the theoretical attempt to translate and so support this 'equilibrium'. But the latter never existed in social reality; the bourgeoisie had become once and for all counter-revolutionary, despite its intentions with regard to absolutism. The realization of the tasks of the bourgeois revolution, such as the dissolution of the powerful feudal remnants and the application of democratic rights, henceforth required a proletarian revolution. This was the meaning of the permanent revolution advanced by Marx and Engels as the principal conclusion of the 1848-1849 revolution. The Russian Revolution of 1905 verified it in practice, with much more force now that the working class and its organizations were developing against the now reactionary bourgeoisie. All of this development was analysed and expressed in Leon Trotsky's major contribution to Marxism, the theory of permanent revolution elaborated on the morrow of the Russian Revolution of 1905.

In these conditions, neo-Kantian philosophy could not be a 'balance', non-existent in reality, between materialism and idealism, but—just like the bourgeoisie on the social and political plane—it was reactionary. It went back, not only in relation to Hegel, not to speak of Marx and Engels, but even in relation to Kant himself. Neo-Kantian philosophy constituted the theoretical weapon of the bourgeoisie to fight dialectical materialism, in the form of a 'balance' between materialism and idealism. It insinuated itself as a 'noble' attempt to rid materialism of its rigidity. It found its form of penetration into the labour movement with Dühring. Engels' theoretical struggle against this attempt was thus the necessary condition of the reinforcement of the conscious proletariat for its historical role, as an independent class. But since



At Friburg: Heidegger and professor Husserl



the principal social conditions remained the same, the theoretical front of the bourgeoisie, namely the different forms of neo-Kantianism, continued to flourish. They undermined the labour movement. The appearance of Bernstein's revisionism, immediately after Engels' death, and its influence must not be separated from the fact that the leaders of German social democracy did not understand Engels' warning on the necessity of theoretical struggle.

One of the most dangerous forms of neo-Kantianism then represented was Machism, against which Lenin took up the struggle and thereby won a decisive battle against neo-Kantianism. Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, written in 1908, aimed at the defence of materialism by developing it, was Lenin's reply, fighting for the proletarian revolution, to the attempts of the bourgeoisie to theoretically disarm it by an attempt at 'reconciliation' of materialism with idealism. In the same way, the theory of permanent revolution elaborated by Trotsky in 1906 constituted the arming of the proletariat against efforts to subordinate it to the bourgeoisie. Between these two theoretical works there is an intimate link; they arm the working class against the desperate attempts of the bourgeoisie to confuse the perspectives, aim and content of its struggle. Without this theoretical preparation and struggle, the October Revolution is inconceivable.

So the social significance of neo-Kantianism rested on this, that it assigned a progressive role to the bourgeoisie. As such, this philosophy was violently opposed to the independence of the proletariat, it constituted the theoretical counterbalance to the theory of permanent revolution. This sociological application of neo-Kantianism, with 'borrowings' from Marx, was also taken up by contemporary academics, particularly Max Weber and Werner Sombart. The 'philosophical' transition to this sociology was assured by the 'Philosophy of life' school of Dilthey and Simmel.

Lukacs was 21 in 1906, when he arrived in Berlin to complete his studies, following the course of the ageing Dilthey and Simmel. The latter deeply influenced him, so much so that in October 1918, on Simmel's death, Lukacs devoted a eulogy to him. In 1913 he left Berlin for Heidelberg University because of the attraction the neo-Kantian 'Baden School' had for him. He explains his choice of Heidelberg in one of his autobiographical notes.

'I had always had reservations regarding extreme subjective idealism (the Marburg school of neo-Kantianism as much as Machism). . . . However, this fact did not lead me to materialist conclusions, but on the contrary to approach the philosophical schools which wanted to resolve this problem in an irrational-relativist manner, sometimes making the latter sparkle in mysticism.'

At Heidelberg, or the university near Friburg, he finds a whole team whose names were, or were to be, known as philosophical or sociological representatives of a 'transcendence' of Marx. Max Weber was professor at Heidelberg until 1903 and his influence had continued to grow. In fact Lukacs himself was to write later:

'Max Weber's writings on Protestantism were my models for a 'sociology of literature' in which elements taken from Marx, necessarily diluted and paled, although still present were scarcely recognizable.'

At Heidelberg he found professors Wilhelm Windelband, Heinrich Rickert, 'those posthumous abortions', along with Emil Lask and Paul Ernst, whose preoccupations, if not the same type, always remain recognizable in Lukacs. As companions there he finds Ernst Bloch, of his own age, Karl Jaspers, then Karl Korsch and Karl Mannheim, whilst Martin Heidegger was at Friburg, where Edmund Husserl was a professor. Quite a programme—Lukacs was then no longer a youthful beginner. From the age of 21 to 30 he basks in the university milieu of Berlin and Heidelberg.



Right and above :
Heidelberg companions,
Jaspers and Korsch

Heidelberg professor Weber

as one of its pillars. On the practical plane this university milieu was the base and support of the social study circles founded and organized by Werner Sombart. This Breslau (now Wroclaw) professor undertook to elaborate social reforms 'in favour of the workers'. He was the pale university reflection of Schultze-Delitzsch, whose aim was to make workers believe that it is possible to reconcile their struggle for emancipation with the maintenance of the social order.

The proliferation of this kind of professor is characteristic in Russia, Germany and the Austro-Hungarian monarchy of the time, which all had fundamentally the same social and political conditions. But whereas in Russia a theoretical and consequently political struggle was waged by Lenin and Trotsky, by the Bolsheviki, against the 'legal Marxists' Struve, Tugan-Baranovski etc., in the other countries, because of theoretical negligence and the consequent opportunism rampant in the labour movement, the influence of conciliatory 'theories' and their practical corollary—namely the attack on the independence of the proletariat, seeking to subordinate it to the bourgeoisie—was considerable. For a long time this characteristic was to leave its traces on the subsequent development of the labour movement in those countries. On the plane of philosophy and theory a huge battle was to take place, the price for which was to be the consciousness, and therefore the class independence, of the proletariat. Attempts to cloud the consciousness of the proletariat were to be concentrated in Germany where the working class was strongest: its actions conditioned the victory of the European revolution. It was not accidental that later, the Bolshevik leadership of the Russian Revolution looked precisely towards the German proletariat and its revolution as the guarantee of the world revolution and consequently the victory of socialism. Theoretically, the permanent revolution linking the class conditions of revolutionary but backward Russia to the revolution in the industrial

countries was in fact stressing the capital role of the German proletariat. Thus, the role of the German working class against its bourgeoisie was one of the important elements of the permanent revolution. Inversely, one could say without exaggeration that the relationship to the German proletariat and its role determined the relationship to the permanent revolution. In fact, to this theory were opposed only ideologies of the progressive role of the bourgeoisie and the subordination of the German working class, just as all variants of such an ideology remain enemies of the permanent revolution; as much then as later, right through to the present.

Breaking from his milieu, and a complete foreigner to the workers, Lukacs turned towards 'international modernism', particularly German. Granted it expressed a struggle on all planes against the backward state of feudal absolutism, but in order to ensure the expansion of the bourgeoisie. So if, then, such a hope seemed futile to Lukacs in Hungary because of the weakness of the bourgeoisie and its consequent more craven submission, in Germany all intellectual life aspired to such a possibility, despite some pessimistic notes. So, breaking from a backward and deformed capitalism, Lukacs turned to a classical, so-to-speak 'pure' capitalism. His attachment to the problems of contemporary literature in general and to classical literature was conditioned by this starting point. Throughout his subsequent evolution he was marked by it theoretically and politically.

We shall see that throughout his life he was to remain a vicious and declared enemy of permanent revolution. This is why it was quite natural for him to repudiate his 'revolutionary' attitude at the time of the revolutions of 1917 to 1923.

In 1969 he wrote these significant lines:

'Like most people who were drawn into the revolutionary movement by the events of 1917, I too was convinced that soon, by the revolutionary road, socialism would replace European capitalism. This

sectarian fanaticism had not yet known the bureaucratic restrictions of the *later stages of development* . . . [it] was a *Messianic sectarianism* which believed, despite all defeats and reversals, in the rapid and radical rebirth of the world. It was this kind of assimilation to Marxism in its early stages that dominated for some years my position on international development.' [Our emphasis.]

Revolutionary politics is completely repudiated by Lukacs, who identifies it with sectarianism and fanaticism.

But if the European revolution is only fanatical Messianism, the only possible path is 'socialism in one country'. Effectively, this is Lukacs' fundamental position. His repudiation of revolution dates from 1924. Lenin died in January 1924. In the following month, Lukacs devoted a book to him, in which—although on the whole in an ambiguous form—appeared the first elements of 'socialism in one country'. Stalin himself only arrived at this position in the autumn of the same year. But Lukacs is modest; he was never to admit that, in some way, he anticipated Stalin. In 1967, writing a long preface to the second volume of his works published by Luchterhand Verlag, he wrote:

'After 1924 the Third International correctly defined the position of the capitalist world as one of "relative stability". These facts meant that I had to re-think my theoretical position. In the debates in the Russian Party I agreed with Stalin about the necessity for socialism in one country and this shows very clearly the start of a new epoch in my thought.'

