

International

Vol. 1, No. 4

15p

Trotsky on the Commune

Women's Liberation

British Trotskyism

Middle East

4

CONTENTS	Page
Editorial	2
Women's Liberation: Context and Potentialities, by Margaret Coulson	5
British Trotskyism in the '30s, by Harry Wicks	26
Review by Pierre Frank	33
After the September War: The Middle East	39
Trotsky on the Commune	53

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Published by The International Marxist Group (01-278 2616)

Printed by The Prinkipo Press Ltd (T.U.), 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.
01-837 9987

Subs: 15p per issue; £1 per annum; £2 airmail to Africa, Asia, Latin America,
North America.

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EDITORIAL

THE TORY IMMIGRATION BILL: THE RACIST CHALLENGE

Few capitalist governments in the world have produced as many "immigration" Acts in such a limited period of time as have Labour and Conservative governments in Britain since 1962. The score at the present moment is roughly even, though it could be argued that whereas the Tories produced anti-Black legislation at respectable intervals (1962 and 1971), the Labour government got off to a much quicker start by producing two disgraceful Acts within a span of three years (1965 and 1968). The question of how to fight racism is therefore posed very sharply. An essential prerequisite, however, is understanding the nature and roots of racism.

While the historical roots of racism can clearly be traced to the capitalist mode of production and while we can still argue that the degree of racism in Britain is determined by the economic situation of British capitalism, to restrict the argument simply to that is to advocate that the victims of racism engage in a fatalistic political pause while the process of abolishing capitalism continues (or rather begins) and the white working class catches up with the consciousness of black workers—a consciousness which has been moulded by the oppression they suffer. Apart from being utopian, this approach is quite frankly reactionary, because it tends to underplay the deep and ingrained racism which exists in the working class movement. A racism which is linked very definitively to the Fabian excrement and other Labour imperialists. The "White Man's Burden" and similar attitudes may not have led to race riots half a century ago in Britain, but it did so in many parts of the areas which were dominated by British imperialism. (Thus the fascist General Dyer led his troops to massacre hundreds of Indians in Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar, India, in the early part of the twentieth century, simply to assert the superiority of his race and the Empire). Today this decrepit and tattered imperialism is reduced to shooting oppressed Catholics in the Six Counties and its power has declined considerably at home. Hence it uses the old

ingrained racism against black workers in this country. The Tory Immigration Bill is part of that process (as were the antics of racist Jim Callaghan when he was in office) and is designed to pander to the backwardness of the British working class and thus accentuate existing divisions. It is interesting that not even the "left" trade union leaders have spoken up loudly and clearly on behalf of black trade union members, who will be affected by the clauses of this Bill. We can also predict that Labour, far from repealing this Bill if it is returned to office, will probably strengthen it and remove "some of the existing loopholes".

The Black population is a tiny minority in Britain, but the battle-lines have been drawn by its adversaries; it will be forced to fight back and in the process build its own organisations. The Black Panthers and numerous branches of Indian and Pakistani workers' associations have already made a start and shown that they are capable of answering the racist challenge. A further development would, of necessity, be the creation of Committees of Self-Defence in the black ghettos to protect the people from both racist attacks and police brutality. The latter, in particular, is on the increase and the new racists' charter gives it rights to question any Black person and force him to produce his identity card to show whether he is a patriot or a non-patriot. In addition, the temporary status of many black workers will mean deportation if they engage in any meaningful political activity. (The message of British capitalism is clear: we need wage-slaves to work for us, but we can't afford them to engage in trade union activities, leave alone politics. The black workers on their own cannot destroy capitalism in Britain—as they can, for instance, in South Africa—on their own. This can only come about by united working class action at some stage in the future, and even then by their own experience of struggle against racist brutality, the black workers will play an important role; but it is totally confused to expect them to wait for the British revolution. Their struggle against the endemic racism of the capitalist system must go on and must be supported by the revolutionary movement. White revolutionaries have an important class duty to solidarise with the Black struggle in a whole variety of ways. There has been a tendency among certain sections of the British left, the C.P., I.S. and the SLL (the Maoists are on this question very correct) to see the racism of the Tories as not much

different to the restrictions imposed on Italian and Yugoslav labour by the Common Market countries. They see racism as tied directly to economic interests and do not see that it is a total ideology which aims to dehumanise the black population through social, sexual, legal and other forms of oppression. It is as a result different from the economic exploitation of immigrant white labour and it is a gross economic oversimplification to imply that the Immigration Bill is *directly* related to the Industrial Relations Bill. It leads to simply mouthing pious propagandistic platitudes and avoiding the question of intervention.

What is needed is a united front of left organisations to fight against the racist Bill and to develop a concrete and meaningful solidarity with the Black population of this country. The Spartacus League has made a modest start by setting up a Black Defence Committee and appealing to all socialist groups to affiliate to it and help build a sustained campaign against racism. The response of the groups has been abysmal and we stress once again the importance of unity, at least, on certain key issues which affect the labour movement. We urge the comrades of IS, SLL, YCL, etc. to join with the Spartacus League and build a strong movement of solidarity with the victims of racist oppression.

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WOMEN'S LIBERATION-

Context & Potentialities

Four years ago, Juliet Mitchell wrote an article in the *New Left Review* entitled "Women - The Longest Revolution", which offers one of the most comprehensive approaches to the problem of subordination of women to have appeared recently. The article began: -

'The problem of the subordination of women and the need for their liberation was recognized by all the great socialist thinkers in the nineteenth century. It is part of the classical heritage of the revolutionary movement. Yet today, in the West, the problem has become a subsidiary, if not an invisible element in the preoccupations of socialists. Perhaps no other major issue has been so forgotten.' (Mitchell, 1966).

Clearly the introductory remarks which were appropriate in 1966 are not appropriate today. The problem is no longer invisible. In Britain, the strike of Ford women workers in 1968 prompted the re-emergence of the campaign for equal pay and equal rights for women, and since then an increasing number of women's liberation groups has developed as well. There have been similar developments in the United States, and in other capitalist countries, most recently in France. Socialists can no longer ignore the question of the subordination of women; nor is the ritual passing of resolutions recognizing the rights of women, or the assurance that all will be well *after* the revolution, acceptable as an adequate response.

Within this situation, to analyse the various aspects of the position of women is not simply an academic exercise, but one which has practical implications for the orientation of socialists today.

1. A General Framework for understanding the subordination of women must consist of an examination of the ways in which the economic structure of a particular society and the biological structure of the human

species are interrelated at a particular time, and of the role of cultural factors in reinforcing the relationships between the two. In developing her analysis, Mitchell argues that production, reproduction, sex and the socialization of children are the key elements and that 'the variations of women's condition throughout history will be the result of different combinations of these elements.' This article will attempt to examine the interrelation of these structures and the elements of which they are composed, and to relate these to the levels of consciousness of subordination which may develop at a particular time.

The exploitation and oppression of women has probably been a feature of most societies throughout history. Engels wrote in 1884:

'The first class antagonism which appears in history coincides with the development of the antagonism between man and woman in monogamous marriage and the first class oppression with that of the female sex by the male.' (Engels, 1968, p.66).

