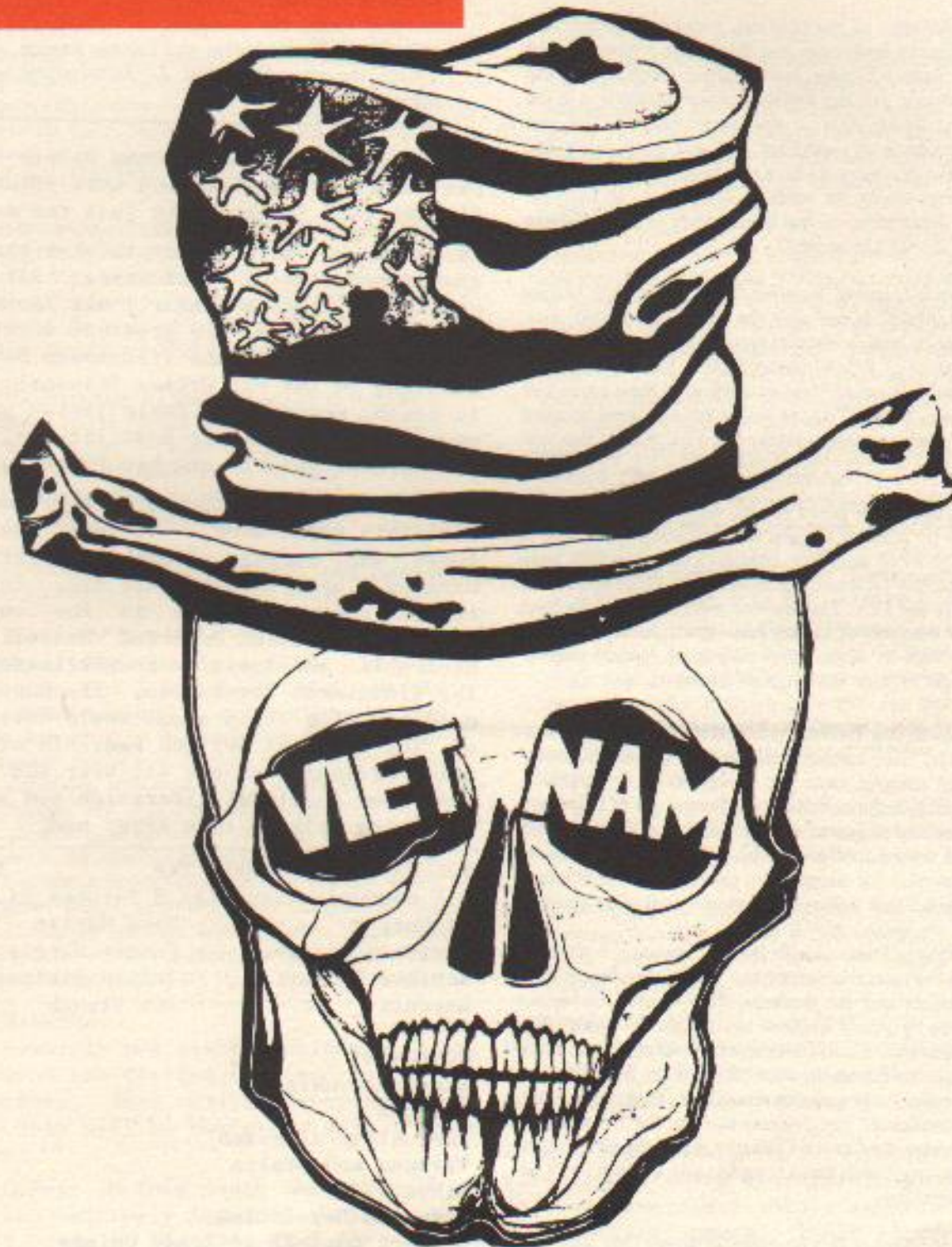


International

A SURVEY OF BRITISH AND
WORLD AFFAIRS

Algerian Revolution



1/6

Czechoslovakia

(A Declaration of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International)

The "normalisation" of the situation in Czechoslovakia is following the logic of the process which began in August 1968 with the invasion of Soviet and other "allied" troops of the Warsaw pact. After the elimination of Dubcek from the government, after the purge of the Central Committee, the repression has been generalised with the discovery of a "Trotskyist plot". Soviet "historians" who completed their studies in the Soviet KGB and had previously helped prepare the Slansky trial, have just arrived in Prague.

The reactionary character of the political, social and cultural line of the Kosygin-Breznev leadership and those who follow it in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, is completely revealed by these events. The real reason for the invasion of Czechoslovakia in the summer of 1968 is crystal clear: it was not provoked by any real danger of the restoration of capitalism, but was the bureaucratic response to the example being set by a people taking serious steps to achieve their aspirations for socialist democracy, an example dangerous to the domination of the bureaucracy in all of Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union itself.

Formally, the accused cannot even be called "plotters". During the short "Prague spring" as well as in the following months, they acted fully in the open, widely distributing documents they edited, first as the Movement of Revolutionary Youth, then as the Revolutionary Socialist Party—even signing them with their name and address. If there was a "plot" those guilty are not these accused militants, but those who secretly prepared and helped the invasion of Czechoslovakia.

The charges themselves are based on the old Stalinist model, an amalgam of frame-up criminal charges and political accusations. It is not necessary to dwell upon the criminal charges, which were lifted right out of the infamous Moscow trials: sabotage, arson, collaboration with the CIA. The accused were supposed to have received fabulous amounts of money from the CIA—although apparently only enough to allow them to publish leaflets mimeographed on a couple of poor mimeograph machines.

The accusations of having received political material (books, brochures, newspapers) from revolutionary groups in foreign countries is particularly striking, since this charge comes from gentlemen who, after having been kicked out by the people of their own country, were installed in power not by political propaganda but by half a million armed foreigners who entered the country by surprise. This is normal for people who cannot lead an "ideological struggle" without first calling upon the services of the censor.

The following are the political charges levelled against the accused: they extol "anti-bureaucratic revolution", they developed links between the students and the workers, they wanted to replace the police and army by armed workers' units in the factories, they thought the programme of anti-bureaucratic revolution was applicable to other Eastern European countries and the Soviet Union, and they were for the world socialist revolution. That, apparently, is an "anti-constitutional" programme. But for the Kremlin and its servants to change the Central Committee and the government of a "brother country" with tanks is apparently a perfectly "constitutional" undertaking.

In fact, the accused have in this programme shown that they have drawn the lesson of the Dubcek experience: one cannot hope for a reform of the bureaucracy which will lead to socialist demo-

cracy. The overthrow of the bureaucratic power is the only way. The real "crime" of the accused is to have formulated this programme at a moment when the men in the Kremlin are panicky about what is ripening in the Soviet Union itself.

The United Secretariat of the Fourth International calls on all the workers, students, vanguard intellectuals and especially those Communist Parties and communist militants who have denounced the invasion of Czechoslovakia, to demand the release of the revolutionary militants imprisoned in that country. They should understand that the arrest of these militants is nothing less than the beginning of a campaign of repression which will strike the majority of the leading Czechoslovakian Communist Party cadres of the January-August 1968 period, and the majority of the leadership elected at the 14th Congress of the Party. Immediate action must be taken against the resurgence of Stalinism and to help all those who, in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, aspire to lead to victory the struggle against the bureaucracy and for socialist democracy.

Elsewhere the press of the Fourth International has summed up the life and work of Bertrand Russell, we want to deal with just one aspect.

The death of this great thinker brought out the customary rush of obituaries. All those in the capitalist press and nearly all those in the left journals omitted his greatest work: his endeavours in support of the Vietnamese Revolution culminating in the War Crimes Tribunal. Thus even in death, despite all their lavish praise, these people continued their hostility to the progressive work of Russell and his Peace Foundation.

For our part we are proud to have been associated with this great work. We are contemptuous of those who, because of Russell's differences with Marxism, seek to denigrate him. In the greatest revolutionary struggle in the world since the Chinese Revolution Bertrand Russell's role was honorable and decisive in mobilising support for the Vietnamese Revolution. If Russell had done nothing else this alone would have made him one of the greatest British radicals of all time. We join ordinary people all over the world struggling for national liberation and social advance in paying tribute to a great man.

VOLUME THREE, NUMBER TWO

FEBRUARY 1970

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UNITED ACTION AGAINST BRITISH COMPLICITY

Prime Minister Wilson has made his pilgrimage to Washington. On the day of his departure for discussions with war criminal Nixon, some 2,000 demonstrators, according to press reports, organised by the Vietnam Solidarity Committee and supporting organisations, marched to Downing Street in a torchlight demonstration to express opposition to Wilson's visit as a symbol of the British Government's complicity in the Vietnam war.

Since then the January 28th magazine section of the *Daily Mirror* has dramatically revealed the roots of British complicity in Vietnam. No one is now able to deny the sordid and direct role of British imperialism in the initial moves by French and American imperialism at the end of the second World War, to crush the national liberation struggle of the Vietnamese people.

The most recent revelations contained in the February 8th issue of *The People*, concerning British atrocities against Malaysian peasants similar to the Song My massacre—which took place about twenty years ago—go further in uncovering Britain's real role in South East Asia and the years of British military intervention against the colonial revolution, behind Wilson's Washington visit.