It could not be clearer.

In this article we shall have occasion to demonstrate this hostility to the permanent revolution, and thus to revolution along with his hatred for Trotsky and loyalty to 'socialism in one country'. For this reason, he was, throughout his life, not an anti-Stalinist, as many would have us believe, but on the contrary the ideologue of the Stalinist bureaucracy who just made the mistake of going forward 'too quickly' for the bureaucracy, of opening up the road which it was to travel before the 'modern' variant of its counter-revolutionary policy had been found. We must, however, raise something which was to deeply mark the beginning of this development—his hostility to the German proletariat, a hostility which, linked with that towards the permanent revolution, is also one of the characteristics of Stalinism.

In his youth Lukacs was a neo-Kantian, nostalgic for the 'grandeur' of the bourgeoisie. Thomas Mann's problem is his too. There is nothing surprising in the fact that for Lukacs, Mann is not only the greatest writer, but also—as he was to say in 1955—a profound judge of the social and cultural processes of his time, "a man of great" political clairvoyance'. But in fact, Mann was, and remained so until his death, a bourgeois who despised the working class. In 1914, Mann basically supported the war of German imperialism, hoping that through it would come the regeneration of the bourgeoisie. This 'profound judge of social processes' later wrote on the question of socialism (in his study on Goethe and Tolstoy):

'Its intellectual life was cramped for too long

in an inferior materialism,' and for that reason 'its national task [is to] read Hölderlin to Karl Marx.'

He too, wanted to rid Marxism of its 'rigidity' by proposing nothing less than the mystical romanticism of Hölderlin. If Lukacs, in his works on aesthetics, gives primacy to those writers who bring out in their works the 'totality' of society and considers Mann as the greatest writer, although the working class is completely absent from his work, that is his business as a literary critic. But if he places Mann the politician on such a high plane it shows that he himself shares the same basic stand, and literary criticism reveals here only too clearly the political position.

It is in relation to fascism that this bourgeois, anti-working class position came out. Here again Lukacs adopts exactly the same opinion as Stalin: a profound contempt not only for the proletariat but for the whole of the German people—and a policy seeking to re-establish the domination of the German bourgeoisie in its 'democratic' form. Again he agrees with Mann. This contempt for the German proletariat goes as far as slander. In 1942 he wrote:

'The German people, confused by demagogy, pushed forward with the whip of terror, a *play-thing of its animal instincts*, lurched on to its death.' [Our emphasis.]

Like Stalin, he does not hesitate to slander the German working class here, without uttering a word about the destruction of the German labour movement as the aim of and reason for the fascist government. For him it represented 'dark forces come to power', and not the most aggressive form of bourgeois power. For—according to Lukacs, just as Heinrich Mann's 'subject'—he sees 'in the German petty bourgeoisie the first traits which will later lead to fascism . . . the disarray of all moral instincts . . . because of the lack of freedom, insufficiency of democracy, the degradation of civil life'.

Fascism, writes Lukacs, is:

' . . . the result of historical and political, spiritual and moral tendencies and counter-tendencies, which have fought for decades; it is the sudden manifestation, in the form of crisis, of the ideological poisoning, prepared slowly and over a long period, of the German people, a poison against which it fought for a long time, but too slowly and with too little vigour . . . real anti-fascism is thus a struggle . . . against the dark forces . . .'

So fascism is not a government of the bourgeoisie, but of 'dark forces' against which 'real' bourgeois democracy must be re-established, for, Lukacs stated in 1944, 'German history is poor in revolutionary events, and even openly progressive events'. The slanderer knows no limits! Whilst the working class is going through one of the most difficult moments of its history, Lukacs (to give himself confidence, perhaps) can do nothing but slander it. An attitude radically opposed to Engels', who on the morrow of the crushing of the German revolution of 1848-1849 sought precisely those means which would allow the German workers to take confidence again. It was this attitude which led him to write on the German Peasant Wars.

The short preface to Engels' book begins with these words: 'The German people too has its own revolutionary tradition.'

Then he writes, 'Faced with a temporary relaxation . . . it is time to set out before the German people the indomitable but hard, vigorous figures of the great Peasant War.'

Lukacs, precisely the opposite of Engels, slanders the working class and the entire German people. He has been led to this position by his hostility to the permanent revolution, his continued attachment to the imprints of bourgeois ideology received at the beginning of his path.

From this attitude derives his idealist appreciation of fascism. In his book *The Destruction of Reason*, written in 1952, he tries to prove that fascism in Germany was in some manner contained in all the previous evolution of German culture and, as such, is an ideological poisoning. It is quite natural that Lukacs always supported Stalin's German policies, up to and including the shameful division of Germany into two. He is still, even today, the defender of this division.

The way in which he formed his ideas and the manner of their development during his youth left profound traces on Lukacs' theoretical and political positions. The separation of theory and practice, along with his negative relationship to the working class and its role will constitute the background to all his theoretical work and every political position. But they do not exhaust the whole of his itinerary.

His approach to the labour movement and entry into the Communist Party

From his autobiographical notes, it is impossible to determine the phases of his approach to the labour movement, nor even the date when his interest for this movement was first awakened. Fixed in his neo-Kantian position and under the influence of the 'Philosophy of Life', then one of its forms, Lukacs for a long time adopted an ethical, moralist position in relation to social problems. This position, before and during the imperialist First World War, brought him to anarchism, particularly in its Sorelian form. Anarchism, the essence of which is petty-bourgeois revolt within the framework of bourgeois society, suited him down to the ground. All the more, since it allowed him not to associate himself to any movement, not even anarchist. In fact, although during the war he took part in debates in a group in Hungary which comprised different tendencies, he belonged to none of them. He remained an outsider with his ethical and moral revolt, the aim of which was 'an internal transformation of man'. Yet in 1969, he sets up as a virtue the fact that 'I was never able to reconcile myself to the social-democratic theory of those days, especially Kautsky, whereas basically he rejected the entire labour movement, now justifying himself by the opportunism of Social Democracy.'

But this self-justification is also false in itself. First because until 1914, the Social Democratic party was a party comprising all the political forces of the working class, the sole framework in which Lenin, Trotsky and Rosa Luxemburg fought for the proletarian revolution. Lukacs' rejection meant not only the abandonment of this struggle and the renunciation of a political party of the proletariat, but also stresses Lukacs' incomprehension of the problem today. He is much more sincere when he writes that, during the war, 'I was not a socialist and could only admire Liebknecht from afar, from outside. . . .'

But this rejection of Kautsky is not sincere, for in reality, by ridding himself of his 'Messianic fanaticism' for the revolution, Lukacs finds himself again, namely a Menshevik conciliator and defender of the bourgeois order, no less tenacious than Kautsky.

From his autobiographies, it is impossible to establish if the influence of the ultra-leftists in the labour movement affected Lukacs during the war or if it only came afterwards. It is said that during the war, he was also under the influence of the Dutch ultra-lefts, through Roland-Holst. In any event, this would not be surprising, but rather in the order of things. It is known that he knew certain of Rosa Luxemburg's writings, which he clearly admired, and some of the German Spartacus League's.

What characterizes Lukacs' political position at this time is an eclecticism of different tendencies which he tries to reconcile on the basis of Kantian ethics. The October Revolution made such an attitude impossible, or rather hostile. In fact, in March 1918, in a debate in Budapest of 'progressive' intellectuals, Lukacs was the main inspirer of the opinion defending an 'ethical idealism', as against materialism, for the rebirth of the world. But there is worse. In November of the same year, the Budapest liberal intellectuals' review *Free Thought* published a special edition entitled 'Bolshevism' on the occasion of the first anniversary of the October revolution. In this edition, Lukacs took a position against the October Revolution!

We are all well aware of how embarrassing this revelation is for 'left' and even communist intellectuals, who are admirers of Lukacs, 'the only Marxist of our period'. Lukacs was always tactful enough not to mention this 'unfortunate' position against the October Revolution anywhere.

We do not have that 'tact', and therefore quote this article by Lukacs:

'Can one attain good ends by bad means, freedom through oppression? Can a new order of the world be created if the means of its creation are only technically distinguishable from those . . . of the old order? . . . Bolshevism is based on the metaphysical supposition that good can come from evil, that it is possible . . . to get to truth by way of lies. The author of these lines cannot share this belief.'

Then, a few days later, 'the author of these lines', Lukacs, joined the Communist Party of Hungary. And from this membership of 'evil', his entire political itinerary will be marked by the

'lie', an intellectual dishonesty that he believes to be 'Bolshevik', but which makes of him one of the most eminent Stalinist gravediggers of Bolshevism.