Drawing from the anthropological works of Lewis Morgan, Engels tried to interpret the trends in human history which gave rise to this exploitation. Engels' work has been criticized because of the almost exclusive emphasis he places on economic and property relationships and because Morgan's work is no longer considered reliable by many contemporary anthropologists, but it does provide the beginnings of an approach which has yet to be more comprehensively developed. At least his analysis does not maintain that the biological characteristics of women *naturally* and *inevitably* give rise to their subordination - a view which has been very popular among many social scientists. (For example, Evans Pritchard, 1965, p.54).

Physical weakness and their role in reproduction has not prevented women from working in general, and in many societies from doing most of the work, including heavy work - though it has restricted their participation in certain types of work in certain types of society (hunting societies for example). Margaret Mead (1950) in a very well-known study, describes three societies, one ex-head hunting, one trading and one agricultural, in which the personal characteristics expected of men and women and the types of relationships between them contrast quite markedly with one another and with our own conventions. Certainly, a cross cultural approach that is statistical may show in most societies 'that males are sexually active, more dominant, more deferred to, more aggressive, less responsible, less nurturant, less emotionally expressive than females.' But 'the extent of these differences varies by culture. And in some cultures these differences

This argument is weakened by the confusion over the source of value in capitalist society, but its implication is clear - for Benston, housework is the *real* work of women, whatever they may do additionally, whoever they may be.

Lenin's view of the effect of housework on those who do it is relevant here:-

'Notwithstanding all the laws emancipating woman she continues to be a domestic slave because petty housework crushes, strangles stultifies and degrades

do not exist (and occasionally the trend is actually reversed). [These differences are related to and presumably influenced by which sex controls economic capital, the extent and kind of division of labour by sex, the degree of political 'authoritarianism', and family composition'. (D'Andrade, 1970).] It is the considerable *range* of social/economic/political relationships between the sexes which is important to our argument, not the statistical fact (see for example Murdoch, 1937) that in most societies men do the 'most important' jobs and dominate over women. In each human society, biology is interpreted culturally within a particular socio-economic structure.

Thus, when we come to consider the relevant biological factors - the process of reproduction, the helplessness (and hence needs) of human infants, and human sexuality, we have to consider these in relation to a specified context, and to look at the particular social meanings attached to each within that context ... and to examine the ways in which these are interwoven with economic and political structures. The context for most of the remaining discussion will be contemporary capitalist society.

2. The Economic Position of Women in Capitalist Societies.

(i) Do women *as such* have a particular structural position? It can be argued that they do. Benston (1969) identifies the material basis for the inferior status of women in the fact that they, as a category, are expected to undertake household work *unpaid*; [they produce use values outside of the money economy and thus are in a different relation to the means of production:-]

[In a society in which money determines value, women are a group who work outside the money economy. Their work is not worth money, is therefore valueless, is therefore not real work. And women themselves who do this valueless work can hardly be expected to be worth as much as men, who work for money.] (p.16).

her, chains her to the kitchen and the nursery and she wastes her labour on barbarously unproductive, petty nerve racking, stultifying and crushing drudgery.' (Lenin, 1969, p.492).

Today, much of the physically exhausting effort has gone out of housework for many women, but the stultifying effect may remain. For instance, some American studies have suggested that labour saving gadgets in themselves have not reduced the time spent on housework (the outside employment of the wife being a far more crucial factor). Secondly, psychologically housework can have an octopus like hold over those responsible for it, involving an endless string of decisions to be taken: what to cook for dinner, how to 'make do' till next pay day, etc., are questions which may constantly intrude into the consciousness, and even provide a continuous mental preoccupation.

The woman's responsibility for housework has general economic significance, as well as political, social and cultural:-

[As an economic unit, the nuclear family is an invaluable stabilizing force in capitalist society. Since the production which is done in the house is paid for by the husband-father's earnings, his ability to withhold his labour from the market is much reduced. Even his flexibility in changing jobs is limited. The woman, denied an active place in the market, has little control over the conditions that govern her life. Her economic dependence is reflected in emotional dependence, passivity, and other 'typical' female personality traits. She is conservative, fearful, supportive of the status quo.] (Benston, 1969, p.20)

This general position of women involves considerable isolation from others in like position. One woman, one husband, 2.5 children, one house as an average. And the real vulnerability of the woman's economic position is obscured by the family set up, and consequently is most clearly revealed where the man is missing from this family group, in the case of unmarried mothers, of widows, divorced and deserted wives. (Holman 1970; Wimperis 1960; Wynn 1964).

Benston in fact lays greater stress on this aspect of the situation of women than has been indicated so far. She is prepared tentatively to define women 'as that group of people who are responsible for the

production of simple use values in those activities associated with the home and family', and to argue, 'In structural terms the closest thing to the condition of women is the condition of others who are also outside of commodity production, i.e. serfs and peasants'. Such an analysis leads to the claim that, qualitatively at least, *all* women suffer the *same* subordination - that Jackie Kennedy Onassis, or Mrs. Thatcher, or any working class housewife or woman factory worker suffer in the same way. It provides some backing, though not necessarily intentionally, to the feminist side of the liberation movement.

Benston draws attention to one *general condition*, but she is mistaken in playing down the significance of very vast differences according to social class, and in ignoring the role of women in the labour force itself. These *three* aspects of the economic position of women have to be *integrated*, inter-related, or we start from a distorted view of the economic situation of women today.

(ii) Women in Employment.

(a) The Need for Women in the Labour Force.

Women have for long provided a reserve pool of labour, to be drawn into productive work in times of war, or full employment, and so on. However, they are not only this. Women are also a necessary part of the labour force, and in the most recent period there has been a clear trend towards an increase in the proportions of women at work.

Between 1881 and 1951, the proportion of women in employment in Britain was fairly stable at about 25 - 27%; by 1961, it had risen to 37% (Yudkin & Holme, 1969, p.25). The Survey of Women's Employment carried out in June-September, 1965 showed 34% of women between 16 and 64 in full time employment, 17.9% in part time employment and a total of 54.3% as coming within the category of the 'economically active'. Nearly 2/3 of the working women were married (Hunt, 1968).

A similar increase can be seen elsewhere. For example, in the United States in 1947, 28.1% of the civilian labour force were women, but by 1968 this had risen to 37.1% (Rowntree, 1970, p.27). Using the significance of such trends to show the inadequacies of Benston's article, J. & M. Rowntree correctly point out that [it is difficult to treat women simply as unpaid producers of use values in the home * when more than 2/5 of them are in the labour force.] The United States National Manpower Council stated in 1958, 'The answer to the question - what would happen if all working wives would give up their

jobs - is that we would not be able to perform the essential services needed. It would be a catastrophe, a disaster of the first magnitude.' (Quoted in Yüdkin & Holme, 1969, p.30). That many women should be in paid employment seems necessary to capitalist economy at the present time. And the wage from a woman's employment has become an important contributor to the standard of living of many families, besides protecting some from poverty. The idea that a woman should work, except, perhaps, for a few years while she looks after her young children, has become widely accepted, and thus many women will be occupied as full time housekeepers and child minders only for a limited number of years; for much more time they may be both employed workers *and* houseworkers.