The publication of these facts by the capitalist press testifies to the sensitivity of the British people to these questions. Recent polls indicated that 6 out of 10 people in Britain had sympathy with the Vietnamese over the Americans in Vietnam. The figure was 5 out of 10 before the Song My revelations. With the exposure of Britain's role the figure should rise once again.

All this underlines the importance of the struggle being waged in this country by anti-Vietnam war forces against British complicity in Vietnam.

The Vietnam Solidarity Committee has stated that it views its January 25th demonstration as only the start of a continuing campaign against British complicity. A recent meeting of the VSC projected a mass demonstration and conference in April in conjunction with expected Spring mobilisations in the United States. The conference would deal with escalation of the war by the U.S. into Laos and Thailand and with a detailed examination of the scope of British complicity in the war. A campaign to make Vietnam a burning issue in the coming General Election campaign was also projected. Anti-war activists throughout the country would be urged to confront Wilson, members of his Cabinet, and the Tory leadership at election meetings through leaflets, demonstrations and questions about British complicity in Vietnam. The VSC will also participate in the coming 1-8 March Trade Union Viet-

nam Week being organised by a number of London offices of trade unions and the London Cooperative Society Political Committee.

The VSC is urging all anti-war and anti-imperialist organisations to take part in these campaigns.

However, not all organisations who claim to be defending the Vietnamese Revolution share the VSC's perspective of united action against the Wilson Government's complicity in Vietnam. Among these is the Socialist Labour League. Although the SLL brought a strong contingent to the VSC January 25th demonstration, it remains outside the VSC and continually attacks it in its press, counterposing its trade union activity to the united actions organised by the VSC.

This excuse for refusing to participate actively in united action is not very convincing. The VSC has always realised the importance of mobilising workers in the shops against the Vietnam war. By mobilising student and worker youth in national demonstrations, the VSC has contributed to making Vietnam an issue on the shop floor. Some time ago the VSC published a pamphlet on Vietnam and the trade unions and another on the complicity of the Wilson Government which has been circulated widely. Can anyone seriously say that the work of VSC conflicts with the SLL's stated desire of raising Vietnam at the factory level? Has not the work of VSC over the past four years helped create a climate in which class-conscious militants can campaign with their workmates on the question of Vietnam? The SLL dismissal of the VSC as a "middle-class protest movement" and its reference to the "anti-working-class" base of the VSC just doesn't ring true.

To be consistent the SLL would have to deny the process in the United States, where the opportunity for a link-up of the struggles of the organised anti-Vietnam war movement and the struggles of the workers—for example in major war industries like General Electric—has been provided, at least in part, by six years of bigger and bigger mass mobilisations by American youth—mainly students.

All in all, the case for the SLL's continuing factional approach to a united anti-Vietnam war movement remains as weak as ever. A serious policy for defence of the Vietnamese Revolution demands a change.

The International Marxist Group will do all it can to build a united campaign of action against British complicity in Vietnam and urges all anti-Vietnam war forces—including the SLL—to actively support the campaign of the VSC.

SUPPORT THE TEACHERS

In its usual cowardly and dishonorable way the Labour Government has decided to stand firm against the teachers. This reflects a cynical calculation that they will be easier to defeat than say the postmen.

As explained before in this paper the struggle of the teachers has extremely important social consequences. It needs to be added that the defeat of the teachers would be a victory for the whole

incomes policy and a defeat for the labour movement. It would encourage the Government to stand up against other similar sectors and undercut the developing militancy among public employees.

Committees of support for the teachers should be established where ever possible; the trade union defence committees should aggressively advocate the teachers' cause. Their struggle is ours and we cannot afford them to be defeated.

THE INCREASING INEQUALITY OF WOMEN

Julian Atkinson

The 1970's will be characterised by women's militancy and particularly by struggles to implement equal pay demands. Already Barbara Castle has shown how the equal pay demand can be emasculated and turned back as a weapon against the working class as a whole. The abstract slogan of equal pay is no longer sufficient; the demand has to be specifically situated in a total strategy that radically challenges not only the pay structure but the structure of employment within capitalism and consequently capitalist education and training in its entirety.

The women's liberation struggle requires a large amount of sociological and theoretical analysis to enable the militants to evolve a radical anti-capitalist strategy. A welcome addition to the literature on the women's struggle is the ATTI working party report on "Education, Training and Employment of Women and Girls." The following arguments base themselves to a large extent on the facts provided in that document.

Much of the debate on women's education has been hampered by what seems to be anachronistic references to the discredited faculty psychology: girls are better at sewing than boys; boys are better at maths than girls; or vice versa. This type of approach does not appear to be very useful and therefore I have not thought it necessary to redress the balance, but to continue with the same methodology by combing through the literature to show areas where women are more capable than men. The working hypothesis will be that men and women have roughly the same potentialities and capacities. Therefore gross deviations from this norm are functions of societal pressures rather than innate differences between the sexes. This hypothesis is useful even if incorrect; it has its thrust towards changing society, which can be altered, rather than a passive reference to "unalterable" sexual characteristics.

In considering the secondary education system, it is easily shown that the percentage of passes at A and O level is roughly the same for boys and girls. The disparity occurs when the distribution of candidates between subjects is considered. Arts subjects are still thought to be the proper study for womankind.

Table of O and A level passes (Statistics of Education, 1967).

	1956		1967	
	O	A	O	A
Mathematics				
Boys	54,611	13,927	102,417	34,661
Girls	2,792	1,846	51,072	6,751
Physics				
Boys	20,076	12,677	43,270	24,295
Chemistry				
Boys	17,493	10,136	33,037	16,623
Girls	3,910	1,828	10,942	4,343

These figures show the extent the curricula of girls and consequently their job opportunities are restricted on the scientific front. This restriction becomes more oppressive for the working class girl. One fifth of the O level physics entry are girls whereas only one-fifteenth of the CSE (the exam for the "non-academic") physics candidates are girls.

The Robbins report tried to deal with the problem of academic wastages. It identified as a major component in this wastage, early leaving from school. The majority of the early leavers were working class and it was working class girls who suffered most severely. However, the report saw a gradual reversal of this trend. In 1963 the report estimated that 16.8% of boys would remain at school until the age of 17 in 1967. This estimate was substantially correct. The percentage of girls was estimated at 12.6%. This underestimated the actual proportion of girls staying on by 2% - an error of underestimation of nearly 16%. This "expansionist" document underestimated the achievement girls

in all of its major predictions. Two points have to be made: the report and the official opinion it represents obviously was not that committed to achieving equality of performance between boys and girls; the increasing performance of girls is good but these are almost exclusively middle-class females and education life span is not automatically related to occupational status.

Further education is a particularly important avenue of academic advancement for working class girls and has a high correlation to employment opportunity. And yet, in no area of the education system are women at such a disadvantage. This is not surprising as further education is nearer to the crude sexual discrimination of capitalist industry than the artificial "fairness" of the single sex grammar schools. The following table from "Statistics of Education, 1967", illustrates the extent of the problem.

Advanced courses in	Men	Women
Further Education		
Engineering	50,260	85
Building	11,555	30
Metal technology	2,040	20
Science	18,126	3,119
Social Administration and Business studies	46,133	6,129

The 1964 industrial training act was to remedy this imbalance; at least Lady Williams invoked this rhetoric on several occasions. Has it done this? The first problem is that very few statistics exist on this subject. The Ministry of Labour's 1967 analysis of occupations of workers in manufacturing industries showed that significant improvements had occurred in the training of women workers. The 1968 "Survey of Women Employment" showed that on-the-job training had been received for only about one type of work in six by respondents of the survey. Only one

type of work in fifty involved an apprenticeship. When the Industrial Training Boards have made recommendations for training, they have made no reference to discrimination against women. This is regarded as a matter for self congratulation: "schemes are designed to improve the quantity and quality of training by types of employment but not by sex."

The day release situation is deplorable. The 1964 report of the Henniker-Heaton committee showed that 24.4% of boys and 6.4% of girls in employment under the age of 18 got day release in 1959-60. By 1968 the figures were 36.3% and 9.2% respectively. The relative proportions have not changed. Analysis of those industries with a large female work force is very disturbing. In textiles, the proportion of women under 18 with day release is 2.4% in clothing and footwear, 2.4%, and in distribution 2%. This final figure represents a drop since 1959 of .5%.

The situation in education and training shows overall a minute amelioration but it is still a vast distance away from parity. It is job structure, however, which is crucial. Very important evidence comes from the DEP's Manpower Studies No. 6: "Occupational Change 1951-61." The proportion of women proprietors, managers, administrators and executives fell from 19.4% to 18.6%; in higher and professional/technical occupations from 33.9% to 31.1%; in lower professional/technical from 46.4% to 43.2% and in skilled manual workers from 15.5% to 13.9%. The percentage of women in semi-skilled and unskilled manual work rose from 40.5 to 41 and from 28.7 to 32.7 respectively. Over this period the trend has been for the proportion of women in skilled work to drop and for the proportion in unskilled work to grow. Unskilled work, most particularly office work where the percentage of women rose from 55.7% to 60.1%, is

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exceptionally sensitive to redundancy flowing from increased automation. The Ministry of Labour "Computers in Offices" gives figures that allow one to predict that by 1974 there will be substantial inroads into the total number of office jobs nationally available. It would not be excessively alarmist to point out that these tendencies could lead to sections of women workers becoming "unemployable."