The man who quoted this article in a Hungarian review (*Volsag*, No 10, 1968) is right to add that this change, surprising to say the least, is motivated in Lukacs by the acceptance of 'evil' to arrive, in a fanatical manner, at revolutionary activity. The key to this is given by Lukacs himself in *Tactics and Ethics* written in 1919 where he quotes Judith, heroine of Hebbel's drama, 'If God placed crime between me and that destined for me, who am I to dispense with it?' Behind this Messianism, cost what it may, it is easy to recognize the 'categorical imperative' of old Kant.

But what is more important, is that when Lukacs joined the Communist Party, he did so

understanding nothing of Bolshevism, nor of the revolution which he rejected, nor of the Party, nor of the labour movement. He 'heroically' accepts revolution as a necessary evil, and against his innermost conviction. It follows logically, and the facts prove it, that after ridding himself of that fanatical and Messianic attitude in 1926, he could only come back to himself, to his position well established previously. And that means that if Lukacs condemned the October Revolution in 1918, he will condemn all revolutions after 1924, just as he was the enemy of revolution previously. His political itinerary is clearly expressed: his anti-revolutionary attitude is an organic constant of his political life—except for his short period of 'revolutionary fanaticism'—through to the present. In the second part of this article we shall analyse the forms and manifestations of this itinerary.



Hungarian Revolution of 1956. Nagy (left), Kadar (right)

Marxist theory and Class consciousness

by C. Slaughter

THE PUBLICATION in English of Lukacs' *History and Class Consciousness*, and the praises being sung for this Stalinist apologist by anti-Marxists and revisionists all over the world, make necessary a re-statement of some of the basic Marxist concepts on the question of class-consciousness. Since May-June 1968 in France, there has also been a boom in 'sociological' writing from bourgeois academics about working-class consciousness and 'politicization'. The sociologists are as directly subservient to the theoretical needs of modern imperialism as were the vulgar economists of the later nineteenth century. This article does not deal with the particular works of these sociologists, but only explains the unbridgeable gulf between Marxism and bourgeois sociology. It was written as the last chapter of a book on Marxism and sociology commissioned by Methuen and Co. but rejected on the grounds that it was too Marxist. An extended analysis of Lukacs' *History and Class-Consciousness* will be published in *Fourth International* as the third part of Balazs Nagy's *The Political Itinerary of Georg Lukacs*.

Marxism is not a 'sociology'. It only appears to be so, because, from the point of view of every other particular section of the intellectual division of labour—philosophy, economics, history, history of ideas, etc.—Marxism goes beyond their defined subject-matter, insisting that the real content of each of them is to be found in the contradictory totality of social economic relations from which flow the forms of activity and thought to which the separate disciplines address themselves. Political economy, for example, is 'negated' by Marxism, in the Hegelian sense. Marx's treatment of political

economy takes to their limit the contradictory developments of classical political economy. To do this requires the explanation of political economy's concepts and their real content as the 'alienated' consciousness of the development of bourgeois society itself. Thus we find in the *Critique of Political Economy* and in *Capital* itself a negation of political economy, which is demonstrated as being an adequate reflection of the sphere of exchange values and their behaviour. But this sphere is shown to be the real world of appearances or illusions as necessarily created by a historically limited social order, capitalism.

Marx's rejection of bourgeois philosophy is a similar materialist critique. His analysis of political and historical thought and their material sources was the third element of the synthesis achieved by Marx.

Why then do we say that Marxism only *appears to be* a sociology? Because sociology originated and developed, not as the dialectical negation, the overcoming of the contradictions, of each of the alienated spheres of thought, but as their definition anew in relation to some supposedly more 'general' science of the 'the social as such' (Durkheim's '*le social en soi*' and 'social facts' constitute the acme of this approach). Comte, first to use the term 'sociology', invented the word in order to indicate:

'... under one single heading that integral part of natural philosophy which concerns itself with the positive study of the totality of fundamental laws proper to social phenomena.'

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'... under one single heading that integral part of natural philosophy which concerns itself with the positive study of the totality of fundamental laws proper to social phenomena.'

Instead of the dynamic synthesis constituted by Marx's negation of the separated and alienated

fields of philosophy, political economy and history (class struggle), we have the static and uncritical synthesis of Comte, to be followed by a century of sterile debate in sociology about 'metaphysics or empiricism', 'generalization or specialized monographs', 'system or action'. Instead of the consistent materialism made possible by Marx's historical or dialectical approach, we have the pseudo-scientific reliance on 'experience', which in Comte's case ended in the purest mysticism, since his 'spiritual' experience was granted just as much validity as any other. Sociology continues to oscillate between idealism and mechanical materialism: 'social facts as things' on the one hand, freedom of the individual on the other; the classical dichotomy of bourgeois ideology. Instead of social analysis in terms of the contradictory development and struggle of opposites in each specific, historically limited, socio-economic formation, we have in sociology the search for general principles or sociological laws which transcend specific historical stages. Talcott Parsons' rejection of Marxism, on the grounds that it is a series of 'genetic' explanations, sums up this functionalist barrenness.

Marxism the dialectical negation of bourgeois thought

These aspects of the split in social theory between Marxism and sociology since the second quarter of the last century are of course inseparably linked with the fact that, as against Marx and Marxism's concern with *capitalist* society, Comte is the father (though he himself is only the bastard son of Saint-Simon in this and many other respects) of the sociologists' insistence that they are concerned with 'industrial' or 'modern' society. This is only a 'sociological' version of the political economists' recognition of the 'natural' character of the laws of capitalist economy, which they could not accept as only the laws of a definite and historically limited socio-economic formation. When Marx insisted on the 'social' dimension of all spheres of activity and thought, it was with a dual emphasis: first, to grasp each sphere as only one 'moment' of a contradictory social whole; second, to put an end to the alienation resulting from exploitation, to give a new life to each activity by making it the conscious activity of the associated producers in a classless society; for this, theory must unite with and develop in unity with the proletarian revolution. Sociology, by contrast, accepts and describes the alienation and even dignifies it by presenting it systematically as the 'differentiation and integration of roles' and the 'structuring of orientations'. A Marxist analysis of sociology would demonstrate in what way these supposedly 'general' social phenomena and mechanisms are but an ideological reflection of the surface of capitalist society itself.

The revolutionary political orientation of Marxist social theory, as contrasted with the professed 'value-freedom' of sociology, is fundamental to Marxism. And the perennial pleas for separating Marx's politics from his sociological 'insights' are

as absurdly misplaced as the similar attempts to cleanse Marx's social theories of philosophy.

Marxism is then the dialectical negation of the highest developments in bourgeois thought, and through this of the reality from which that thought flows and of which it forms a necessary part. It is this conception which lies behind Lenin's famous dictum:

'The workers can acquire political consciousness *only from without, i.e.,* only outside of the economic struggle, outside of the sphere of relations between workers and employers. The sphere from which alone it is possible to obtain this knowledge is the sphere of relationships between *all* classes and the state and the government—the sphere of the interrelations between *all classes*.'¹

Here Lenin expresses politically (i.e. in conflict with political opponents who based themselves on the supposed 'spontaneous' development of socialist consciousness from the experience of the working class) the implications for working-class consciousness of the discoveries of Marx. Scientific thought (in the philosophy of Hegel) had arrived at the point where it must accept the conclusion that it could advance further only by grasping actively its real place in the struggle to end the conditions of its own alienated character; this was only possible, Marx said, by grasping the nature of the working class as the agent of the necessary revolutionary change. The working class itself, however, could arrive at the necessary consciousness and thereby the unity necessary for social revolution only by understanding the full historical implications of its role in production and its capacity for abolishing class society. Besides the conclusion that the economic structure is 'basic', and that the class struggle of the proletariat is an objective necessity creating the conditions for socialist revolution, there was necessary the whole theory of historical materialism, the understanding of social development as a unified process, with revolutionary consciousness seizing hold of the meaning of the contradictions at the base of society in order to overthrow it. This body of theory could not come from the working class but only 'from the outside, from bourgeois intellectuals'. From that point on, the development of Marxism takes definite forms in relation to the struggle of the working class, its internal political conflicts, strategy, tactics and organization, nationally and internationally. While Marx and Engels themselves made great contributions in this field, it has of course been most enriched in the twentieth century, above all by the work of Lenin and Trotsky.