(b) Inequality in Work.

At work, women are in an inferior position in comparison with male workers. Some aspects of this inequality have been quite widely publicised over the past few years, especially where action campaigns and publications have drawn attention to this situation, as in the case of unequal pay. Thus we have seen Barbara Castle prepare a bill apparently offering equal pay in five years (though at the same time removing most of the protective legislation governing the employment of women). Even the Tories and the C.B.I. have had to pay lip service to the desirability of equal pay. However, these gestures should not obscure the nature and extent of inequality in work, nor mislead us into thinking that the inequalities *must* be diminishing. The main aspects can be summarised as follows:-

(i) Unequal Work. Women tend to be employed in a very much narrower range of occupations than men. The Survey of Women's Employment showed that most of the jobs done by women 'were at a low level in the Registrar General's classification' of occupations. The same would be true of other capitalist countries. In the U.S.A. 'Most women workers are to be found in a relatively small number of occupations which are generally considered to be 'women's work''. (Yüdkin & Holme, 1969, p.31). In Sweden, Baude and Holmberg point out:- 'According to the 1960 Census, 71% of all gainfully occupied women are concentrated in slightly more than 20 occupations. By contrast, only 11.7% of all male workers are listed in these job categories. The vast majority of occupations are in consequence almost exclusively 'male'. (Dahlstrom, 1967, p.113-4). In Britain it is not only that women's work tends to be traditionally within a narrow range of low status and low paid occupations, but also that while the numbers of women at work increase, the proportions of them in skilled, technical, supervisory and managerial work is *decreasing*. An ATTI pamphlet summarising a Department of Employment and Productivity survey, 1968, shows this trend:-

'Between 1951 and 1961, the proportion of women

proprietors, managers, administrators and executives fell from 19.4% to 18.6%; in clerical and allied work it rose from 55.7% to 60.1%, in higher professional technical occupations, the percentage of women fell from 33.9 to 31.1%, and in lower professional technical from 46.4 to 43.2%; there was a fall in the proportion of women skilled workers from 15.5 to 13.9% but a rise in semi-skilled and unskilled of 40.5 to 41 and 28.7 to 32.7% respectively'. (ATTI, 1970).

* It appears that the increasing numbers of women drawn into employment are coming predominantly into work requiring little skill. *

(ii) Unequal Pay. Women's work is associated with low rates of pay. The survey of women's employment carried out in 1965 showed that 31.2% of working women earned less than 4/- an hour, 53.3% earned less than 5/-; only 3.6% earned as much as 10/- per hour and 1.5% as much as 14/- an hour (Hunt 1968). The D.E.P. Survey of earnings of Sept. 1968 showed that the median wage for male manual workers was £22.4, while for women it was £10.8. For non-manual workers, the median for men was £27.8, for women £14.1, for a full week's work in all cases. This reflects the low economic value which has been attached to the categories of work done mainly by women, as well as the lower rates of pay for women doing the same jobs as men in many cases. Despite the publicity and recent campaigns on this issue, these inequalities also seem to be widening. For example, in October 1960, average earnings for women in full time manual employment were 49% of the equivalent male earnings; in 1968 they were 48%, in October 1969 they were 47%. (Morning Star, 18/12/70).

In addition, wage offers in connection with productivity proposals during this year have been such as to increase the differential between male and female rates for jobs within the same grade, the discrimination against women who have to work for lower rates of pay is particularly obvious. But systems of job grading, which are arbitrary and unscientific anyway, tend consistently to under-rate women's jobs. An agreement drawn up for Rootes, Linwood, in 1968 classified all the jobs in the factory into five grades, with different rates of pay for each grade; a sixth grade with pay equal to grade 5 involved no job or skill specifications at all, but simply consisted of 'all females except cleaners'. (Labour Research, Aug. 1968). (It is relevant to remember that Ford women struck initially not simply because they received only 85% of male rates of pay but because they saw that their skills were being deliberately down graded).

In this general context it can be seen that the establishment of legislation requiring equal pay for equal work could be of only limited value. The experience of other countries which already have such legislation is instructive.

In France, for example, equal pay for equal work has been accepted in principle since 1948. In practice however, 'the basic wage for women is 7% less than that for men and the difference in take home pay can be as much as 33%. (*Guardian*, 23/11/70).

(iii) Unequal Education and Training. The system of education in Britain is supposed to provide for equality of opportunity; but, as in the case of working class access to education, so with girls. The removal of crude economic and other barriers only reveals subtler ones at work (to paraphrase Jackson & Marsden, 1964). Only one or two aspects of this will be listed here, but the relation of educational experience and opportunity to work experience and opportunity is very important.

Educational provision is not always equal. In many schools, the curriculum for girls tends to be biased more towards arts and domestic subjects, while for boys it tends to include more science, and in some cases mechanical and technological subjects. Standards for the equipment of girls schools have reflected this - less laboratory space for girls schools than for boys' housecraft space for girls and none for boys (see for example, Ministry of Education Bulletin 2A, 1954). After school the differences become more apparent. The proportions of girls getting day release is low:- in 1962-3, while 30.3% of boys under 18 got day release, only 7.4% of girls did so; of 18-20 year olds, the percentages were 16.7 and 1.7 respectively. (Henniker Heaton, 1964). In 1964, only 6% of girls compared to 36% of boys went into apprenticeships and the range of apprenticeships open to girls is itself very narrow. Although the proportions of girls getting university places has increased, they still only make up about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the student body, which is even lower than the proportion for many other countries. A UNESCO report in 1966 gave the following proportions:- U.K. 24%, Finland 47%, France 41%, USA 37%, Sweden 34%, Italy 29%.

The examples outlined above are intended to indicate some of the inequalities in education, training, work and pay which characterize the situation of women in this society. However, their situation is more complex than this. To be in a position of equality as wage workers, women would require an equal cultural freedom with men to enter into the wage relationship. Because of their domestic, maternal, wifely 'duties', they lack this. 'In this society, the father's family role is a market one, that of 'provider'. This role is compatible with his role as free wage worker. But the mother's culturally defined role is a non market one, the practical day to day care of children. While men can comfort themselves with the thought that 'at least I'm providing for my family', working women fear that 'I'm neglecting my children too'. As a result, women experience all

the alienation faced by any worker under capitalism, plus a conflict rather than a reinforcement of cultural values, and are not even financially rewarded for their discomfort'. (M. & J. Rowntree, 1970, p.28).

Thus there are very real contradictions between home and work, and these are likely to be most acute for working class working mothers.

3. **These Cultural Constraints** must now be examined; in this we are considering the social evaluations which have been attached to reproduction, sexuality and the relative helplessness of human infants; and which have the effect of preparing women for, and reinforcing them in a position of general secondariness which, despite the contradictions within it, most women accept.

(a) **Reproduction and the care of children.**

Reproduction and the physical and social dependence of infants and small children have been very widely interpreted as interdependent features of motherhood. Mead comments of this:- 'We have assumed that because it is convenient for a mother to wish to care for her child, this is a trait with which women have been more generously endowed by a careful teleological process of evolution. We have assumed that because men have hunted, an activity requiring enterprise, bravery and initiative, they have been endowed with these useful aptitudes as part of their sex temperament.' (Mead, 1950).