This growing discrimination against women, on one level of rationality does not make sense for capitalism; "Status of Women in Sweden 1968" calculates that the Swedish national income would be increased by 25% by utilising the unused labour potential of women, and by 50% if sex discrimination were abolished. The inevitable irrationalities capitalist production rejects the logic of planned and full use of labour as surely as

PRAISE FOR THE GRAVEDIGGER OF REVOLUTIONS

Nhan Dan, the official North Vietnamese government newspaper, carried a front-page editorial on 22 December commemorating the ninetieth anniversary of the birth of Stalin. According to a report in the December 23 *Washington Post*, the Vietnamese described the late dictator as "an eminent Marxist-Leninist theoretician, great leader of the Soviet Union and the world Communist movement".

The *Nhan Dan* editorial reportedly said that Stalin was Lenin's "disciple, comrade-in-arms and successor" and that he "waged an unremitting struggle to preserve the purity of Marxism-Leninism and develop its creative power" while opposing "opportunism under all forms".

Nhan Dan urged the "entire Vietnamese party, army and people" to learn from Stalin's "revolutionary spirit".

Even *Pravda*, in its December 21 editorial on Stalin's birth, included criticism of his "unjustified repression" of the Soviet people, although the Soviet CP paper painted a more favourable picture of Stalin than at any time since the Khrushchev revelations in 1956.

It can hardly be supposed that the North Vietnamese leaders are unaware of the truth about Stalin. Lenin, rather than regarding him as his "disciple, comrade-in-arms, and successor", demanded that the party remove Stalin as general secretary. After Lenin's

they reject the full and social use of the fruits of that labour.

But reformist utopias have to be avoided for reasons other than their non-validity. It is totally impermissible for Marxists to lead a struggle for the right of all women to be exploited equally with men workers. The struggle is against exploitation as such. And that is where we break with Fabian schemes to get housewives into factories. The slogan, "Equal Pay, Now!" has a transitional nature, but we must also point out to the vanguard women militants that it is primarily equal pay that is cutting back the proportion of skilled women workers. Given the choice between employing at equal pay, a man or a woman, capitalism takes the male worker, better training and equal pay for women must be fought for, but women's equality lies outside the grasp of reformist politics.

death, Stalin became the spokesman for the privileged bureaucratic caste that suppressed every expression of proletarian democracy in the Soviet Union and murdered virtually all of Lenin's closest collaborators.

Instead of opposing "opportunism under all forms", it was Stalin who made "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism a central tenet of the Communist International in place of Lenin's policy of advancing revolutionary struggles.

The Vietnamese people have had bitter experiences with Stalinism. After World War II, when the French sought to reoccupy IndoChina and crush the new Viet Minh regime, the French Communist Party—then, as now, one of the most servilely pro-Moscow CPs in the world—supported the de Gaulle regime against the Vietnamese.

The French CP was, in fact, in the government, and in March 1947 all the Communist cabinet ministers voted to support the military expedition. Maurice Thorez, then head of the Communist Party and a vice-premier, personally signed the military orders. *L'Humanite*, the French CP newspaper, although it formally called for negotiations with Ho Chi Minh's government, declared in the July 24, 1946 issue, that it did not wish to see France reduced to "its own small metropolitan territory...".

"Are we," *L'Humanite* added, "after having lost Syria and Lebanon yesterday, to lose IndoChina tomorrow, north Africa the day after?"

In 1954, after the French had been decisively defeated at Dien-bienphu, Stalin's immediate successors and their Chinese counterparts insisted that the victorious Viet Minh accept the extremely disadvantageous terms proposed by the French and their American allies: that the Viet Minh withdraw north of the seventeenth parallel and turn the south over to the French puppet emperor Bao Dai, thus setting the stage for the present American intervention in support of an "independent" South Vietnamese regime.

Tillman Durdin, writing from Geneva in the July 24, 1954 *New York Times*, said: "Evidence has accumulated here that Viet Minh leaders are not entirely happy about the peace settlement for

Vietnam. A number of members of the Vietnam delegation have declared openly that pressure from Chinese Communist Premier Chou En Lai and Soviet Minister Vyacheslav M. Molotov [to this day a die-hard defender of Stalin's record] forced their regime to accept less than it rightly should have obtained here."

It must be recognised, of course, that the Vietnamese leaders are under heavy pressure from both Moscow and Peking, which control the major sources of arms for the freedom fighters in South Vietnam. Neither of the bureaucratic giants would hesitate for a moment to cut off even the small flow of aid they have granted the Vietnamese if political concessions were not forthcoming.

The fact that the Hanoi leaders feel it necessary to pay such blackmail (or to hail Stalin for reasons of their own) does not lessen the duty of revolutionists throughout the world to actively demonstrate their solidarity with the Vietnamese revolution and to do everything within their power to force the United States to withdraw all its troops at once from Vietnam.

At the same time, it must be stated that putting Stalin in a place of honour injures the Vietnamese revolution. Stalinism has accurately been described as the syphilis of the labour movement. Millions of people who are opposed to what U.S. imperialism is doing in Vietnam can become uncertain and even more accessible to imperialist propaganda if Hanoi fails to recognise where Stalin stands in informed public opinion internationally today.

Ali El-Fezzani

Libya discussion

Tessa van Gelderen's criticism of the first of my articles published in the *International* is what one would expect from a text-book Marxist. But revolutions are not made to measure, under laboratory conditions. They take place in the real world we live in. Nor do they always wait for the historical processes to complete themselves (vanguard party, class-conscious proletariat, soviets, etc.). We have, surely, had many revolutions since 1917 which have not gone through the prescribed formulas—deformed revolutions, true, but recognisable revolutions nonetheless. Because imperialism has distorted the economies of the colonial world and prevented their full development, we must expect the advance to socialism of these countries to be painful and long, with many diversions. This is one of the prices we have to pay for Stalin's destruction of the Third International which Lenin and Trotsky saw functioning as the general staff of the world revolution and our failure to build a Fourth International of sufficient strength and attractive power to influence events decisively.

Tessa argues for "workers' control". Control of what and by whom? Does she know anything at all of the Libyan economy? Apart from oil there are practically no indigenous industries and no proletariat in the Marxist sense of the word. The workers in the oil fields are itinerant workers, nomads only yesterday, scattered over vast distances in the arid deserts of Cyrenaica. Until the advent of the September Revolution even the most primitive form of trade union organisation was unknown to them.

Nationalisation of oil? As I point out in my article in the December issue, the foreign-owned oil-fields constitute a permanent

threat to the revolution. This is A.B.C. But the exploitation of the oil fields require a very highly trained technical personnel. Where are the Libyan geologists, engineers, accountants, etc. who can run it successfully? For historical reasons they simply don't exist. Nearly 90% of the non-school-age population are illiterate. The gap can be partially filled by the more highly developed Arab lands, such as Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Palestine, but these countries also have still to face up to the problem of nationalisation.

Tessa complains that the Revolutionary Command Council has "no perspective for the building of the revolutionary party or for setting up soviets..." What kind of utopian world does she live in? The RCC are, for the most part, petty-bourgeois revolutionaries and Arab nationalists, not Marxists. The course of events may impel them in that direction—as happened in Cuba after Castro's seizure of power—but this is not the most likely variant. It is for the handful of Marxists in Libya (and they are, literally, only a handful) to commence this task together with their co-thinkers in the other Arab lands and internationally.

When discussing the Middle East it is important to bear in mind that to some extent the existence of the Palestine situation is distorting the picture. The struggle against Zionism has progressive and reactionary features. It is progressive because it acts as the catalyst of the Arab revolution, but it is reactionary because it enables the Nasserist and Baathist leaderships to divert the masses from the struggle for socialism and to concentrate on the purely nationalist aspect of the revolution. The new Libyan regime has given impetus to the anti-Zionist struggle, but it is giving its support to the petty-bourgeois dominated Al-Fatah rather than the left-wing Democratic Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. It is for the Marxists in the Arab lands as well as internationally, to hammer away at the thesis that the national struggle can only be finally victorious when it merges with the struggle for socialism.

Tessa is also wrong when she joins the bourgeois press and dismisses the events of September 1 as simply a military coup. Enough is now known of the personal histories of the members of the RCC to establish the fact that they were a group of young, dedicated Arab nationalists (with one or two socialists among them), who deliberately joined the army with the express purpose of using it as an instrument for the seizure of power (no officer above the rank of captain was involved in the seizure, and the leaders nearly all come from poor peasant families). The old regime was always wary of the armed forces and depended for its security on the police, secret police, etc. who were much more heavily armed than the military.

The immediate task of revolutionary socialists in Libya is to work out a transitional programme which will advance the revolution to a higher stage. It must raise the question of organs of popular control. What form these will take is for the Libyan people themselves to decide. That it will assume the form of soviets in the traditional sense of the term is highly unlikely. Soviets have only come into being in countries where the working class had a history of organisation and struggle (Russia, Germany, Hungary). As a first step they might demand the creation of elected popular committees to ensure that the Government's decrees about rent and price control are effectively carried out. The newly-legalised trade unions must be activated and transformed into organs of struggle, especially in the oil fields.