Thoroughgoing polemicists

Marx and Engels began their communist political careers with a series of thoroughgoing polemics against other schools of socialism (e.g., in *The Communist Manifesto*). Immediately after the

¹ Lenin, *What is to be Done?*

1848 revolutions they combated the impatience and what amounted to rejection of theory by those who wanted to continue an insurrectionist struggle in unfavourable conditions. They never ceased to participate in and advise the labour movement in every country with which they could establish contact. They insisted—for example, in correspondence with Russian and North American socialists—on a very close and detailed attention to the specific conditions of the history, economy and working-class movement of each particular country. But they always were vigilant against eclecticism and attempts to put aside the theoretical conquests they had made. Writing to Bebel and other leaders of the German Social-Democratic Party in 1879, Marx and Engels returned to a theme which had concerned them as long ago as 1848: the role of bourgeois intellectuals in the revolutionary movement. Then, in the *Manifesto*, they had written:

‘... a small section of the ruling class cuts itself adrift, and joins the revolutionary class... in particular, a portion of the bourgeois ideologists.’

The differences between 1848 and 1879

Now, in 1879, they make a very definite emphasis, and one which shows that Lenin was not inconsistent when he combined his insistence on the decisive importance of intellectuals in the development of revolutionary theory with an implacable struggle against every manifestation of revisionism and intellectual light-mindedness with theory. Marx and Engels go out of their way to warn Bebel and the party leaders that bourgeois and petty-bourgeois intellectuals joining the movement must show that they are willing to *learn* from the party its theory of scientific socialism in the first place. If this is not done, then they inevitably bring with them elements of the *now* decaying and disintegrating German bourgeois culture and philosophy. (In other words, what could be *gained* from bourgeois development before 1848 was the *opposite* of what flowed from it in 1879.)

Lenin stressed that the fight against revisionism (so called after the celebrated controversy in the German Social Democracy over Bernstein's criticisms of Marx in the 1890s) was a recurring and inevitable one. He explained that not only individual thinkers in the working class or the revolutionary Marxist party were affected by particular aspects of bourgeois ideology, but that the development of capitalism constantly modified the relations between the proletariat and the middle classes, the latter carrying into the former their ideas, the ideas of capitalism. Revisionism in the labour movement reflected these class pressures. The nearer a revolutionary situation, the more these ideological differences would be expressed in political and organizational differences. Hence the vital importance in a pre-revolutionary period of consciously combating revisionism. This theoretical fight is the anticipation of all the

problems and divisions which the working class will have to overcome in its actual struggle for power.

The problem of proletarian class-consciousness is often discussed in a very abstract and general manner, instead of through the analysis of the actual historical process by which the Marxist movement and the working-class movement have developed. These are not two distinct processes: the conscious building of revolutionary parties is the highest form of the process by which the proletariat becomes a class ‘for itself’. In the proper place, there is needed a critical analysis of all those writings on the working class and its consciousness which rely on concepts like ‘affluence’, ‘prosperity’, ‘embourgeoisement’, ‘social mobility’, and so on; and this analysis would have to deal with all the superficially very different and ‘radical’ approaches of writers like Marcuse. For the Marxist, such an analysis is of interest as an insight into the ideology of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie, reflecting their own historical situation and its changes, but it would at the same time be important in relation to the development of Marxism itself, because it bears directly on the most characteristic ‘revision’ of Marxism in our epoch: the rejection of the revolutionary role of the working class and of the need for revolutionary parties.

Class, for Marx, is rooted in social relations of production, and cannot be referred in the first place to relations of distribution and consumption or their ideological reflections. In considering the class-consciousness of the proletariat, Marxists are therefore not concerned with the ideas of individual workers about their position in society (no matter how many examples are collected and classified) so much as with the following series of categories: relations of production (sale of labour-power, exploitation); conflict of workers and employers on this basis (economic struggles, trade unions, elementary political battles for economic ends); conflict at the level of class (economic struggles which merge into the conflict between classes, which is organized through the political parties and the struggle for state power); the theoretical and practical struggle to build revolutionary parties of the working class, in conflict with non-revolutionary and counter-revolutionary tendencies in the class and their reflection inside the revolutionary party.

A contemporary example

Thus, for example, a worker in the motor car industry will move through his elemental experience to an understanding of the gap between his own standard of life, income and conditions of work, on the one hand, and the mass of wealth to whose production he contributes, on the other. He will recognize an identity of interest, on this basis, with other wage-workers. ‘Combinations’ or trade unions are the adequate expression of this level of consciousness. To this ‘trade union consciousness’ may correspond other ideological, criti-



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Durkheim
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cal views on various aspects of capitalist society: for example, such consciousness can easily co-exist with that view which lays all the stress on differences or similarities in patterns of consumption; thus, elementary socialistic propaganda of the moralizing type, and modern pessimistic speculation about the workers' consciousness being dulled by the abundance of consumer goods, are types of consciousness which do not penetrate to the basis of class differences and class struggle and therefore cannot facilitate the development of political consciousness.

More 'sophisticated' socialist views of class-consciousness often refer to a process of more or less spontaneous political maturing through a series of economic struggles which take on greater and greater magnitude, finally posing demands which the system cannot meet. Here again the same basic error, from the Marxist standpoint, is made. In all such approaches, the class and its consciousness are seen in terms of a pre-Marxist theory of knowledge and of history. Those who put forward these ideas are unable to escape from a conception in which the separate *individuals* in the class move from their own working and other everyday experience to a higher level of consciousness, in this case political consciousness.

In point of fact an individual worker does not arrive through his own experience at a 'scientific' consciousness of his actual relationships 'at work', let alone his political relationships. It is only when a worker comes into contact with the products, in political programme and action, of Marxist theory in politics—i.e., with the outcome of theoretical works produced in the first place by non-proletarians—that he can conceive of even his own working experience in terms which go beyond those of the prevailing bourgeois ideology. These works take the essence of the experience of the proletariat as well as all developments in economy, politics, science, the arts, etc.

Only a *historical* view of the working class and

of the theory of Marxism, in their mutual interrelations, can produce a theory of *class-consciousness*. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Marx and Engels, working on various fields of learning, as well as analysing the experience of the struggle of the working class to that date, elaborated their theory of socialism. This theory is henceforth the essential component of the process by which the working class becomes a class 'for itself'. As a theory, it had first to penetrate beneath the day-to-day phenomenal forms of capitalist society to the social relations of production. It demonstrated that production under capitalism continues, and society develops, not through any conscious plan, but through the drive to produce surplus value, consequent upon the reduction of labour-power to a commodity, to units of 'abstract labour'. This is the essence of the worker's exploitation, rather than the fact, say, that he does not own the cars he produces. What he produces is essentially surplus value, the augmentation of that same capital which oppresses him.

From these basic relationships, Marx demonstrated the reality of the history of capitalism, the way in which private ownership came to a revolutionary clash with the further development of the forces of production. For a political or socialist consciousness of the struggle against the capitalist class, there is necessary the understanding of this historical tendency of the capitalist system. This means not just an abstract knowledge of the theory of historical materialism, but the concrete analysis of, and active engagement in, the development of the class struggle in all its forms and at all levels, in the period of capitalism's historical decline.