The part played by women in productive work has been restricted by their role in reproduction - having babies necessitates some withdrawal from work. But this has been built into a powerful ideology in which having and caring for babies and maintaining a home are seen as the *natural vocation* of women, the main path for them to personal fulfillment. It is important to notice that during a period in which the amount of time spent in child bearing and rearing has considerably decreased (Titmus estimates that in the 1890s a woman would spend on average 15 years in a state of pregnancy or nursing a child through the first year of life compared with 4 years for the average mother today (1963, p.91)), the mystification of motherhood has not been similarly reduced. In fact the latter is supported by statements and reports from diverse sources: religious leaders, industrialists and advertising experts, psychologists and sociologists, educationalists, etc., and thereby inferior opportunities and rewards for women (unequal because 'different') can be sustained.

For example, in the field of education, Sir John Newsom has written:-

'We try to educate girls into becoming imitation men and as a result we are wasting and frustrating their qualities of womanhood at great expense to the community. I believe that in addition to their needs as individuals, our girls should be educated in terms of their main social function - which is to make for themselves, their children and their husbands a secure and suitable home, and to be mothers'. (The Observer, 6/9/64).

This identification of a *specific* period and particular aspect of women's lives as their 'major social function' is consistent with the unending moralistic, religious and emotionally loaded platitudes which are attached to the questions of motherhood, and of working mothers (e.g. Billy Graham, 1970, Frieden, 1965, Ch.2). Thus, the work of Bowlby and other psychologists on the effects of maternal (not of course parental or social) deprivation has been used to attack mothers who go out to work at least as much as it has been used to condemn impersonal residential institutional care for children. The popularized versions of this work are innumerable and often emotionally highly charged. An article in the Guardian warned, 'there is a sixth sense which warns us that although the widespread employment of mothers by small children might be to the nation's economic good, it may not be to the good of the nation's children ... A child is happiest with its mother. Deep down the average mother is happiest with her child ...' (O'Neill, 1967). The article fails to examine the source of that 'sixth sense', which must derive from socialization, and thus involved assumptions about relationships of men, women and children which are related to the particular economic and social structure of this society.

Further reinforcement for this view is provided by Parsons, who has argued that the child 'needs' an expressive model (mother) and an instrumental model (father) for 'adequate socialization' (Parsons, 1946). More recently, other sociologists have suggested that modern families have become 'little democracies', and that the subordinated and restricted position of women is a thing of the past (Fletcher, 1962, McGregor, 1968). To reach such conclusions it is however necessary to ignore even the obvious negative results of family relationships: baby battering and other types of personal violence, scapegoating, etc. (Blackburn, 1969, Laing & Esterton, 1968).

The advertising media, concerned with women as major consumers, have made a strong contribution. Frieden quotes one advertising expert:-

'Most of the manufacturers we deal with are producing things which have to do with home making. In a free enterprise economy, we have to develop the need for new products. We help (women) to re-discover that home making is more creative than to compete with men.' (Frieden, 1965, p.199f.)

Although maternity is seen as the ultimate fulfillment for women, in the occupational sphere it is treated as a sort of deviation for which women may be punished by loss of pay, loss of job, loss of opportunity for promotion, etc; the *right* to work after the baby is born is called into question. This is well illustrated by the Plowden Report's recommendation for increased provision of nursery education:-

'We consider that mothers who cannot satisfy the authorities that they have *exceptionally good reasons* for working should have low priority for full time nursery education for their children.'
(Plowden, 1967, p.128, my italics).

However, the acceptance of some 'exceptions' is also necessary and important. In world war II, the 'duty to work' overrode the 'duty' to children, and creches and nurseries were established in greater numbers than exist today, to ease this sudden change. Today we see that a positive virtue can be made out of *not* providing enough full time care facilities, even though it is recognized that this will drive many women to make unsatisfactory arrangements for their children (Plowden, 1967, p.127, Yudkin, 1967). Nevertheless, the main source of unused labour within this country is married women, many of whom will have children, and some of them must be drawn back into employment. Economic pressures and the desire for adult social contact ensure that some mothers do so, but at the expense of flouting the dominant ideology of motherhood, and of (generally) coping without the necessary services for the care of children. The 'expressive' qualities of true motherhood are widely understood as women's compensation for her economic and sexual dependency.

(b) Sex can be discussed separately from reproduction to a greater extent than in the past. The technical means of separating sexual intercourse from pregnancy are now more reliable and more available and more within the control of women; in particular, the

pill and somewhat easier access to abortion have been important factors in this. But the idea that women have the *right* to control their own bodies and to define their own sexuality is strongly resisted. Although traditional standards of sexual morality have to a considerable extent been questioned and rejected (the marked increase in illegitimate births in Britain during the 1960s can be interpreted as one indication of this (Illsley & Gill, 1968)), we inherit at least the remnants of a dual morality with a great heritage of complex ideological rationalizations to support it, and the assumptions of dual standards have become a part of the English language, just as racist assumptions have become built into our patterns of speech.

Two aspects of this will be discussed here.

(i) Men define women's sexuality - and they have defined it as a *response* to men. This can be traced through a range of traditional clichés - ladies don't move, men act, women react, etc. Freud's interpretation of the problems of his female patients lies *within* this tradition and at the same time has been used to justify it. Freud's women patients *may* have been unable to reconcile themselves to the fact that they were not men, *may* have suffered from penis envy, *may* have been unable to achieve 'mature' sexual relationships (i.e. vaginal orgasm). However, their neurotic condition, thus diagnosed *may* either be interpreted as telling us something about women, and about female sexuality in general, or about certain types of response to a social situation in which the opportunities and openings for women were absolutely and narrowly delimited, whereas for men, that is, for middle class men, they were not. *But* an increase in the range of opportunities available to women, at least in a general sense and for some women, has not undermined the dominance of this view of female sexuality, although it is questioned. A recent example from a book on the 'Sexuality of Women' illustrates this, one of the authors sees 'man as the nurturer of sex, a gardener cultivating the blossoms of sensuality, which *flower or fade according to his dexterity.*' (my italics, from review of Gebhard, Ruboch & Liese, 1970 in *New Society*, 7/5/70).

Male definitions of women's sexuality are also reflected in the ways in which women try to make themselves into what they - or their mothers - think men want them to be. In terms of appearance, their shape, weight and decoration is exploited by whole industries. But this also applies to personal characteristics and abilities. One of the few more interesting studies of behaviour

in American colleges demonstrated that American college girls were pressured into appearing more stupid than their dates (Komarovsky, 1946). Such processes, sometimes obvious, sometimes subtle, are part of the process of socialization - involving many contradictory elements - experienced by girls within societies such as ours. Female sexuality, seen as something which is intrinsically passive, submissive, dependent on the definitions and actions of men is vulnerable to distortion and manipulation not only in personal relationships, but through, for example, the uses that can be made of it through advertising and the media generally. It provides a further means of reinforcing the differences between people.