This is the realistic, Marxist approach to the Libyan Revolution. We must show an understanding of what is and not expect the application of the whole of our programme, immediately, under conditions which make this impossible.

THE ALGERIAN REVOLUTION 1962-1969

I.
Six months after the coup d'etat that overthrew Ahmed Ben Bella, the Eighth World Congress of the Fourth International, meeting December 1965, analysed the situation in Algeria in a resolution, "Progress and Problems of the African Revolution." This analysis singled out the following aspects in the development of the Algerian revolution from 1954 to 1955:

1) Before independence, the Algerian revolution took the form of a deep-going mobilisation of the masses. The political instrument of the revolution, the FLN, took form as a politically ill-defined multi-class front.

2) Following independence, the FLN literally burst into fragments at the time of the crisis in the summer of 1962, which developed along very unclear lines.

3) A new stage characterised by a dynamic of growing over into socialism opened with the exodus of the French colonists. The rising curve in the revolution reached its highest point with the March 1963 decrees and continued up to the expropriation measures in October of the same year. Observing this process, the United Secretariat of the Fourth International took note of the fact that a workers' and peasants' government had been established in Algeria. At that time the process had already slowed and a pause had set in.

4) Algerian society remained marked by the coexistence and conflict of different and antagonistic forces and sectors. A significant Algerian private capitalist sector continued to exist, including in the countryside, as well as a powerful foreign capitalist sector (oil and gas). Furthermore, imperialist aid continued to be important and Algeria remained dependent on the franc zone. An administrative, economic and military state bureaucracy developed which enjoyed a privileged share of the national income.

5) The coup d'etat of 19 June, 1965, was the outcome of the deterioration in the situation which Ben Bella could no longer forestall. The coup d'etat was supported by the most well-known representatives of the state and army bureaucracy. Its result was to encourage those forces most hostile to a socialist conclusion to the Algerian question.

In adopting these conclusions, the World Congress, however, left discussion open on the Algerian question.

II.
Immediately after 19 June, 1965, two factors favoured a temporary misunderstanding of the nature of the coup d'etat and some hesitation among the revolutionary vanguard in designating the character of the Boumedienne regime:

a) The fact that the coup eliminated only a relatively small number of figures, while a whole series of ministers in the Ben Bella government joined Boumedienne's "Council of the Revolution".

b) The support which the Chinese leadership gave to the Boumedienne regime in the weeks following the coup and which was motivated by considerations of a factional nature linked to the way in which Ben Bella and his team had been preparing the Afro-Asian conference.

Today these factors are no longer operative. The nature of the Boumedienne government became clear to the revolutionary vanguard when Boumedienne adopted a completely different orientation from that of the Ben Bella government.

Other changes should be noted. Moscow and not Peking is making conciliatory moves towards the regime, accompanying this with

an attempt on the ideological level to paint up the Boumedienne regime as "anti-imperialist". This line is being followed by the PAGES [Parti de l'Avant-Garde Socialiste, formerly ORP (Organisation de la Resistance Populaire) founded after June 19] in which former members of the Algerian Communist Party are active. In addition, after the Algerian leaders assumed verbal "leftist" positions in the Israeli-Arab conflict, Fidel Castro, who had very severely condemned the authors of the coup d'etat, went back on his condemnation, doing this in the form of self-criticism.

In view of possible confusion from these sources, it is necessary to reaffirm the position of the revolutionary Marxists on the present regime in Algeria without any ambiguities.

The June 19 coup d'etat marked the destruction of the workers' and peasants' government. The molecular changes for the worse that had been accumulating both in the consciousness of the various classes and in the government personnel and organisation had ended in a qualitative change. Having seized power with relative ease, owing to the previous deterioration in the situation, Boumedienne and his army had little trouble in putting down the opposition. The new power represented a reactionary resolution of the contradiction that had existed between the capitalist state and the workers' and peasants' government with its socialist orientation.

In the following period extending from 1965 to the end of 1967, there was an increasing drift to the right although centres of resistance still remained. At the end of 1967, a second period opened, which continues to the present, with the rise of Kaid Achmed (former Commander Slimane) to the second highest political post in the country, to the position of head of the "party".

In this shift, a dual phenomenon should be noted:

a) The development of a state capitalist sector in the economy in close osmosis with imperial interests.

b) The steady loss of momentum by the UGTA trade-union apparatus. This apparatus thought it could maintain its independence and serve as a centre for a new mobilisation of the masses by limiting itself in the interval to a defensive struggle to preserve self-management, if not to a purely economic struggle.

The attempted counter coup d'etat of El Affroun, led by Tahar Zbiri in December 1967 and supported by a section of the trade union militants, was a desperate attempt to reverse the trend to the right. The masses did not intervene in any way.

III.

The essential feature in the changes which have occurred in the Algerian economic structure has been the strengthening of the "mixed" (state capitalism and foreign capital) fuels sector of the

AN N

Resolution adopted by the International Exec. Committee of the 4th International December 1969

Algerian economy. This is the main sector of the economy from the standpoint of export and has undergone constant expansion (39.7 million tons produced in 1967 as against 26.1 million in 1964). The fuels sector is dominated by Sonatrach [Societe Nationale de Transport et de Commercialisation de Hydrocarbures], a state company created originally to manage the third Hassi Messaoud-Arzew pipeline completed in 1966 but which has developed into one of the principal petroleum producers. The activities of Sonatrach, which is aided by American and Soviet experts and collaborates closely with foreign interests, have expanded to such a degree that this enterprise constitutes a veritable state within a state. The basis for the collaboration between imperialism and the state sector is still the 1965 oil agreement concluded shortly after the June 19 coup d'etat and ratified in the French parliament by a UNR-PCF majority. Algerian state capitalism has been collaborating with imperialism without any major conflicts. The "nationalisation" of the American oil companies distribution network in September 1967 was, in appearance, an anti-imperialist measure in response to the Israeli aggression. In reality it was a purchase agreed to by the companies involved. The same was true of the purchase of the other distribution centres in May 1968. While collaborating with imperialism, the state sector seeks to assure its control over the transfer of currency and to impose its conditions with regard to export prices. These are minor conflicts in which the primary objective is "getting into position" for the renewal of the 1965 agreement in 1969.

It must be added that the Algerian left forces have never advanced specific demands for this sector, limiting themselves to declaring that nationalisation of mineral and energy resources was a "long-term goal" (1964 Algiers Charter).

As against the constant expansion of this sector, the modest self-managed industrial sector, composed in general of old plants, is steadily losing momentum. Its social weight is minimal. The workers in this section are calculated at less than 15,000 (6% of the Algerian working class). Moreover, the new investment code freezes the limit of development of this sector. It guarantees that there will be no nationalisation of the foreign capital invested in Algeria for ten years time and after that it can be nationalised only with payment of 100% compensation.

The nationalisation of French plants in June 1968, planned by American and Swiss "experts", was carried out according to this scheme. These plants were turned over to state companies that were not self-managed. Some of them were previously self-managed plants returned to their former owners (Norcolor). In other cases, the "nationalisation-purchase" was made long after these concerns had brought the enterprises in the self-managed industrial sector to their knees (oil works, soap factories).

Parallel to the industrial sector, peasant self-management has had to struggle constantly against sabotage by the authorities combined with difficulties on the French wine market (wine import quotas).

As for the "agrarian reform", adopted in 1966 but left unimplemented, it itself is nothing but a caricature of the reform drawn up under the Ben Bella government. Matching the appetites of the state bureaucracy, it is limited to an area producing a net annual income equal to the state payroll.

IV.

In Algeria the bourgeoisie was exceptionally weak both socially and politically. It lacked the capacity to meet the revolution head-on at this stage. The immediate source, therefore, of the counter-revolutionary initiatives was the state bureaucracy.

In order to understand the reasons for the behaviour of this new bureaucracy, we must examine the elements making it up, its international context, and the international social forces on which it bases itself.

We can define three layers in the Algerian state bureaucracy. These layers are based on the social interests they have represented in post-1962 Algeria, independently of the social origins of the bureaucrats themselves. According to this criterion, a bureaucrat may drift imperceptibly from one stratum to another.

1) A layer that made it possible to maintain a "well functioning" state apparatus between the cease-fire and the formation of the first Ben Bella government. It is composed of a certain number of functionaries, who were former or recent collaborators of the colonial regime, coming from the famous "Lacoste promotion". It is made up both of Algerians and reformed and cooperative Pieds-Noirs. This stratum is the most faithful supporter of the leaders who want to maintain a state of the bourgeois type. By its inertia and its sabotage of revolutionary measures, this layer plays an important braking role. It hides behind the mask of "technical competence" in order to maintain itself. But it is being subjected to criticism by the most conscious cadres, who demand that it be purged. The continually-promised removal of this stumbling block is always indefinitely postponed. This stratum takes advantage of the delay to consolidate its privileges and it exercises a pernicious influence on the opportunistic nationalist cadres who are slipping into reactionary positions.