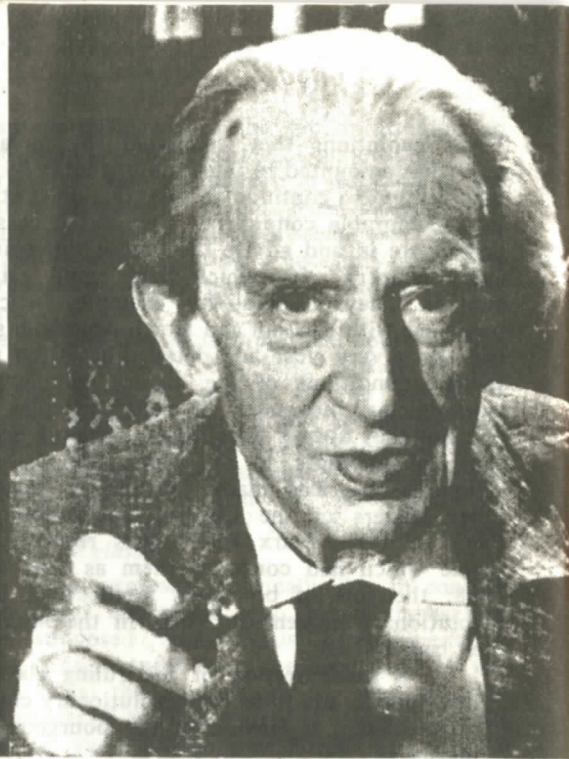
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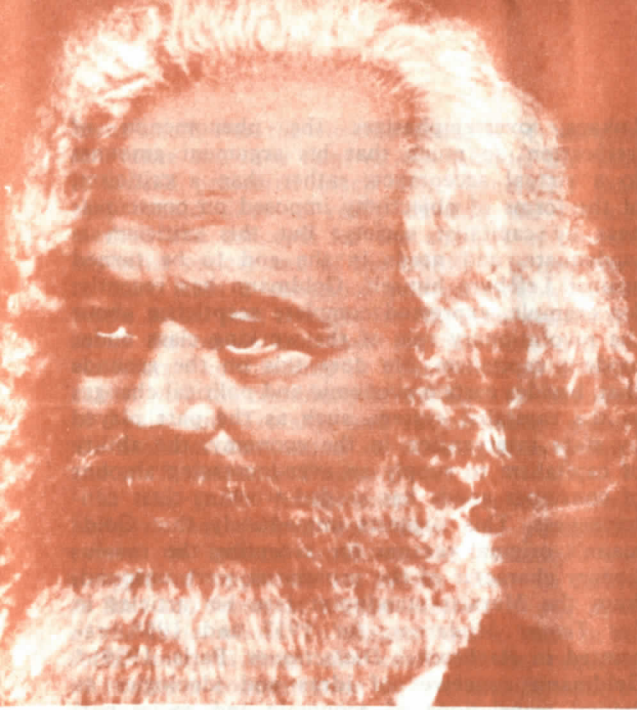
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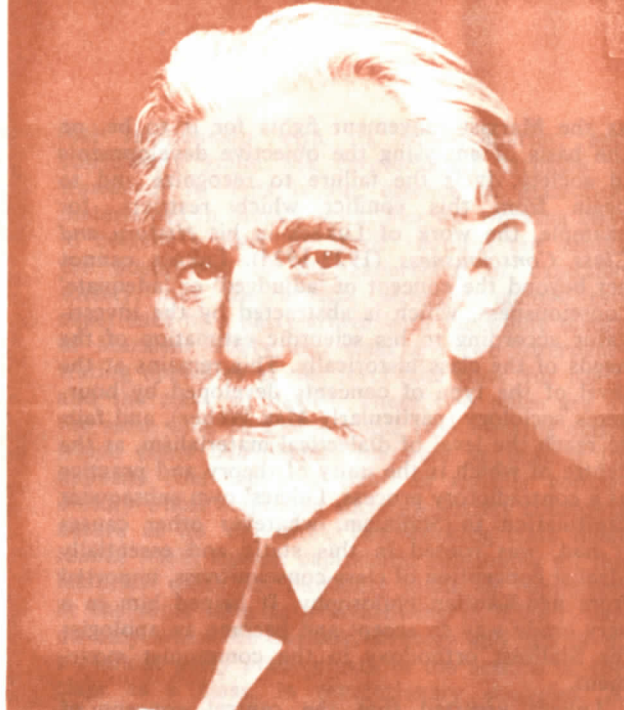
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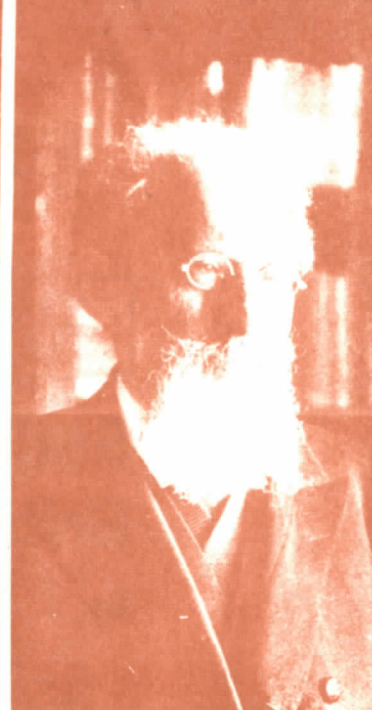
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devoted a series of books and articles to the defence and development of the ideas worked out by Lenin (cf. particularly his *In Defence of Marxism* and *Lessons of October**). Gramsci also worked on important aspects of the relationship between Marxist theory and class consciousness, and developed further the critique of notions of spontaneity.

We have seen that even though the mass of workers experience capitalist exploitation, it is necessary for a struggle to take place between their existing consciousness, on the one hand, and Marxism on the other. This struggle is conducted, as part of the struggle of material forces, by the revolutionary Marxist party. The socialist revolution, like every social revolution, occupies an entire epoch. Its outcome is decided by a series of battles in every country, requiring the developed strategy and tactics of revolutionary parties and a revolutionary international whose whole outlook and experience is guided by the theoretical foundations laid by Marx.

Through the socialist revolution, men will enter 'the realm of freedom', says Marx. Consciousness will then not be the distorted ideology of oppressive social relations, resulting from the product's domination over the producer, but will be the expression of the scientifically-orientated will of the collective producers, of 'socialized humanity'. 'The free development of each will be the condition of the free development of all.'

Already the struggle of the working class against capitalism raises this fundamental question of the relation between subject and object, thus bringing Marx to say that philosophy can realize itself only through the proletariat. Capitalism poses the question in generalized form for the whole class in its relation to the rest of society, and thus demands nothing less than a revolutionary solution:

'... the labour employed on the products appears here as *the value* of those products, as a material quality possessed by them.'²

This 'reification', the value-form, in which a social relation between men in their most fundamental activity is transformed into a 'thing' standing outside and against men, is specific to the way in which the capitalist system continues the enslavement of man by man. This 'topsy-turvy world' becomes in sociology a world of 'social facts', of 'roles', faithfully recorded as the necessary framework of experience.

Just as the working class in its struggle must reject this split between subject and object as a threat to its very humanity, so must Marxist theory penetrate beneath it and point the way to its internal contradictions and historical fate. The real relation between the working class and its product is obscured in the first place by the fact that the labour appears to have been paid for in wages, and that there the matter ends. Marx says that this illusion of wages as the proper reward for labour is the key to all the ideology of capitalism (*Capital*, Vol 1, p 550). Marx exploded this illusion in theory, and thus opened the path for its being exploded in practice. That path leads from trade union consciousness (a fair day's pay for a fair day's work!) to socialist consciousness.

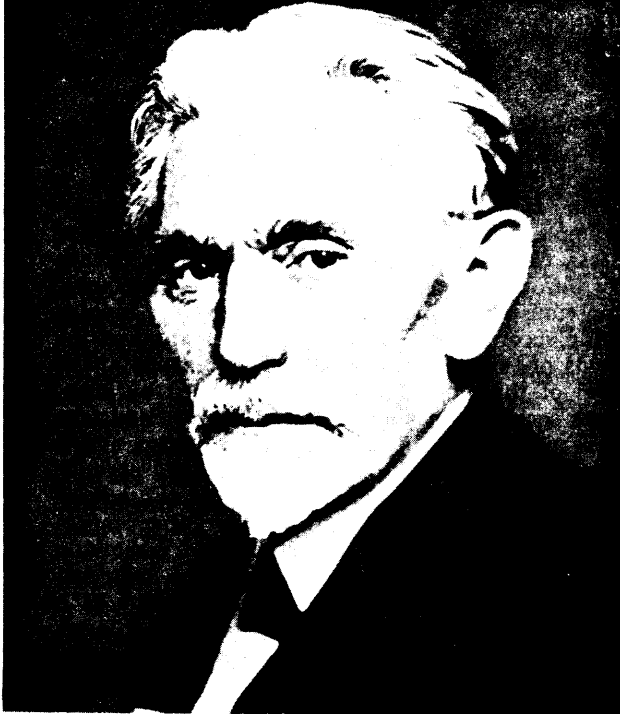
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as the Marxist movement fights for it to be, on the basis of analysing the objective developments in society. It is the failure to recognize and to begin from this conflict which restricts, for example, the work of Lukacs in his *History and Class Consciousness* (1923-1924). Lukacs cannot get beyond the concept of 'adjudged' or 'adequate' consciousness, which is abstracted by the investigator according to his scientific estimation of the needs of the class historically. This remains at the level of the type of concepts developed by bourgeois sociology (particularly Max Weber), and fails to reach the level of dialectical materialism, at the centre of which is the unity of theory and practice as a contradictory process. Lukacs' own subsequent capitulation to Stalinism, whatever other causes it had, was rooted in this static and essentially idealist conception of class-consciousness, imported from neo-Kantian philosophy. It helped him in a very crude way to accept and become an apologist for Stalinist orthodoxy in the communist movement.

Lukacs asserted that the central concept of dialectics is 'totality'; and here again he shows the inadequacy of his outlook for a theory of class-consciousness. For Marx, the struggle, the unity and the interpenetration of opposites is the essence of dialectics, and this dialectic is materialist, so that for Marxists the notion of totality must have a meaning different from that presented by Lukacs. 'The unity of the world consists in its materiality,' wrote Engels. It is characteristic of Lukacs' agnosticism on the question of the objective nature of the external world (in *History and Class Consciousness*) that he must take 'totality' and the proletariat's grasp of this totality as an abstraction. Only a view of the 'unity' or 'totality' of the objective world of nature and society which sees this unity as arising continuously from a changing conflict of material opposites can form the basis of 'revolutionary practice', the *sine qua non* of Marx's theory of knowledge.