(ii) Female sexuality is used as a thing, separate and separable from the person. This is commonly reflected in speech - a picture of a nude woman is 'a pair of tits', and the English swearing vocabulary shows the same characteristic. These traditions of speech help to reinforce the separation of men and women into different social and psychological worlds (e.g. Dennis, et. al., 195). The more obvious instances are thrown at us through advertising and the media generally. A few sexy dollies - or appropriate portions of them - can be attached to almost any commodity to enhance sales appeal. Advertising also distorts male sexuality in this way, though it is to a lesser extent frequently used. In relation to this a great deal of advertising directed at women plays upon contradictions and uncertainties in women's situations - thus the purchase of the right toothpaste makes one sexually desirable, the right drink guarantees popularity, the right washing powder marks out the 'good mum', etc., etc. The parade of female bodies in 'beauty' contests, of which the Miss World contest is merely the most publicised example, suggests that female 'beauty' can be judged in a show ring in much the same way as the quality of cattle at a dairy show; the body is not part of a person, but a set of proportions to be compared with other sets of proportions. The sexual oppression of women is expressed in numerous and pervasive ways, some of which are very crude. It is not surprising that some writers have focussed almost exclusively on this aspect of the subordination of women - most recently Greer (1970). Such an approach, however, fails to make the crucial links between this, and the other aspects of exploitation.

The social interpretation of pregnancy and child bearing, of the dependency of children, of the sexual characteristics of women, all this is such as to confirm women in a position of economic and social subordination. Thus we have noted the cultural identification of physical maternity with an elaborate and mystified social concept of

motherhood, the characterization of female sexual identity as dependant and subordinate, the uses of female sexuality as an object; all of which combine to produce the cultural subordination of women, which both reflects and provides an ideological justification for exploitation. The particular set of relationships between economics, biological and cultural factors determines the position of women in any society. Of these, the structural factors are dominant, but the superstructural factors have a special significance because they encompass biological characteristics, so that many aspects of the subordination of women can be made to appear inseparable from the physiology of womanhood. Because of this, the liberation of women is not possible without a transformation of economic and political structures, but we cannot be sure that these will provide a guarantee of liberation either.

4. Women in Post Capitalist Society.

At this point it is relevant to comment briefly on the position of women in the USSR, and on how this has developed since 1917. While Russian women have in some respects greater equality than women in Britain or other capitalist societies, they are by no means liberated. Recent translations from Soviet sociology illustrates this very clearly (Osipov, 1969). In them, the ideological-theoretical framework for the sociology of the family is moralistic and reactionary. A specific study of a Moldavian village shows - through tables, not the text - the continuing exploitation of women, whose working hours decreased from 13.2 in 1964 to 12.2 in 1960, compared with a decrease from 11.7 to 7.8 hours for men. This situation has to be understood in relation to the specific historical circumstances of the Russian Revolution. In the years immediately following 1917, legislation was directed at undermining the traditional family structure with its exploitation of women and of children. Legal equality was established, marriage became a matter of state registration, divorce was available on demand by either party, abortion was free, the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate children was removed, Lenin continued to emphasize the need to free women from 'chattel slavery', and creches and communal dining rooms were set up (Carr, 1970, ch.2). However, these measures were introduced within that context of revolutionary isolation and economic backwardness which provided a basis for the development of Stalinism. It is against this background that the erosion and in some respects reversal of progressive family policies should be located:-

'The actual liberation of women is unrealizable on the basis of generalized want',

wrote Trotsky (1957 ed., Ch. VII), tracing and explaining the betrayal of this aspect of the revolution. Within the overall degeneration of the revolution, the 'functional' need for a traditional type of family has been re-affirmed and the re-mystification of motherhood probably reached its peak in the 1940s when producing children became almost a political duty.

The early developments show us the potentialities for liberation which may follow from a change in economic relationships, but the subsequent history of the USSR also shows how, in that specific situation, the old cultural forms could be recalled to a considerable extent, and women set back in a secondary, though formally equal position.

5. Consciousness of Subordination.

As with other structurally disadvantaged groups, so with women, the existence of subordination is not automatically recognized by those who suffer it, although subjective awareness will be related to structural position in some way. Indeed, women have proved to be important pillars of their own oppression. From infancy, they learn of their own inferiority, and learn to measure their lives within it; they have been champions of the 'equal but different' view which divides the world into men's things and women's things. Many have learned to find some identity in the mystique of motherhood, in the power that a woman can wield in the home, and indirectly through her husband or her children. Yet few women can totally avoid the conflicting expectations which surround their contemporary situation. The vast majority of women marry, and in effect see no alternative to doing so; getting a man is an achievement even if the long term implications are often unclear - one study of the projected life histories of teenage girls as told in stories revealed that a significant proportion of them had 'got rid of' their husbands by the age of 40 (Veness, 1962). Most withdraw from work to have and bring up children; and yet, according to Gavron's small study, many experience 'motherhood as a kind of captivity'. (Gavron, 1968, p.151). As children grow up, most women now hope to return to work (Gavron, 1966, Hunt, 1968); and yet the idea that women have a *right* to work is still hardly developed, and Klein did not find it at all in her investigation of women and work (Klein, 1960). Restricted opportunities, unequal economic recognition and reward, a secondary position in the family, contradictory expectations have given rise to dissatisfactions, frustrations and confusions among women but generally at a vague and fragmented or incoherent level. Women as a whole do not appear to identify

themselves as a group who share a common situation of exploitation and oppression; and as the experience and significance of belonging to the category woman varies very greatly according to class position, it would not necessarily be a progressive step if they came to do so. The clearest and greatest exploitation is that of working class women, whether at home, where they may be the targets for the antagonisms and frustrations which their husbands derive from their work situations, or at work, where they will be amongst the most exploited of workers. Probably for working class working mothers the contradictions are most extreme. Particularly outside the long established working class communities where relatives may live near enough to provide help, support and company, the need for adequate (in both a quantitative and a qualitative sense) child care facilities is particularly important and the provision almost always inadequate. At work, the potential for organization and action is often considerable. The need for organization seems to be becoming more widely recognized amongst women - the proportion joining trade unions has exceeded male recruitment in the last two years.

The veneer of educational and social equality and family 'democracy' may impress many middle class women, but those who become aware of their secondary position may develop a sense of being psychologically contained by their situation within the home and by their unequal chances at work. Their cultural background may lead them to search (initially at least) for personal solutions or for sympathetic others with whom problems can be talked out (either a man who will half the housework, or a group of women with the same problems). But in most cases the material pressures are likely to be less acute, and the possibilities of finding some measure of individual relief are probably greater (au pair girls, play groups, etc., etc.).

Let us evaluate briefly the various perspectives of those who are more articulate about and against the subordination of women today. Firstly, there are those who want more women to get a share of the rewards which are available in this society. They want more women to be able to get directorships, or they see the (not irreversible) trend to co-educational comprehensive schools as a threat to the promotion prospects of female teachers, or they want married women in highly paid jobs to be taxed separately from their husbands, and hence less heavily. Such issues have little to do with women's liberation: they are concerned, at least in the immediate sense, with admitting more women to that small proportion of society which participates most advantageously in capitalism.