2) The national bourgeoisie was extensively represented in the first Ben Bella government. These cadres based themselves in the state apparatus on a bureaucratic layer of high functionaries (cabinet members, prefects) whose actions then and since have been guided by the same class interests. M. Khider, the secretary of the FLN, worked in the party apparatus to consolidate the power of these strata, if not for a seizure of power by them. Representatives of this layer were to be found in the successive Ben Bella governments. A few were unmasked, but these bourgeois bureaucrats remained throughout the machinery of state. Certain bourgeois technocrats remain also in the Boumedienne government.

3) The third layer in the state bureaucracy, and the most numerous, formed as a bureaucratic layer in the FLN administrative apparatus during the war. It emerged from the agrarian and urban petty-bourgeoisie which flocked to the FLN and the ALN. This layer rallied first to Ben Bella and then to Boumedienne. It includes the majority of the army and men in the ministries whose opposition to the June 1968 "nationalisations" tends to show that some of them, too, have slipped into the first group. The vast majority of the intermediate-level functionaries in the ministries and the local administrations have come from different

strata of the petty bourgeoisie—small and middle tradesmen, middle peasants, petty functionaries of the colonial era. The ANP officers are almost entirely representatives of the petty bourgeoisie.

A part of this strata came from the working class in the cities or in emigration. Former working-class cadres in the MTLD and former CGT or UGTA unionists have risen to positions of responsibility in the state apparatus. Boumaza, Alia Yahia, and Zerdani represented this element. But in the context of the alliance that the petty bourgeoisie has concluded with the national bourgeoisie, this layer of the working-class bureaucracy, which is rather weak, has vacillated between the government and the masses to the extent that it experiences the political pressure of the masses. This layer will never be capable (with very rare exceptions) of conducting a proletarian policy. It is being totally rooted out of the state apparatus.

The most characteristic feature of this state bureaucracy is its heterogeneity. Representatives of the national bourgeoisie are found side by side with representatives of the working class, in the same ministerial and government commissions, in the Political Bureau.

The question which arises continually for each of these strata is, whom to serve. Such a heterogeneous bureaucracy becomes conscious of its social role only through constant confrontation with the social forces and classes which it claims to serve as a whole. This is why since 1962 all government bodies have been torn by clique in-fighting and struggles over immediate interests.

The pressures of imperialism on this bureaucracy must not be overlooked. French imperialism has brought pressure to bear through economic cooperation, continuation of the Evian accords, and the 1965 hydrocarbon agreements; British imperialism through mixed companies. American imperialism has exercised pressure through its not inconsiderable economic aid. And West German imperialism as well as others have been present. No less important is the considerable economic aid provided by the bureaucracies of the workers' states—the USSR, China, and Yugoslavia heading the list. Far from being provided in accordance with the principles proclaimed by Che Guevara at the Algiers Afro-Asian Economic Seminar, this aid has been accompanied by declarations favourable to the regimes in power and in the last analysis has favoured stabilisation of the state structures and the status quo. The same effect was produced by the ideological default of the former PCA (especially in the newspaper *Alger Republicain*) and later, after Harbi's arrest, of the ORP-PAGS (speculation on conflicts in the government teams even today) assuming that a "socialist state" or a "noncapitalist road" had been achieved or was in the process of being achieved.

Enmeshed in this international context, the state bureaucratic structures have become allied with the reactionary social forces.

V.

The general political resolution of the Second Congress of the UGTA in 1965 listed the "bureaucratic layer being formed" among the "forces of counter-revolution" alongside the feudalists and exploitive bourgeoisie.

But the Oumesiane leadership of the UGTA, elected at the Second Congress, timidly avoided drawing the necessary conclusions from this analysis. It tried to counter the dismantling of self-management by a defensive struggle, seeking support in the government. Its paper has been repeatedly prevented from coming out (May 1966, December 1967, and up to the present).

In Algeria today, the workers' right to determine the rules under

which their unions function, to elect their representatives freely, to formulate their programme without interference from the authorities, and to decide their actions in complete independence—that is, the four necessary criteria of trade union independence from the state apparatus—have been deprived of all semblance of reality.

VI.

At the present time, despite Cherif Belkacem and then Kaid Ahmed's "reorganisation", the "FLN party" is still non-existent.

But on the side of the opposition organisations, the picture is not a reassuring one.

a) The "CNDR" or ex-"PRS" [Conseil National de la Defense de la Revolution, and Parti de la Revolution Socialiste] was never able to develop after its initial "Menshevik-type" positions condemning the Ben Bella's revolutionary measures as "premature".

b) The "PAGS" or ex-"ORP" [Parti de l'Avant-Garde Socialiste, and Organisation de Resistance Populaire] became nothing but a vehicle of the Kremlin's foreign policy, under Alleg's leadership after Mohammed Harbi and Sahouane were arrested. This was shown by its turn on January 26, 1966, toward the formation of a broad "people's democratic" front demanding even the release of Ait Ahmed, who was imprisoned at that time, and proposing a front with the FFS. It has no mass base.

c) Ait Ahmed's "FFS" and Mohamed Labjaoui's "OCRA" [Front des Forces Socialistes, and Organisation Clandestine de la Resistance Algerienne] represent factions in the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois wing of the old apparatuses.

d) The "Rassemblement Unitaire des Revolutionnaires" (RUR), which was born of splits from the ex-ORP and the OCRA, represents, from the standpoint of its programme and its analyses, the tendency closest to revolutionary socialism. Its base in Algeria, however, is as limited as that of the other movements.

VII.

1) In this context the fundamental strategic task remains the organisation of a revolutionary Marxist vanguard and the subsequent formation of a party of the urban and rural workers which would struggle for the overthrow of the Boumedienne regime and the establishment of a government of the worker and peasant masses.

2) Inseparably bound up with this task is the necessity of struggling to revitalise the trade union movement and gain its complete independence from the state.

3) This struggle can only be waged through and parallel to a revival of the mass movement. And the mass movement can be revived only through struggle for:

a) Stimulation of the non-capitalist sector of the economy by putting the entire nationalised industrial sector under self-management and giving priority to this sector as regards fiscal advantages and the development of trade relations, etc.

b) The establishment of a monopoly of foreign trade and the introduction of mandatory national planning to avert strangulation of the self-managed sector.

c) Nationalisation of the petroleum-producing enterprises belonging to all the imperialist countries involved in the June 1967 aggression against the Arab revolution, and the establishment of workers' control exercised jointly by representatives of the oil workers and the socialist industrial sector over Sonatrach and the other oil companies.

d) Abrogation of the pseudo-agrarian reform of 1966 and implementation of a radical agrarian reform by means of expropriation of the large landowners and severe limitations on the right to hold property in land. The starting consideration must be that it is of course incorrect to call only for the restriction of large and middle land-ownership independent of seeking the most productive use of the land. But it is not correct either to envisage agrarian reform as an attempt to put the most land possible under cultivation according to abstract criteria of economic efficiency, independent of social relationships.

e) Amendment of the 1966 law on municipal government for a new definition of municipal boundaries guaranteeing that the municipalities will be economic units and eliminating interference by the FLN apparatus.

f) Defence of the revolution by the creation of workers' and peasants' militia based on the big farms, the big factories, and the municipalities.

g) Renovation and purging of the state apparatus, the creation of organs of people's power, and promotion of equalitarian tendencies in the struggle against bureaucratic privileges. Revival of the struggle for democratic demands—emancipation of women, the struggle to keep Islam out of public affairs, the struggle against illiteracy and for education, the struggle against regional particularism.

4) Particular importance must be accorded to work among the Algerian workers in Europe as well as work for the release of all the interned militants, especially Ben Bella, Ben Allah, Zahouane, Harbi, and Hadj Ali.

VIII.

Today the Trotskyist movement is unanimous in its assessment of the current situation in Algeria. After the June 19 coup d'état, however, the limited extent of the change in the government make-up led some militants to ask whether the character of this coup had not been exaggerated; since, after all, it did not exceed the dimensions of a palace revolution. Subsequently the majority agreed that the coup was the qualitative expression of a molecular deterioration which had occurred in the last period of President Ben Bella's regime. But in view of the rapidity with which the state bureaucracy accentuated its right turn, a second question arose: Did the Trotskyist movement exaggerate the advances of the Algerian revolution in February 1964 when it characterised the Ben Bella government as a workers' and peasants' government? This is the question that must be answered now.

There is no reason to minimise the real advances that marked the development of the Algerian revolution during the first years after independence. Real anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist actions were taken by the Ben Bella government and, more precisely, the limited team around Ben Bella, which in important instances went beyond the institutional framework, legalising the conquests of the masses by decrees.

It is, however, likewise necessary to take into account the fact that the masses in movement who won self-management were the permanent workers on the large estates that later became self-managed farms; that is, the agricultural proletariat in the true sense of the word. After the summer of 1962, this agricultural proletariat was the only sector of the masses in motion. This was the social base of the Ben Bella team. Its relative narrowness constituted a most serious weakness. The masses of poor peasants could have offered a broader social base, but they were atomised during the crises of the summer of 1962. They could have been mobilised through immediate implementation of a radical agrarian reform. But the Ben Bella team did not do this.

The Fourth International did not correctly estimate the narrowness of the social base on which the Ben Bella team rested and therefore failed to see the major difference between the situation in Algeria and the situation which led to the establishment of a workers' state in Cuba less than two years after the Castroist team took power.