Lefebvre's critique of Goldmann

Henri Lefebvre (in his *The Sociology of Marx*, Allen Lane, the Penguin Press, 1968, and elsewhere) has criticized Lukacs for his stress on 'totality' and has argued that 'the conflict of opposites' is in fact the core of dialectics. However, in Lefebvre's work this correct criticism remains purely abstract, and leads him eventually to Utopianism. He starts from the concept of a struggle of opposites, but leaves it at the level of the very *general* concepts of *praxis* and *alienation*. These terms, taken from Marx's early work, enable Lefebvre to make often penetrating exposés of capitalist culture, but they remain altogether too abstract for a revolutionary theory of class-consciousness. The theory remains purely critical, aloof from practice, i.e., from the activity of the class and the fight for a working-class leadership on a Marxist basis.

Lefebvre criticizes, for example, Lucien Goldmann, because the latter, developing the work of

Lukacs, over-emphasizes the phenomenon of 'reification' so much that his argument amounts to a virtual acceptance, rather than a criticism, of the forms of objectivity imposed on consciousness by capitalist society. But this criticism is inadequate, and needs in the end to be turned against Lefebvre himself. Goldmann has recently, for example, expressed complete scepticism about the revolutionary role of the working class under modern capitalism. He does this on the grounds that, besides certain economic and political changes in the capitalist system, such as the part played by state intervention in the economy, the ability of capitalism to supply an ever-increasing amount of consumer goods has eroded working-class consciousness. This suggests immediately that Goldmann's original reasons for accepting the revolutionary character of the proletariat were unsound, from the Marxist standpoint (see his articles in *Les Temps Modernes*, for 1957 and 1958, reprinted in *Recherches Dialectiques*, Paris, 1959).* Goldmann conceives of ideas and ideologies as mental translations of economic and social patterns, rather than as the outcome of the struggles of the class at all levels of social reality (see chapter VI above), and this has provided an avenue for him to accept the fashionable 'structuralist' school of idealism in France.

Lefebvre and the 'young Marx'

The actual contradictory process of the struggle for revolutionary consciousness, the contradiction between theory and practice, between party and class and, concretely, the struggle of tendencies within the labour movement and within the revolutionary party, and the class bases of these struggles—all these are almost completely lacking in any of the often interesting commentaries of these writers, whose works appeal so much to those who look for some pure or 'restored' Marxism, rediscovered by removing all the results of a century and more of bitter struggle as the theory has taken on flesh and blood. The 'young Marx' is the usual gospel of this faith. Instead, it is in the spirit of Marx himself to aim for a Marxism which is rich and concrete, and at the same time war-like, having worked over and 'negated' all the contradictory developments in the proletarian revolution, and above all in the communist move-

* A belated explanation is necessary to our readers concerning an article by Frank Girling in *Fourth International's* predecessor *Labour Review* (Vol V, No. 2, June-July 1960). Entitled 'Alienation and the Working Class', this article presents a summary of certain aspects of Marx's theory of fetishism and exploitation. Not to put too fine a point on the matter, Girling translated, and presented as his own, a large part of the Goldmann article to which we here refer. He took the precaution of omitting certain openly revisionist formulations by Goldmann on supposed changes in capitalism and in the role of the working class since the death of Marx. Girling himself left the Socialist Labour League in 1962.

ment itself. For the various 'schools' of Marxism in France and their faint echoes outside, the issue is indeed presented much more concretely than they would like: to really develop the Marxist method and concepts for the analysis of modern capitalist society and of the USSR, it is necessary to start from a conscious reintegration with the whole actual past struggle for Marxism against the social democrats and then the Stalinists and revisionists who distorted it. That means an identification with the continuity of the fight for Marxism of Lenin and Trotsky, and in particular against the Stalinist domination of working-class politics and of 'Marxism' in France.

In the most fundamental theoretical terms, Lefèbvre has missed out what was potentially correct in Lukacs' insistence on 'totality': the struggle of opposites in society must be taken as first and foremost a class conflict, at the level of the social whole. To analyse, and to start in all social analyses from this contradiction, requires of course a concentration on the specific contradictions of capitalism and of the development of the working class and its revolutionary consciousness within capitalism. Marx himself (as Naville particularly has stressed in his *De l'Alienation à la Jouissance*) developed his ideas from the general notions of *praxis* and *alienation* of humanity in his early works to the specific analysis of the historically developing social relations of capitalism, out of which grew all the 'praxis' and 'alienation' of modern man. By returning to the early Marx for the key to capitalist society today, Lefèbvre opens the door to a reformist and Utopian critique of culture, instead of a consistent and revolutionary theory and practice, in conflict with the Stalinist distortion of Marxism in every field. His works *Critique de la Vie Quotidienne* (Vol II, 1960, Editions de L'Arche) and *Introduction à la Modernité* (Editions de Minuit, 1962) reveal this tendency very clearly: a searching for a 'poetic' quality in particular aspects of life, a contrast between creative and repetitive actions which is made a more general and important distinction than the specific historical contradictions of capitalism and the tasks of revolutionary transformation which they pose to the working class and to Marxists.

Our argument here does not simplify the question of class-consciousness. On the contrary, it opens up a prospect which cannot be settled purely by words. Theory must become conscious of its

real relationship with its subject-matter, and consciously guide the revolutionary struggle to transform it. This is the essence of dialectical materialism in Marx's work. For the working class to become a class 'for itself' requires not simply the absorption of the experience of capitalist society, but the critical struggle against this experience by a party armed with the whole theory of Marxism. Party and class are two interpenetrating opposites at one level (the class 'for itself' and the class 'in itself'). These two poles are at the same time part of a whole (the working class) which itself constitutes one pole as against its opposite (the capitalist class) in another contradictory whole (capitalist society). Society confronts nature as its 'opposite'. The working class must realize itself, against capitalism, subsuming all the historical gains for humanity made by capitalism at the same time as overthrowing it. This it can do only when the outlook, strategy and tactics of a Marxist party predominate in the actions of the class as a class, in revolutionary struggles. A similar process is necessary within the party: only if it can study, unify and transform through struggle all the experiences of the class can its theory be saved from one-sidedness, dogma and return to idealism. Within the Marxist party, once again we have a struggle of opposites, a struggle for the development of Marxist theory and its application to the struggles of the proletariat, in constant struggle against every mode of adaptation to the existing position of the working class, its disunity, fragmentation, etc., those aspects of its situation which predispose it towards acceptance of its oppression. Then theory itself must also be considered as a struggle of opposites. We have seen that at every level, each pole of a unity of opposites contains a recapitulation of the total opposition within itself (e.g. the party has both its own essence and its opposite *within* it and not only as an external opposite, etc.). Marxist theory develops by proving the 'concreteness' of its abstractions against the apparent concreteness (really abstractness, because abstracted from the changing forces which produce them) of uncritically accepted empirical reality. It does this through a struggle to change that reality, capitalism, by placing itself politically in a relation of political consciousness, leadership, with the working class. Marxism is this struggle: it is not a sociology or an abstract theoretical system of any kind.

REVIEW ARTICLE

Stalinism, Liberalism and British History

by T. Brotherstone

Geoffrey Best, *Mid-Victorian Britain 1851-1875*.

Noreen Branson and Margot Heinemann, *Britain in the Nineteen-Thirties*. (*The History of British Society*, edited by E. J. Hobsbawm. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, World University Library, London, 1971, £1.50 per volume in paperback.)

AS CAPITALISM'S crisis deepens and the working class prepares for power, so bourgeois scholarship declines. Genuine attempts to understand the past in an all-sided way have to be abandoned for one-sided versions which do not challenge the (for the bourgeoisie) comfortable but entirely unhistorical assumption that capitalism is a fixed and eternal system.

The most honest 'liberal' scholars respond to this situation by burying themselves in small-scale, detailed studies of particular events, which do nobody any harm and may provide Marxists with useful information—especially when they are researched with that admirable, if sometimes rather staggering, diligence which is the best feature of liberal scholarship.

But a drowning bourgeoisie, accustomed to regard itself as cultured, demands more than this to console it in its dying moments. Before it sinks for the last time it has to see its own past flow before its eyes, presented in the most subjective fashion to provide maximum consolation.

Demand for history books is therefore at present high, the publishers have their instructions from the market, and all but the most sincere and serious of the scholars are queuing up at the doors of the publishing houses, ballpoint pens and portable typewriters at the ready. At best the general studies of the past which result display a frivolous obsession with style, which would have made the genuine stylists of bourgeois scholarship (especially in the 18th and 19th centuries) turn in their graves. (It's not what you say, it's the way that you say it.) At worst these studies patch together subjective 'interpretations' which mischievously distort

historical reality and serve the cause of perpetuating illusions and limited conceptions, upon which reaction thrives.

The series of which two early volumes are here reviewed displays both tendencies. It also opens the way for some analysis of the role of Stalinism in trying to help bourgeois scholarship out of its dilemma: how to write serious history without overcoming the intellectual blockage caused by the (to the bourgeoisie) necessary assumption of the fixed nature of capitalist society, and hence raising the question of the proletarian struggle for power.