A second perspective is feminist; in its most extreme form seeking to

replace men by women in positions of dominance, often identifying men as the oppressors of women. The American 'Society for Cutting Up Men' is probably the most frequently quoted example of such an orientation; the confusion which it represents is that of identifying men, who are the main *agents* of the oppression of women, with the *causes* of that oppression. In a less extreme form, those who hope to build a movement which will appeal to *all* women (which is the logic of Benston's analysis mentioned earlier) imply the same confusion. Some women, as noticed above, are looking for a greater chance to exploit or contain others - female or male - and not for general liberation. Sexual exploitation, and responsibility and provisions for the care of young children are the issues which have been most frequently emphasized within this orientation. Most women's liberation groups in Britain have so far tended to develop such an emphasis, though groups vary very much and some campaign on economic issues as well. They have been largely, though not exclusively supported by middle class women and have often provided a kind of therapeutic environment in which personal frustrations could be articulated as well as - sometimes - a basis for action or protest. Women's liberation groups will not spontaneously move from introversion and from the main concern with sexual exploitation to action and a more integrated and extensive opposition to all aspects of the exploitation of women. Such developments are possible, but they are only likely to become consistent where understanding develops from a personal or impressionistic or group therapeutic level to that of a structural and super-structural analysis; that is from a feminist to a socialist perspective.

Thirdly, there are the campaigns - struggles which have developed around the campaigns for equal pay and equal rights. After the strike of Ford women workers in 1968, it seemed that there was a considerable potential of mass support, mainly from working women for such a campaign. However, this has not been realized, although there was a demonstration in 1969 with considerable trade union support, resolutions were passed at several trade union conferences, and a number of industrial struggles have taken place on the equal pay/equal grading/equal rights and the right to unionization issues.

Whether or not the National Joint Action Campaign Committee for Women's Equal rights can recapture the potentialities of 1968/69 is uncertain. But the major significance of this aspect of the rejection of subordination is that it is industrially based. Working women, and particularly working class working women have the potential power of an organized group, or a potentially organized group. Women have traditionally been regarded as a backward sector of the labour movement but that this tradition should be broken is important both to the struggles of women and

of workers generally; that it can be broken has been indicated by the militancy of women involved in struggles such as those mentioned above, and in others not only concerned with women. But if these struggles are to develop progressively, the demands for equal pay and the right to unionization must extend to full and equal control in union affairs, to the right to those provisions which would give women cultural equality with men in entering into work, to a general questioning of the basis of capitalist relationships, which tie women to general subordination. For it is clear that the situation of most men within our society is not enviable - to be in an *inferior* position is worse, of course, but equality is not enough. The *liberation* of women (or most men) is not possible within the structure of this society.

Thus, both the fundamental need to change the structure of society and of attacking the tenacious superstructural factors must be recognized if women are to be liberated. What are the implications of this for the orientation of socialists to this movement? Firstly, their orientation must reflect the centrality of economic structure as the lynch pin of the subordination of women in capitalist society; so overall priority is to the situation and to the struggles of working class working women, without whose militancy and consciousness alongside that of male workers, the necessary structural changes cannot be made within which the movement towards liberation - for women and for men - becomes possible.

In practice this may involve support for any women workers on strike, taking part in picketing, interviewing strikers, explaining their case, for example to students, and getting solidarity support, offering to work with them to produce leaflets explaining demands and the development of the struggle; developing contacts with shop stewards and their women workers (often more direct approaches are possible than in the case of male workers, as there appears to be less hostility from such women towards female students), and working with them on such questions as unequal or low pay, working conditions and opportunities, nursery provision, unequal work, etc., and as such contact is developed, it may be possible to link such campaigns to other issues, such as sexual exploitation. Propaganda work based on pay opportunities, conditions, facilities in the local situation can be built up and can be used to explain and extend the campaign. Such local demands must be linked to the general situation, and must be extended from questions of economic equality to developing an understanding of the necessity of changing those cultural conditions without which potential equality cannot be made real. While support must be built up for the demands for free abortion and contraception,

and against sexual exploitation, and the significance of these matters as a part of the subordination of women should be explained, campaigns on such issues are not the central ones in the work of women socialists.

In addition, we need further analysis and investigation of the inter-relation of the various aspects of the position of women as it exists. However, action must be linked to discussion and analysis. There is a marked tendency in many existing women's groups for action to be replaced by it.

The significance of the women's liberation movement today is that it forces socialists to remember their support for issues which have for long been considered of secondary importance. Lip service has been paid to the rights of women but both within the theory and the practice of the socialist movement this issue has often been treated as periferal. The time has come for socialists who are women to challenge this tradition; it must be recognized that the liberation of women is a crucial part of any socialist programme towards which demands must be raised *now*. At the present stage the means to this is the development of Socialist Woman groups around the sort of programme outlined above. If political organization is to be related to an examination of the nature of the political problem faced, the import of the analysis in this paper is that neither by immersing themselves in a feminist dominated women's liberation movement, an attraction to some socialists, nor by refusing to organize a women's movement at all, as others argue, can advance be achieved. The socialist women's groups can be the base, both for a re-orientation of the feminist groups, and for the development of the understanding of the broader implications of the problem, both for working class women, and for many male trade unionists and socialists.

Margaret Coulson.

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British Trotskyism in the Thirties

The following article is the text of a speech given by Harry Wicks at a Spartacus League educational school on the Fourth International.

In a later issue we will deal with work inside the ILP & the formation of the Revolutionary Communist Party. (Eds).

The Communist Party

Like the Bolshevik Leninists in the C.P.S.U. the opposition developed out of a struggle within the Communist Party itself. Unlike the C.P.S.U. however the British Communist Party was not rich in theoretical Marxism. In fact, the British movement as a whole for generations was devoid of theory, one could almost say contemptuous of it. What Deutscher termed the 'classical Marxism', those debates that occupied Social Democracy before 1914, scarcely found an echo in this country. So not surprisingly, the Communist Party which was formed in the halcyon days following the October revolution was equally indifferent to Marxist theory, it was to an extent insular in outlook, and devoted itself to giving a left wing militant edge to trade union struggle. Profiting from the 3rd Congress of the Communist International particularly its thesis on the Party and Organisation, Dutt and Pollitt produced a report to the Battersea Congress (1922) which aimed to build a centralised party. The core of that report was that the party was to be organised into working groups oriented to a specific function. The positive side of this organisational plan can be seen, the party membership was a working membership, coherent and unified within a particular field of activity. The negative feature, which aroused opposition at an early stage, was that the membership were deprived of an essential element of political life, that of discussion. Policy discussion became the prerogative of the leadership at national and district level. Only at times, by means of aggregate meetings of the membership was it possible to hear political debate on a wider sphere than ones working group. It was in such an aggregate

meeting of the London membership that the issue of Trotskyism first arose in the British party. At an extended Party Executive meeting held in January 1925 it was decided to endorse the E.C.C.I. decision condemning Leon Trotsky for the publication of *The Lessons of October*. This blanket endorsement was questioned by the London District Party Committee. What was it about? Where was the information? This doubt resulted in the first and last discussion of Leon Trotsky's viewpoint in the British party. An aggregate meeting of the London membership heard A.E. Reade, a member of the London District Party Committee move an amendment to a resolution submitted by Rothstein and Murphy. Reade's amendment was:

'This aggregate meeting of the London District membership of the C.B.G.B. joins with the District Party Committee in regretting the hasty vote of the Party Council in condemning Comrade Trotsky without full information: and this meeting at the same time takes the opportunity to express the London membership's emphatic support both of the left wing's minority fight in the Russian Party against bureaucracy, and equally of the Comintern's struggle against right wing divergencies from Leninism in the French, Bulgarian and German sections'.