In this situation, a revolutionary leadership possessing an adequate instrument, a revolutionary party, could still have mobilised the peasant masses. But in Algeria, the FLN was never a "party" in the class sense. Moreover, it no longer existed after 1958, except as an organisation in the federation of France and as a government in the GPRA. For all other purposes it had abdicated in favour of the ALN.

In its early stages, the Algerian freedom struggle had served as an inspiring example throughout the colonial world. The Cubans, especially, were influenced by it. After the victory of the Cuban revolution and the establishment first of a workers and peasants government and then a workers state in Cuba, this reciprocal influence continued, with Cuba now becoming an example for the Algerians. It was legitimate in Algeria to hold up the example of Cuba and to struggle for a similar outcome.

However, the dynamics of the Algerian revolution was determined by important differences from the developments that led to the establishment of the Cuban workers' state. French imperialism had drawn a lesson from the victory of the Cuban revolution; it followed a different course from the one taken by US imperialism toward Castro. The mass mobilisations were much more limited in Algeria than in Cuba. The Ben Bella team was of much lower revolutionary political stature than the Castro-Guevara team in Cuba. It failed especially to smash all surviving elements of the bourgeois army—which in Cuba were smashed upon Castro's entering Havana. Instead, in accordance with one of the main provisions of the Evian agreement, Ben Bella allowed these elements to be integrated into the ALN. In view of these differences, which became evident in the course of the struggle, it was a mistake to expect an outcome analogous to the one in Cuba.

This error in estimate was made worse by a wrong assessment of the nature of the ALN, especially after the application of the Evian agreement, and by the conception, maintained primarily by the Pablo tendency, that in the concrete Algerian situation of 1962-63 the army could play the role of the party. The grave consequences of the delay in organising an Algerian revolutionary vanguard were seriously underestimated.

The Pablo tendency, which was in charge of the work in Algeria and which also controlled the journal of the French section of the Fourth International for at least two years, tended to develop its own independent line. It advanced confused and incorrect formulas with regard to the Algerian state, calling it an "anti-capitalist state" or "semi-workers' state". It did not grasp the contradiction between the workers' and peasants' government and the bourgeois character of the state apparatus. It therefore assigned to mass mobilisations essentially the role of supporting the Ben Bella tendency and carrying out the programme of the FLN, failing to appreciate that it was crucial for the urban and rural proletariat and poor peasantry to set up independent organs of power, and clinging to the utopian and non-Marxist concept of the possibility of a gradual change in the nature of the state.

From this, various consequences followed such as minimising certain serious events; for example, the gangster-like attack committed by the Khider apparatus at the UGTA congress, which was explained away by calling the UGTA leaders "left Mensheviks".

The Pablo tendency eventually split from the Fourth International.

The Fourth International never used the category of workers' and peasants' government in the Algerian context as a synonym for a dictatorship of the proletariat. The state structure was always correctly analysed as bourgeois.

But although the International correctly applied the designation of workers' and peasants' government to the Ben Bella regime, it did not sufficiently stress the imperious necessity of establishing independent organs of political power by the urban and rural proletariat. Such bodies, moreover, would have been the best instruments for a general mobilisation of the masses and the sole means for making the process of permanent revolution irreversible.

A concomitant error was committed in May 1964 when the International Executive Committee set the task for the revolutionary Marxists of collaborating in the formation of a revolutionary socialist left "led by the FLN" (the EC resolution, "The International Situation and the Tasks of the Revolutionary Marxists," *Quatrieme Internationale*, July 1964) instead of stressing the need to work among the ranks first to create a revolutionary Marxist organisation linked to the Algerian masses.

Workers Control of Trade Unions!

Before the concept of workers' control of industry can be discussed seriously, it is necessary to discuss the undemocratic character of the Trade Unions. Although the Trade Unions are more democratic than any other form of organisation in capitalist society, they are nevertheless far from the situation where the working class have democratic control over them. Therefore before we can visualise the working class taking the giant step forward of socialising the economy and taking control of industry, surely they must remove the obstacles—within their own organisations—that stand in their way.

This can best be illustrated by examining a very important experience the working class went through last year. Barbara Castle presented a *White Paper, In Place of Strife*, to the House of Commons. A document which contained such far-reaching anti-Trade Union legislation that had it been put on the statute books it would have gone a long way towards taking away the only democratic right workers have—the right to strike.

How did the leadership of the Trades Union Congress react? Instead of calling on the organised might of the Trade Union movement to struggle against the offensive of this so-called Labour Government, and placing themselves at its head, the TUC leadership organised a special congress at which they agreed in essence with the Government that "unofficial" strikes must be curbed. The only difference being that they should do the job of disciplining the rank and file instead of the Government.

This was the main issue on which the TUC leadership moved to

The lesson of the events in Algeria is of considerable importance. The victory of the socialist revolution in Algeria was possible. But a decisive factor was lacking: the revolutionary party.

Within the frame of this self-criticism it must be added frankly that if the participation of the Trotskyist movement in the Algerian revolution, its support to the struggle and to the most progressive tendency after 1962 were considerable, too little was done in carrying out the specific function of the Trotskyist movement—to form the nucleus of a future Algerian revolution. The work of training and recruiting Algerian militants was neglected for work at the top.

Doubtless, during an initial phase, in view of the smallness of our forces, it was correct to concentrate on a campaign of practical support for the revolution which was creating a climate favourable for the spread of our ideas. But after a given point, the formation of an organised nucleus should have been given priority and all work at the top subordinated to this goal. The International recognised this at its Sixth World Congress. It did not, however, make the necessary effort to carry out this line. Thus, it shares the blame for this error with the comrades of the Pablo tendency, who were the main ones responsible for this work and for the false orientation as regards building a revolutionary nucleus.

defuse the growing opposition among the working class against the Wilson Government's policies. In practice this meant that at every turn workers found themselves not only in conflict with employers, management, and the Government's income policy, but also with their own Trade Union leadership. This has happened with the miners, steel workers, women car workers, etc. We must remember that in these struggles we have not been witnessing battles that called for a change of ownership and control of industry, but struggles that were in defence of living standards that have been won over a number of years. So how much more of a brake would these "leaders" be on a struggle to fundamentally change society?

While capitalist commentators on the radio and television, and in the papers, decry the mass upsurge of working class militancy in the past year, and talk depressingly about the state of the economy, we socialists should welcome and support the willingness and ability of workers to struggle in defence of their working standards. We should also see the possibilities of a development which promises, as the struggle unfolds, the working class going over to offensive actions in which "workers' control" demands will be utilised.

Before we go into the question of workers' control in the Trade Unions in more depth, and illustrate the intimate connection between workers' democracy in the Trade Unions and the struggle for workers' control of society at large, it will help us in our purpose if we trace the causes behind the new upsurge in working class militancy.

The first point that must be made is that the increase in the number of strikes in Britain is an extension of a process that has been happening right across Western Europe. In France we saw millions of workers involved in a massive general strike which posed the question of the transfer of class power. In Italy we witnessed millions of workers paralysing the country. And West Germany has experienced widespread strikes by militant workers.

The strikes in Britain have been in defence of working conditions and living standards that have been threatened by the offensive of

the Labour Government. This Wilson Government, backed by Big Business, has been pushing policies of rationalisation which have led to mergers and closures, giving rise to unemployment. The economic review from the National Institute states that through 1970 unemployment will leap by 10,000 a month and rise to 750,000.

Wilson pushes productivity deals leading to greater exploitation of the individual worker, deals which are used by employers to lower the working people's living standards. Instead of the workers gaining more control of production, productivity deals have led to declining control of existing working conditions. There has been a big speed-up of production lines—the *Sunday Times* of September 10th stated "the productivity per man year has leapt from an average of about 2.5% in the early 1960s to nearly 4% since 1966."

Therefore, in order that Wilson's policies of rationalisation and productivity deals, incomes policy, and unemployment be combated effectively, it is necessary to bring in the great power of the Trade Unions in such a way as to make use of their tremendous assets: — the power workers have because of their position in the economy; the history and tradition of struggle the workers' movement is based upon; the millions of workers in Trade Unions along with millions of unorganised workers that can be set into motion.

For the Trade Unions to struggle effectively against Government policies they can no longer rely on defensive actions. For example to meet the threat of rationalisation and consequent unemployment workers must extend control over their work environment. This will not be brought about without mass action. Therefore, instead of the Trades Union Congress using its machinery for the curbing of "unofficial" strikes, they should be encouraging any sign of a tendency in which workers' frustrations break out and take the form of struggle.

However, the truth is that there is a big conflict between large sections of the Trade Union leadership and the interests and hopes of the rank and file. There is a big task ahead for the mass of workers to democratise the Trade Unions.

Barbara Castle tried to impose legal ballots for strikes. This was aimed at workers' power on the shop floor, against shop stewards' ability to bargain with the bosses by threatening to withdraw their labour.

The TUC has now introduced similar ideas in a circular to its 155 affiliated Unions; here are a few examples:

- 1) Unions are asked to "state clearly the procedure to be followed and which bodies have the authority to call or approve or terminate a strike".
- 2) "State clearly the method of election or appointment of shop stewards and the body within the Union to whom the steward is responsible."
- 3) "Ballots should be held where a strike is contemplated or during the course of a strike, the decision to hold such ballots being entirely at the discretion of the appropriate body of the Union."