★

E. J. Hobsbawm, general editor of *The History of British Society*, is the leading historian in the British Stalinist movement, one of a handful of intellectuals who joined the CP in the 1930s and 1940s and did not leave in the 1950s. He has kept his intellectual left foot in the Stalinist camp, contributing regularly to its 'theoretical' journal, *Marxism Today*, and his right foot (more elegantly shod) in the liberal debating chambers of the scholarly societies and university seminars.

That he presents two distinct 'images' was clearly brought out in his recent contributions to the debate on the role of the Labour Aristocracy in the 19th century British labour movement. In his academic book, *Labouring Men* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1964) we were presented with a scholarly, amply documented, empirical study purporting to find out who the Labour Aristocrats were, how many of them were there, what did they do, what did they earn, etc. Marxist theoretical writing on the

subject was relegated to the role of a few comments providing an introductory 'framework'. (For a criticism of the Stalinist view of the 19th century Labour Aristocracy, see P. Jeffries, *Workers Press*, May 19, 1970.)

But in his *Marxism Today* article, 'Lenin and the Aristocracy of Labour' (*MT*, XIV, July 7, 1970) none of the findings of this painstaking research was presented. For his Stalinist comrades Hobsbawm confined himself to selectively quoting Lenin in the style originated by Stalin himself. No references were given, which was not surprising, since Hobsbawm's explicit intention was to detach Lenin's contribution to the role of the Labour Aristocracy from his—Lenin's—(Marxist) understanding of the dominance of bourgeois ideology over the working class in capitalist society (p. 208). This led to the conception that:

'Today...it is possible to separate what is of permanent relevance [to whom?] in Lenin's argument from what reflects the limits of his information or the requirements of a special political situation...' (p. 210).

Leaving aside the implications of the Stalinist formulation that Marxist analysis is dictated by 'the requirements of a special political situation', it is clear that Hobsbawm's stress on the limits of Lenin's 'information' opened the way for the argument that since Lenin (naturally) had no information about the British labour movement in the 1970s his writings on the reactionary role of the Labour Aristocracy and the trade union bureaucracy which was recruited from it are of limited 'permanent relevance'. This revelation

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AS CAPITALISM'S crisis deepens and the working class prepares for power, so bourgeois scholarship declines. Genuine attempts to understand the past in an all-sided way have to be abandoned for one-sided versions which do not challenge the (for the bourgeoisie) comfortable but entirely unhistorical assumption that capitalism is a fixed and eternal system.

The most honest 'liberal' scholars respond to this situation by burying themselves in small-scale, detailed studies of particular events, which do nobody any harm and may provide Marxists with useful information—especially when they are researched with that admirable, if sometimes rather staggering, diligence which is the best feature of liberal scholarship.

But a drowning bourgeoisie, accustomed to regard itself as cultured, demands more than this to console it in its dying moments. Before it sinks for the last time it has to see its own past flow before its eyes, presented in the most subjective fashion to provide maximum consolation.

Demand for history books is therefore at present high, the publishers have their instructions from the market, and all but the most sincere and serious of the scholars are queuing up at the doors of the publishing houses, ballpoint pens and portable typewriters at the ready. At best the general studies of the past which result display a frivolous obsession with style, which would have made the genuine stylists of bourgeois scholarship (especially in the 18th and 19th centuries) turn in their graves. (It's not what you say, it's the way that you say it.) At worst these studies patch together subjective 'interpretations' which mischievously distort

historical reality and serve the cause of perpetuating illusions and limited conceptions, upon which reaction thrives.

The series of which two early volumes are here reviewed displays both tendencies. It also opens the way for some analysis of the role of Stalinism in trying to help bourgeois scholarship out of its dilemma: how to write serious history without overcoming the intellectual blockage caused by the (to the bourgeoisie) necessary assumption of the fixed nature of capitalist society, and hence raising the question of the proletarian struggle for power.

★

E. J. Hobsbawm, general editor of *The History of British Society*, is the leading historian in the British Stalinist movement, one of a handful of intellectuals who joined the CP in the 1930s and 1940s and did not leave in the 1950s. He has kept his intellectual left foot in the Stalinist camp, contributing regularly to its 'theoretical' journal, *Marxism Today*, and his right foot (more elegantly shod) in the liberal debating chambers of the scholarly societies and university seminars.

That he presents two distinct 'images' was clearly brought out in his recent contributions to the debate on the role of the Labour Aristocracy in the 19th century British labour movement. In his academic book, *Labouring Men* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1964) we were presented with a scholarly, amply documented, empirical study purporting to find out who the Labour Aristocrats were, how many of them were there, what did they do, what did they earn, etc. Marxist theoretical writing on the

subject was relegated to the role of a few comments providing an introductory 'framework'. (For a criticism of the Stalinist view of the 19th century Labour Aristocracy, see P. Jeffries, *Workers Press*, May 19, 1970.)

But in his *Marxism Today* article, 'Lenin and the Aristocracy of Labour' (MT, XIV, July 7, 1970) none of the findings of this painstaking research was presented. For his Stalinist comrades Hobsbawm confined himself to selectively quoting Lenin in the style originated by Stalin himself. No references were given, which was not surprising, since Hobsbawm's explicit intention was to detach Lenin's contribution on the role of the Labour Aristocracy from his—Lenin's—(Marxist) understanding of the dominance of bourgeois ideology over the working class in capitalist society (p. 208). This led to the conception that:

'Today... it is possible to separate what is of permanent relevance [to whom?] in Lenin's argument from what reflects the limits of his information or the requirements of a special political situation...' (p. 210).

Leaving aside the implications of the Stalinist formulation that Marxist analysis is dictated by 'the requirements of a special political situation', it is clear that Hobsbawm's stress on the limits of Lenin's 'information' opened the way for the argument that since Lenin (naturally) had no information about the British labour movement in the 1970s his writings on the reactionary role of the Labour Aristocracy and the trade union bureaucracy which was recruited from it are of limited 'permanent relevance'. This revelation

must have been a relief to a Stalinist leadership falling over backwards to cement its treacherous and opportunist alliance with the left bureaucrats in the trade union movement today.

The new series, which Hobsbawm has edited, carries his career a stage further. Although he wrote neither of the books reviewed here himself, as general editor he is responsible for the choice of authors. For the two 19th century volumes which have so far appeared he has turned to eminent academic colleagues, leading liberal historians Professors J. F. C. Harrison and G. F. A. Best. For the 1930s, however, Hobsbawm has chosen political colleagues. Noreen Branson edits *Labour Research*, a journal closely connected with the Stalinist movement; and Margot Heinemann, now a university teacher, once had the same job. In *Britain in the Nineteen-Thirties*, the acknowledgements (p. x) are a roll-call of CP members and associates; the (very) brief bibliography (pp. 326-328) reads more like a list of books on the shelf of an ageing radical making a half-hearted attempt to keep up-to-date, than any sort of check-list of recent research.

★

In this series, Hobsbawm has attempted to introduce his intellectual left foot to his intellectual right foot. What becomes increasingly clear is the nature of the 'contribution' which Stalinism has made not only to continued physical domination of the bourgeoisie over the working class, but also to the domination of bourgeois thought-control over the minds of historians and other intellectuals. Stalinist historians (including those who left the CP in protest against the effects of Stalinism without ever settling accounts with its causes) have made valuable contributions to knowledge through their research work (ex-CPers Christopher Hill's *God's Englishman*, and E. P. Thompson's *Making of the English Working Class* spring to mind). But their method is essentially that of the liberal empiricist with certain 'Marxist insights' added on to help them over the stifling uncertainties which increasingly bar the most honest liberal scholars from any meaningful generalization.

Hill announced the programme of this self-styled 'Marxist' school of history-writing in 1948 in an article which set out to 'suggest certain ways in which a better understanding of Marxism would be of assistance to historians and students of history at the present day'. (*Modern Quarterly*, 3, 1947-1948, p. 52.) Historical materialism was to be reduced to a few tips for bewildered (bourgeois) historians, divorced from the struggle of the working class for power.

Hobsbawm carried the same approach further and placed it on the patriotic basis so beloved of the exponents of separate national roads to socialism in *Marxist Quarterly* (2, 1955, p. 25):

'Marxists... believe that their method alone enables us to provide a successor to the old "Liberal-Radical" view of British history

which will be adequate in science and scholarship, while giving the citizens of this country a coherent picture of our national development and answering their questions.'

In other words the standard patriotic, one-sided, and increasingly reactionary historical method of the liberal bourgeoisie in Britain (Whig history) had become out-of-date: Marxism was the method through which a more credible version could be patched together.