Workers Weekly, Jan. 23rd, 1925

According to that report the Rothstein Murphy resolution was carried with only ten voting for the Reade amendment. What was significant was that the following week, 30th January, the Workers Weekly carried a correction to its report which stated that 200 were present at the meeting and the minority was 15. Further, at one stage in the debate, a motion to adjourn the debate (in order to be informed of L.T. case) was defeated by 81 votes to 65.

This episode in the party's history revealed a party leadership supporting the Stalin line in the Comintern whilst at the same time starving the membership of information as to the issues in dispute. This practice was again repeated in 1929, this time on the Bukharin expulsion from the C.P.S.U. At a London aggregate meeting held on July 12th, 1929, a resolution was passed critical of the C.C. draft resolution for the Leeds congress. The London membership aggregate declared that the C.C. draft *'presupposes that the party as a whole has a fair knowledge of the inner party situation of the sections (of the C.I.). This information the party has not got and for the party to understand this statement it must have in its possession more complete information'*. (Com. Rev. Nov., 1929).

The cumulative effect of the decisions of the 9th Plenum (Jan. 1928), the 6th Congress of the C.I. (July 1928) and the 10th Plenum (July 1929) produced

in the British party complete ideological confusion. The ninth plenum pushed the party to assert itself against the L.P. on the parliamentary election front, the 6th Congress announced the Third Period, the eve of revolution. The tenth plenum declared that social democracy was social fascism and it was now the tasks of the communist parties to independently lead the masses. The Leeds Congress met in December 1929 with the party at its lowest ebb ever, and the membership in ferment. Those comrades who wish to deepen their understanding of the nature of Ultra-Leftism as applied to British conditions, I recommend the study of the British party history for the years 1929/33. From this inner party struggle of that period emerged the Groves, Sara & Purkiss group which probed deeper for the reasons of the crisis within the C.I. and Party. Within a year these comrades were studying the writings of Leon Trotsky which were being published in America. By early 1931 Groves was a correspondent for the American Militant, and preparations were under way to renew the fight against the ultra left line of the C.I.

The Balham Group and the Communist League

In November 1931 Max Schatman visited London and at a meeting of Groves, Sara, Purkiss and myself discussed the formation of a left opposition group in this country. Shachtman proposed that one of us should 'stand on the altar' for demonstrative expulsion as a declared Trotskyist. This we objected to. We saw our task as that of attempting to win a wider group of party members to challenge the leadership on the fateful line of the C.I.

From the Autumn of 1931, when unemployment reached its peak, we conducted a widespread unemployment agitation in South London. In spite of the 'social fascist' theory and the party attitude that the I.L.P. was the 'left hand of fascism' we initiated discussions within the I.L.P. branches in South London to clarify a policy to meet the crisis.

The Spring of 1932 the C.I. announced an International Conference against War, not called by organisations but by a manifesto under the name of Henri Barbusse. This substitute for the Leninist United Front was forcibly denounced by Leon Trotsky and the International Left Opposition. The Balham group tackled the task of building a South West London Anti-War Committee on a representative basis. The Daily Worker reported the widespread meetings of solidarity with the German workers which were initiated by the S.W. Anti-War Committee under the chairmanship of Reg Groves. Throughout the early summer of 1932, when the German elections were revealing the threat of fascism in Germany, the Balham group campaigned unremittingly for a United Front in Germany and against the line of the party on the Amsterdam congress of Barbusse. The trade union policy of the party was criticized and the group demanded the convening of a party conference. A notable success was achieved

by the Daily Worker publishing in full with bold headlines the resolution passed by the S.W. London Anti-War Committee *The Militant Mandate for Delegates*. This mandate embodied the salient points of the declaration of the International Left Opposition.

Three days later (16th Aug., 1932) with equally bold headlines carried an article by J.R. Campbell denouncing the Militant Mandate as not being militant but mischievous, and concealing Trotskyist phrases. (D.W. 16th Aug., 1932). On Monday, 15th August, the Polit Bureau announced the calling for October 12th Party Congress and the opening of the most democratic pre-conference discussion. Three days later the Daily Worker announced the expulsion of Groves, Flower and Wicks for fractional activity against the line of the party. Within a week, Stuart Purkiss and B. Williams, two railway militants, were expelled and Henry Sara. At a specially summoned meeting of the Balham group the remaining members were presented with an ultimatum. Repudiate the line of the group or face expulsion. With one exception, all chose expulsion rather than capitulate to the disastrous line of the party leadership. To some of those comrades, the party was their life, but no recidivists were among them.

The Group replied to the expulsion policy with a declaration explaining to the membership the issues that had been fought for, and the problems that faced the party and C.I. in the existing situation. It listed the names of the expelled, together with their years of party membership, and ended with the declaration that we would appeal to the now announced 12th Party Congress. Refused the right to appeal to conference, Groves and myself distributed leaflets from outside. Apart from the attempted rough hand we witnessed the unedifying spectacle of Rust the Political Bureau member taking from the assembled delegates, even Central Committee members, our published statement before they entered the conference hall.

The Communist League (1933-34)

The voice of the International Left Opposition was by no means muted by our rejection in December 1931 of the Shachtman proposal for a demonstrative exit from the C.P. From early 1932 'The Communist' was published, which printed in duplicated form all those writings of Leon Trotsky addressed to the German Proletariat before Hitler's conquest of power. Trotsky, in a letter to us at the time, praised 'this excellent duplicated publication'.

On May 1st, 1933, the first issue of the monthly paper the 'Red Flag' appeared dedicated to the task of regenerating the revolutionary movement. Its first editorial declared:

'We do not at this stage, seek to form a new party or a new International, we are a group of revolutionaries who have

been expelled from the Communist Party for advocating the policy and principles upon which the Communist International was founded. Our object is to win the communists back to that policy, and such an object concerns all working men and women, since without a functioning effective Leninist International we cannot hope to overthrow capitalist rule'.

With the publication of the Red Flag as the organ of the Communist League, our appeal and the writings of Leon Trotsky reached out to a wider public. Some notable successes were recorded. Two worthy of mention were the Open Letter to Tom Mann, and the effective clarification of the implications of the United Communist Party proposal campaigned for by the Revolutionary Policy Committee of the I.L.P.

For the younger comrades the letter addressed to Tom Mann was on the occasion of the arrest of Chen Tu Hsiu a founder member of the Chinese Communist Party. The Comintern and its International Labour Defence organisation uttered no protest. The reason for this silence was that Chen Tu Hsiu had written that the Chinese events of 1927/28 had tragically confirmed the analysis of the Russian Opposition. Tom Mann, like our Comrade Sara, was a member of a Comintern delegation to China in 1927. Tom Mann wrote to the Red Flag:

I count it my duty to continue to develop opinion till it shall be equal to demanding and securing the release of our comrade'.