The measures are clearly meant to move in to curb the power of the steward on the floor. The intent is to bring the shop steward under the control of the higher leaderships of the Unions.

A good example of this intention was the action of the NUR leadership when it instructed its Committee representatives to go into work regardless of whether the rank and file workers on the tubes responded to the January 1st strike call.

The *Guardian* stated: "In short the TUC statement is a curious mixture of attempts to marry the Government's earlier determination to curb small groups of unrepresentative wildcats and insistence of left-wingers that the rank and file should have a bigger say in Union policy-making."

In that shop stewards directly represent the wishes of the rank and file we must campaign against any encroachment on their independence or power.

However, from the struggle outlined above, it is clear that there is a difference between the real interests of the rank and file (and their representatives) and those of the majority of full-time Union officials. Thus, if in the coming struggles against productivity deals, rationalisations, mergers, unemployment, the Trade Unions are really to defend their members, they must be democratised.

To do this it is necessary to bring the leadership under the direct control of the rank and file by carrying out the following measures:

Election of all full-time officials, for a given period and subject to recall.

The elected representatives earn a wage no higher than the highest-paid worker in the Union.

Abolition of the block vote, within a Union.

No bans or proscriptions against any party or political tendency.

At the same time we must struggle to commit the Unions to an alternative socialist policy to the Government's. A policy of: Workers' control of production.

Control over hiring and firing.

For the nationalisation of the basic industries, banking and finance.

To plan the economy in the interests of the working people.

Pat Braine (P.O.E.U.)

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MARXIST ECONOMIC THEORY

Ernest Mandel: Marxist Economic Theory (2 vols.), translated by Brian Pearce and published by Merlin Books. £4 4s. from Pioneer Book Service, 8 Toynbee Street, London E.1.

The publication of Mandel's work on Marxist Economic Theory in English is a valuable addition to our arsenal of theoretical weapons against capitalism. It is particularly welcome to British Trotskyists, where most of the little work that has been done in the direction of socialist economics has been at the hands of state capitalists or members of the Communist Party. Mandel reconstitutes the Marxist system in a historical framework that goes back to the beginnings of organised society and forward to an analysis of the transitional economies and of socialism. His method is a truly dialectical one—he explains what capitalism is by examining it in the context of what it is not. As he tells us, the great advantage of Marxian economics over other schools of economic thought is that it contains a dynamic synthesis of economic theory and economic history. This synthesis is completely lacking from bourgeois economics today, which has no past but which focuses all its attention on the brute task of keeping the system going. The method of a Marxist must be "genetico-evolutionary, critical, materialistic and dialectical, genetico-evolutionary because the secret of no 'category' (1) can be discovered without study both of its origin and its evolution, which is nothing else but the development of its inner contradictions, that is to say, the revelation of its true nature." The book flows quite correctly far beyond the narrow confines within which the bourgeoisie would pen economics, into the realms of anthropology, sociology and social psychology. In the introduction Mandel specifically states that he believes the correct method was not to rehash the quotes of the masters but to reconstruct Marx's ideas "on the basis of the scientific data of contemporary science". One of the great virtues of the work is that it is much more than a simple work of economic history. It is a theoretical work and a self-conscious one, considering its own methodology.

Any work on Marx's economics produced today must be considered in the light of how it copes with the major political developments since Marx's time. This century has seen the rise of revolution in the underdeveloped countries and the forcible removal of a large chunk of the world from the sphere of Capital. It will be seen from Mandel's book and more especially from the various critiques of it that only someone thoroughly grounded in the politics of internationalism will be equipped to undertake this task. To consider just the developed countries will lead one to revise Marxist theory in a petit-bourgeois nationalist direction. Only at the world historical level can a genuine theory of the proletariat be worked out, for any other approach will lead one to confuse what is essential with what is incidental in one's environment in the manner of the state capitalists. Mandel combats the Menshevik misinterpretations of Marx, which the world communist movement must accept a large responsibility for propagating, the crude theory of stages, where revolutionaries are displaced from the dynamic of history: "It remains true that the attempt we have made to 'de-Westernise' the material, except that relating to nineteenth-century capitalism, that is to say, to discover the common features of pre-capitalist economic categories in all the civilisations which have reached the stage of developed international trade, may seem rash... Nevertheless, it is indispensable, both because the public to which Marxism appeals today is no longer essentially a Western public, and also because the popularisers of

Marxism have brought a tremendous confusion into this sphere with their theory of the 'successive stages' that society is supposed to have passed through, or must necessarily pass through, in all parts of the world, a theory which was explicitly repudiated by Marx himself (see especially his letters to the *Otechestvennie Zapiski*, November 1877, and to Vera Zasulich, 8th March 1881)." (2)

The first volume of Mandel's work deals with the basic economic categories in the order of their social appearance. He traces the origin of the first surplus, the introduction of the division of labour, the use of money and trade through to the age of petty commodity production and capitalism proper. Despite the erudition evidenced by the length of the bibliographies attached to each chapter, the work remains eminently readable, even for someone whose prior knowledge of economics is somewhat rudimentary. An idea of the structure of the larger work can be gained by an examination of a pamphlet of Mandel's, *An Introduction to Marxist Economic Theory* (3). This pamphlet contains a section on neocapitalism which is particularly interesting and has the added advantage of being written several years after the larger work. Particularly important in the first volume is Mandel's treatment of the concept of surplus. He distinguishes the necessary product of a society from the surplus product. The real political question to be answered is how a society shall use its surplus, who shall it benefit. His section in Chapter 1 on "Is there an economic surplus?" (4) is a useful antidote to a lot of attempts at mystification on the part of the bourgeoisie as to the nature of the problems of the Third World. Central to Marx's ideas was an investigation into the nature of value. It is important not to confuse the physical properties of objects with their values. Mandel deals at length with the appearance of value and its nature. He follows this analysis through the two volumes, to situate the ideas of value and price in their historical context, to give an idea of the forces which hold these phenomena in place and the situation in which it will disappear. In the chapter on "Money, Capital and Surplus Value" the reader should take note of the section on the Law of Uneven Development. "To reduce economic history to a series of stages or to the successive appearance of 'categories' is to make it excessively mechanical, to the point of rendering it unrecognisable. But to eliminate from historical study an allusion to successive stages of economic organisation and any reference to the progressive appearance of these 'categories' is to make it merely incomprehensible." (5)

Two especially interesting chapters in the first volume are Chapter 5 on the contradictions of capitalism and the final chapter on periodical crises. These two chapters between them contain much of the guts of Marx's system. The second volume brings the work into the present day, discussing the decline of the capitalist system, monopolies and imperialism and the appearance of the transitional economies. Mandel stands very firmly on the position that we do live in the age of wars and revolution. There can be no way out for the capitalist system and he is no friend of the people who attempts to pretend that there is. Progressively, it becomes harder for the capitalist to maintain his rate of profit. His absolute amount of profits may well go up, but it will become less and less worthwhile to invest. The source of profit is to be found in human labour because labour has a dual nature. It not only produces enough value to reproduce itself, but extra value, surplus value, which can be appropriated by the capitalist and turned into capi-

tal. Capitalists through competition will be forced to accumulate or be swallowed up by other capitalists. As they accumulate, however, the amount of depreciation or amount of value represented by reproducing their capital will continually increase. The result of this increase will be to lower the portion of price represented by living labour and the rate of profit must go down. There will be many factors which will delay the operation of this process. Capital will flow throughout the world, breaking down all boundaries in search of higher profits in the age of imperialism. Capital today, however, has lost a large portion of the world. It can no longer freely flow in and out of the workers' states. The system is at heart an anarchic system. It does not adjust in a rational manner, but by crises, when values are liquidated to reduce the concentration of capital. Extremely important is the attempt to keep clear the distinction between physical and value relationships. It is the latter, value relations, which are responsible for the dynamic of capitalism. The very anarchic nature of the system makes it so. In the era of monopoly capital "monopolisation" does not only intensify all the classic contradictions of capitalism, however — it also adds some new ones. To the fundamental class contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie there is added, in the age of monopoly, the contradiction between the colonial and semi-colonial peoples, on the one hand, whose poverty and economic backwardness constitute the main source of superprofits for the monopolies, and the big metropolitan bourgeoisies on the other." The capitalist system becomes increasingly a bigger fetter on the productive abilities of mankind and its parasitic character "explodes in the world's face in a new epoch of history, filled with convulsions: the age of capitalist decline, the age of war, revolutions and counter-revolutions." Since the second world war, crises have begun as sharply as the 1929 crisis, but capitalism through the intervention of the state in economic life has succeeded in reducing cyclical fluctuations (Chapter 14, "The Epoch of Capitalist Decline"). The choice for the state has been between crisis and inflation. Crisis would be politically untenable for capitalism, but on the other hand inflation itself creates grave hindrances to the normal functioning of the capitalist economy. The bourgeoisie is forced to turn to planning and to recognise the de facto socialisation of economic life. Its use of planning as an efficient agent of economic progress is impeded by its restriction within the confines dictated by the profit motive. In the long run "the slow devaluation of the currency brings about that very long-term stagnation that the system was initially trying to escape". (7)