Hobsbawm soothed the doubtless troubled minds of his academic colleagues who might have had some inkling that Marxism was something to do with the proletarian struggle for power. That possibility was not mentioned in his article, and he concluded reassuringly:

'There is room for discussion and co-operation between Marxists and non-Marxists... [on the ground of dissatisfaction] with the lack of a general view of the British people's progress and with the marked conservative bias—implicit or explicit—of much history-writing of the past twenty-five years.'

The most recent results of that discussion—which might have been entitled, 'How Can Marxism Help Bourgeois Scholarship Out of Its Impasse Without Disturbing the Foundations of Bourgeois Society?'—are seen in the series now under review, for which Hobsbawm has grand-paternal responsibility. But it may be noted in passing that the Hobsbawm synthesis has not, in its most recent version, been greeted with much favour by that maverick radical-reactionary spokesman of the non-conformist intellectual Establishment, A. J. P. Taylor: in the *Observer* (March 21, 1971) he announced that the Harrison and Best volumes made him proud to be British, but dismissed Branson and Heinemann as a communist tract!

Stalinist apology would be nearer the mark. A whole chapter on the unemployed scarcely mentions the role of the CP in the NUWM, and certainly makes no analysis of the disastrous policy of setting up a separate unemployed workers' movement instead of uniting the working class by demanding that the trade unions organize the unemployed. Mild criticism of the CP's sectarian 'left turn' in the late 1920s is used not to uncover the historical roots of the Stalinist 'zig-zags' of this period, but to apologise for the pre-1926 policy of covering up for the lefts on the TUC leadership, which led to the treacherous CP slogan 'All Power to the General Council' in the General Strike (p. 88).

★

No reference is made to the requirements of international Stalinism which dictated not only the left turn of the late 1920s, but also the popular front policies after 1935—praised by Branson and Heinemann, their eyes firmly fixed on the present Stalinist line, as leading to 'a good deal of practical unity on the left from 1935 until 1939' (p. 91). Even when Branson and Heinemann mention the role of CPers in the International Brigade in the Spanish Civil War they present this as simply an interesting

contribution of the British people to international radicalism, and have the effrontery to ignore altogether the Stalinist policies which ensured that the sacrifice of these comrades was to be futile.

Indeed so firmly is the Branson-Heinemann volume set in the philistine traditions of British radicalism that they are incapable—despite *sotto voce* lip-service to Marxism—of offering any serious analysis of the context of international capitalist crisis in which the history of British society in the 1930s must be set if it is to be understood. All we get here is the standard school-textbook-type introductory chapters on economic and political background, as a prelude to a schematically arranged succession of chapters on various 'aspects' of the thirties, into which a certain amount of more or less useful information is fitted.

The idealist method of Branson and Heinemann means that they see the past as a fixed pageant which they describe in a manner quite divorced from any serious analysis of the real movement of forces in capitalist society. Hence the significance of the 'thirties'—a living warning of what decadent capitalism is—becomes completely obliterated in their complacent assumption that it was all just an unpleasant experience in the history of the British people which can never happen again because *nobody* (including the capitalists, presumably) would put up with it. The book ends with the hoary cliché that the Second World War welded the British people together and made them determined never to return to the conditions of the 1930s (p. 325). This is petty-bourgeois idealism carried to the most cynical extreme. No analysis of the forces which caused the depression or the war: instead a great deal of 'progressive' wishful thinking designed to divert the working class and its potential allies from grasping that the programme for survival of capitalism today is precisely a return to the thirties—and under historical conditions in which the changed position of British capitalism in the world places fascism as well as mass unemployment on the agenda.

★

But Branson and Heinemann cannot face up to historical lessons which pose the question of the working class taking the power in Britain, because that is something that can only occur if the lie-machine of Stalinism and its allies is smashed by the working class under revolutionary leadership.

'Mid-Victorian Britain' should be a much more comfortable theme for bourgeois historians to deal with than the 1930s. But, though Professor Best admits that the ground he covers is well-trodden by other historians (p. xiii), he makes a constant pretence of lack of confidence in approaching his task. This is because he is determinedly wedded to the methods of empiricism and impressionism. He seeks an 'ideal, "agreed" definition and explanation of mid-Victorian British society' (p. xiii), but states, that:

'History knows no way of approach-

ing that ideal goal but by the trial-and-error method of repeated range-finding salvos from historians with firm enough attitudes and large enough vision to enable them (perhaps) to measure range and enforce pattern and proportion . . . (p. xiv).

The empirical method of the British bourgeoisie, once a progressive force in struggle against the metaphysical imperatives of the feudal social order, has reached its end-point of reactionary idealism. For all his hopes for an agreed version of history in the distant future, Best is really saying that the history of British society cannot be grasped by anyone; all we can hope for is an endless succession of 'patterns' of events dreamt up in the minds of historians. The worthy professor's intensive study of the period he writes about, he consistently suggests, in no way qualifies him to understand the past any better than anyone else. In this way he absolves himself from any responsibility to educate his readers. The more you know, evidently, the less you understand. Best ends his book with an extraordinary brazen statement of ignorance, greatly praised by A. J. P. Taylor in his *Observer* review: 'We are all in the dark.' A remarkably frank admission of the death of liberal scholarship.

The point is, of course, that there are certain intellectual candles (or 200 watt bulbs) which Best, isolated from the real movement of forces in capitalist society because he is unable to grasp the need for the working class to overthrow capitalism, deliberately ignores. His index contains the names of a host of Victorian intellectuals and of present-day scholars whose names are unlikely to ignite even a spark of recognition outside the 'specialist circles' of the university. But two well-known names are conspicuously absent—those of the greatest 'mid-Victorian scholars' of all: Marx and Engels.

References to Marxism are not entirely absent from the book, however, and when they come, they are an apt reflection of the all-pervasive anxieties of the liberal bourgeoisie today. Best's

central theme is of course the relative social calm of this period of British history (1851-1875), when, on the basis of world-leadership in industrialization, the British bourgeoisie had the resources to 'buy off' a whole layer in the working class—the 'labour aristocracy'. Best gives some excellent contemporary quotations to show the effects of this: a complacent bourgeoisie able to use the leftovers of the feudal aristocracy to occupy the positions of government, and hence to preside over a social order giving the appearance of a semi-feudal stability, behind which the bourgeoisie proceeded on their forward profit-making march at the expense of the mass of the working class.

★

Although Best's book scarcely mentions the working class (in the section 'The Making of Livings' he attempts to analyse it out of existence), what constantly lurks beneath the surface of his 'impressions', and what clearly disturbs his intellectual equilibrium, is the essentially relative and temporary nature of this period of class peace. Despite the calm, he writes, there were jarring notes, including 'a lot of drunkenness, violence, harshness and selfishness . . .' and also 'some plain Marxist class hostility [!]' (p. 232). And the whole edifice of mid-Victorian stability was crumbling, he admits, by the end of his period,

' . . . eroded by the semi-subterranean forces of economic and social change [the working class?], some of which we have seen welling up (or resurfacing) during the later sixties and early seventies. Of the major forces of this ultimately irresistible complex, only Marxist socialism and militant feminism were not yet conspicuous by 1875' (p. 284).

Reality here peeps through the liberal scholar's impressionism, hostility to Marxism and fear of the working class. The period of British history when Lord Palmerston could claim to lead 'a nation in which every class of society accepts with cheerfulness the lot which providence has assigned to it; while at the same time each individual of each

class is constantly trying to raise himself in the social scale, not by violence and illegality, but by preserving good conduct and by the steady and energetic exertion of the moral and intellectual faculties with which his creator has endowed him', was a brief one. The revolutionary traditions of the British working class were temporarily, though not completely, submerged after the defeat of Chartism in 1848. They were already re-emerging under impact of the world crisis of capitalism beginning in the 1870s. And under the impact of the infinitely intensified crisis of the 1970s these traditions come surging to the surface more dramatically than ever before, finding material expression in the largest working-class demonstration on February 21, 1971 since the days of Chartism, and finding conscious expression in the struggles of the *Workers Press*.

It is this movement of forces which accounts for the confusion of liberal scholarship so clearly expressed by Best's book. Only through a turn to the working class today, which means building the revolutionary party, can the realities of British history be grasped unfettered by the shackles of bourgeois idealism. Best is writing about the heyday of a doomed society. Because he cannot see the revolutionary role of the working class in that society, he is reduced, for all his voluminous learning, to naïve expressions of humility and ultimately an admission of total ignorance.

Yet for all his impressionism certain aspects of reality peep through. Best's book lacks the mechanistic approach, the conscious omissions and distortions of the Stalinist-dominated Branson-Heinemann volume. What we have in this series clearly presented are the alternatives placed before anti-revolutionary scholars today, if they seek to avoid mere antiquarianism, and to make some pretence of explaining the world: open admission of deepening confusion, or open distortion.

It is fitting that a leading Stalinist academic should preside over the most recent attempt in the field of history to synthesize the two approaches.

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