Mandel sees the Soviet economy in a crisis too, but a crisis of a very different nature and origin to that affecting the capitalist economies. Bureaucratically centralised planning succeeded in creating the heavy infrastructure of the Russian economy, albeit with losses and wastage that need not have occurred. The Left Opposition favoured rapid industrialisation to be able to satisfy the peasants' demands for manufactured consumer goods. Having opposed this policy, supposedly in the interests of the peasants, after 1928 "the leading faction of the Bolshevik Party ... went from one extreme to the other ... Superindustrialisation of the country at the expense of the peasants was carried out on a scale that the Opposition had never conceived. Thereby the Soviet people were called upon to pay a terrible tribute in order to make rapid industrialisation possible, a tribute which could have been avoided." (8) Soviet planning, however, despite the bureaucratic distortions, is still real planning. "Elements of anarchy continue... but their role is precisely comparable to that of the elements of 'planning' in capitalist economy." The world capitalist economy is a whole and a crisis in one part will be reflected throughout the whole. The Soviet economy is exempt from these fluctuations. It still has some links with the capitalist market, but these are not essential to its operation. It is not linked with the capitalist pricing

system in an organic fashion. The system of dead labour incorporated in the capitalist world system has been appropriated by the Russian people and their state remains a workers' state, although a very degenerated one. It will do so while the economy continues to be centrally planned. The real dilemma the bureaucrats face is that to build more than an infrastructure, to deal with complex modern industries such as computers and electronics, costs must be taken into account. The bureaucrats operate in their own caste interests. The central contradiction is between a non-capitalist mode of production and bourgeois norms of distribution. The only way forward is for a political revolution to put power in the hands of the workers with a system of universal workers' control, which could produce a real economic plan, reflecting the needs and desires of the Russian people. The bureaucrats, however, can only make one sterile turn after another in an attempt to prevent the rate of growth from stagnating and to fulfil the plan. The section on the Soviet economy can be best read in conjunction with Mandel's reply to Kidron's review in IS36 (9) in a pamphlet called *The Inconsistencies of State Capitalism*, (10) which enters a detailed discussion of the nature of the bureaucracy and possible developments within it.

In Mandel's last chapter, he gives a history of economic thought, "The origin, rise and withering away of political economy". (11) This is a particularly useful section for comrades working in the academic sphere, who need to construct a course critique of social science courses. For the movement as a whole, one cannot stress too strongly the need for its day-to-day theoretical work to be thoroughly imbued with a grasp of the principles of Marx's economics. It is his economic system that gives Marxism its right to be considered as a science. It is in defence of that status that the Fourth International fights in its theoretical work against any petit-bourgeois tendency to emasculate Marxism by removing its true critical content, its world view, and to pragmatise it. Only a thorough-going internationalist can aspire to write a book about the real developments in the world economy. Mandel's book gives the lie to the neutral status which the bourgeois social scientists so much love to assume. Economists, like it or not, are committed economists, they serve one class or another. The proletariat fighting for power must have a world view of its role. It must appreciate what the forces of history are and what that role is. Mandel's book is a worthy contribution to the construction of that world view in the twentieth century.

David Kendall

Footnotes:

- (1) Mandel, *Marxist Economic Theory*, p.18.
- (2) *Ibid*, p.20.
- (3) Mandel, *An Introduction to Marxist Economic Theory*, 8/6d. (plus 6d p&p.) from Pioneer Book Service.
- (4) Mandel, *Marxist Economic Theory*, p.42.
- (5) *Ibid*, p.91.
- (6) *Ibid*, p.437.
- (7) *Ibid*, p.542.
- (8) *Ibid*, p.553.
- (9) IS36. Kidron, *Magnot Marxism, Mandel's Economics*. See also IS41.
- (10) Mandel, *The Inconsistencies of State Capitalism*, 4/- (plus 6d p&p.) from Pioneer Book Services.
- (11) *Ibid*, p.690.

A Farmworkers Rebellion

E. J. Hobsbawm and George Rude: *Captain Swing*. Lawrence & Wishart, 70/-.

In the autumn and winter of 1830, within an area stretching from Somerset in the west to East Anglia and Lincolnshire in the east, bands of up to several hundred normally respectable farm labourers were marching systematically round their localities, smashing the local farmers' threshing machines and demanding higher wages. To the £8,000-worth of damage done to rural capitalists' property in this way was added the wide-spread burning of ricks, sending of threatening letters, angry wages-meetings and riots involving thousands against the "special" police. In a year of revolution in France and Belgium, when the Radicals were calling for blood and revenge and the new urban proletariat were rapidly unionising in the industrial slums, the British authorities saw the riots as the first demonstration of power by the rural working-class. The authors of *Captain Swing* show why the movement was doomed to failure, leading to the long period of passive demoralisation among English farm-workers which only ended with the rise of the agricultural workers' unions in the 1870s.

The 1½ million landless English "peasants" formed the bottom layer in rural society's three-part hierarchy, supporting above them the tenant-farmer who hired them by the week or the day, and the wealthy land-owner—one of the 4,000 who owned roughly 4/7 of England and Wales. Huge surplus-labour problems and high prices left over from the Napoleonic boom-years were aggravated by an archaic poor-relief system which reduced most labourers to virtual paupers in an effort to combine the stable pre-capitalist social hierarchy with the profits of a capitalist market system.

Labourers were worst hit in the cereal-producing south and east, where seasonal fluctuation of the labour demand was most marked; threshing-machines introduced by progressive farmers took away what little winter employment there was, and became a focal point of grievance. Security of employment and a living-wage were, however, the starving labourers' only demands. There was no interest in land-reform, most of them believing the Government would sympathise with their attempt to regain the security of pre-capitalist society and their "customary rights as free-born Englishmen". Mostly Radicals completely failed to understand the movement, hopefully urging the rioters to "give up all these petty outrages against property, so unworthy of you, and unite for a Glorious Revolution", and although many local Radical craftsmen emerged as leaders, there was virtually no co-ordination between them, and they only provided a minimum of organisation on a local level. The revolutions across the Channel may have provided encouragement but had very little direct influence beyond inspiring red or black flags, or tricolours, in places.

In spite of what the letters said ("Revenge to thee is on the wing/ From thy determined Captain Swing"), and apart from a few persons being pushed in the village pond or locked in the vestry until

they agreed to lower their tithes, nearly all the violence was directed against property, and often had a festive spirit, with the rioters in their Sunday best. (Though feeling ran high against the "special" police: "Blast my eyes, I will smash the bloody Buggers' heads, six at a time" somebody is reported to have said). Another common tactic was the mass walk-out from church on a Sunday, followed by a meeting in the graveyard.

Many farmers were surprisingly sympathetic and readily agreed to have their machines smashed; they were usually on hire, or insured, in any case; growing unemployment put the parish rates up; and a sneaking feeling persisted that machines were slightly immoral. Where they could, farmers channelled the movement in their own interests, e.g. against tithes; although the labourers would have no truck with opposing taxation ("It was the King's money, and it wouldn't do").

Official reactions to the outbreak differed. The Kent riots were variously blamed on foreign revolutionaries, Irish labourers, O'Connell agents, Papists, bigoted Protestants, government agents, Radicals, the French, and the non-conformists. The Earl of Hardwicke called hysterically for a "General Union of all Classes...for the Preservation of Property and the Detection of Incendiarists". Wellington sent out the local magistrates and their retainers on horseback to hunt down the rioters with horsewhips and guns ("It is astonishing how soon the country was tranquillised, and that in the best way, by the activity and spirit of the gentlemen," he commented). At Pyt House in Wiltshire the yeoman cavalry were called out with their muskets, killing one labourer and wounding several others. The Government was, however, nervous of using the army because of urban unrest, and finally found a successful tactic in the "Sussex Plan"—the occupation of villages by special constabulary units *before* trouble started. At the trials afterwards, over 1,000 were imprisoned, transported, or hanged. As Justice Alderson said, "We do not come here to enquire into grievances. We come here to decide law."

On a local level the movement had great impact. Local solidarity during the riots was high—the authorities had great difficulty finding anyone ready to sign on as a "special"—even where support remained passive. A burning rick would produce a crowd of admiring onlookers, busy lighting their pipes at the flames, saying they should have brought some potatoes to bake, and making not the least attempt to put it out. Mass decisions were democratically taken in places, and delegates voted for; some villages adopted the slogan "We are all as one" to prevent victimisation of "leaders". But by their very nature, as spontaneous and sporadic outbursts, the Swing riots could not succeed. Between villages there was scarcely any unity, apart from the single wage demand of 2/6 a day, and labourers generally had no perspective beyond their own village, or parish at the most, and certainly had no thought of linking up with the urban movement. With the slight increase in wages and signs of reform bills beginning to move slowly through Parliament, people afterwards said, "Ah, them there riots and burnings did the poor a terrible deal of good"; but in fact the failure and brutal repression of the movement finished the resistance of the rural working class for another half-century.

Captain Swing is the first book since 1911 to deal with this subject; the authors give an extremely detailed account of their findings, and fully explain the conclusions they draw from their research. If you haven't got time to read the whole book, read the Introduction which gives a good historical and social background, and is an excellent summary of the main conclusions drawn from the bulk of the text.

Felicity Trodd