Red Flag, Sept. 7th, 1933

Following the disaffiliation of the I.L.P. from the Labour Party (1932), the Revolutionary Policy Committee within the I.L.P. were campaigning for a United Communist Party. The basis of this unity was to be the programme of the Communist International. Through the Red Flag and active discussion with the I.L.P. militants, the Communist League urged the revolutionary workers in the I.L.P. to fight for their organisation to declare itself openly upon the main political questions of the time. The problem posed by the German debacle, the united front, the question of the situation in the U.S.S.R. By our active intervention, the militants in the I.L.P. were inoculated against Stalinism and only a fragment followed J. Gaster into the Communist Party.

At the end of 1933, the International Secretariat of the Left Opposition suggested that we should liquidate the organisation and enter the I.L.P. to win them over to the Fourth International. After a thorough going discussion this view was rejected by a substantial majority, thereupon the minority entered the I.L.P. and the status of the Communist League was reduced to that of a sympathetic section.

The Marxist League

The immediate aftermath of the German defeat, 'the Communist International's Fourth of August', as Trotsky expressed it, raised the question for all revolutionary marxists of; can the discredited communist movement be regenerated? Throughout the left opposition a vigorous debate proceeded. Trotsky projected on an International scale a new orientation for the movement; the need to build a new International. Experience had convinced us that it was necessary to look beyond the discredited communist party for fresh forces. In that situation the Red Flag (Oct., 1934) stated:

'For the victory of the British workers there is a need for a Marxist leadership: this does not exist today in an organised form within the Labour Movement, neither is it to be found in the Communist Party of the I.L.P. A new party cannot be built by proclamation; a leadership does not spring up overnight ... For this reason the C.L. seeks to unite the advanced workers within the already formed organisations for the winning of the mass of the workers to revolutionary principles and understanding'.

With the aim to return to the grass roots of the movement, and a declaration of principles for which it would struggle, the main force of Trotskyism in this country concentrated its energies in the Labour Party, the trade unions, trades councils and the Labour League of Youth. The Red Flag continued to be published, but now as the organ of The Marxist League. The Popular Front strategy of the Communist Party met within the wider labour movement itself an articulate opponent. In the Socialist League the Unity Campaign of the I.L.P., Communist Party and Socialist League, was opposed from a revolutionary marxist position. The Communist Party's efforts to silence criticism of Soviet Foreign Policy and the critics of the Moscow Trials through the Unity Committee encountered formidable opposition. This episode ended by Cripps succeeding by a narrow majority in liquidating his own organisation. It was in this period that Groves was selected, in face of considerable opposition from Transport House, to fight a parliamentary by-election in Aylesbury. The Daily Worker excelled itself in its attack on this Trotskyist Groves as a Labour candidate. In the interest of the Popular Front the Communist Party in this by-election urged the workers to vote Liberal. To the dismay of the C.P. and the unrecorded views of the Transport House leadership, Groves considerably increasing the Labour vote in that constituency. The Moscow Trials of August 1936 were a stern test for our movement. Both the Red Flag and The Fight, the journal of the Marxist group within the I.L.P., found difficulty in preserving regular publication. The Communist Party conducted a most slanderous campaign against the Trotskyists within the Labour Movement.

An effort was made to initiate in this country a broad committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky analogous to that formed in America. Despite the most painstaking efforts to win support for the elementary idea of an enquiry into the Moscow Trials through an international commission set up by the International Labour Movement, the movement preferred to remain silent on that obscene in the history of Stalin's Russia.

The appeal for a Provisional Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky was finally published in the Manchester Guardian and the Daily Herald in December, 1936. With few exceptions the left intellectuals preferred to remain silent.

Years later I passed to the Revolutionary Communist Party the files of that voluminous correspondence between the Committee of which I was secretary and the 'Left' intellectuals of that day. It represented to me a pitiful picture of how even 'great' minds are intimidated by power.

This apparent isolation of the Trotskyist movement on the issue of the Moscow Trials did not deter us from rallying to the defense of Leon Trotsky. Every opportunity was sought out to explain the significance of the Moscow Trials. In the big Communist meetings, against the Campbells, Pritts and Sloan we took the platform. Our own meetings, despite the fused efforts of all the groups, were significantly small. The years from 1936 to 1939 indicated that we were swimming against a strong current. Our movement, it would be true to say, was stagnating.

Harry Wickx

REVIEWS: Owing to the postal strike and the late arrival of review copies we have been forced to hold our book reviews over to the next issue.

Books received :

MacGibbon & Kee : *Waiting for the News* by Leo Litwak - £1-95.

The Future of Work and Leisure by Stanley Parker - £2-25.

Class Inequality and Political Order by Frank Parkin - £2-25.

The Decline Of Working Class Politics by Barry Hindess - £2-25.

Penguin : *Aid as Imperialism* by Teresa Hayter - 30p.

Hart-Davis : *Wolves in the City* by Paul Henissart - £2-95.

NB : we do not preclude reviewing these books in a future issue.

REVIEW

Revolutionary Syndicalism in France (The Direct Action of its Time) by F.F. Ridley. (Cambridge University Press, 279 pages, £4.20).

Youth today has thrown off the yoke of social-democracy and of Stalinism but is obliged, by the nature of things, to try and find its roots in the past, even when it thinks it has erased everything and started afresh. Academics who also generally attempt to find some link, or at least some similarity, between the currents of today and those of the past, are thus encouraged in their works. May 1968 in France could not have failed to give an impetus to such efforts.

It is in this way that F.F. Ridley's⁽¹⁾ study on the revolutionary syndicalist current of the French, pre World War I Labour Movement can be explained. We do not believe that between what has been happening in France since 1968 and what took place between 1900 and 1914 exist such links as those mentioned by Ridley in his study. Among the present revolutionary movements (apart from the Trotskyists), the Maoists and the Spontaneists have usually adopted a hostile attitude towards the unions.

Having said this, Ridley's study must, before all else, be examined for its analysis of the French revolutionary syndicalist movement, as it was then. From this point of view the book contains much valuable information about the origins, the characteristics and the activities of the revolutionary syndicalist movement. On the other hand, it suffers from serious weaknesses when the author deals with the ideas of this current outside their social context, and he neglects many important issues. A very grave shortcoming lies in the fact that the author does not, even in the most general of terms, approach the question of what happened to the various forces in this movement on the outbreak of war and especially after 1914. How can one pretend to fully understand a phenomenon when one ignores its outcome, even if this means its disintegration and its end?

The author is correct in stressing that revolutionary syndicalism must not be considered as an ideology which, consciously applied, was meant to guide the activities of the militant workers; it was a current of the French Labour Movement, and thus a political current in the broad sense of the term (even though it was one of the specific particularities of the movement that 'politics' were forbidden!) which pragmatically carried out its action around a number of general themes and ideas; these were more or less well formulated but never systematized.

This departure point of the author was a very good one. It is only natural that the author of such a study had to clarify what was at the basis of the ideas of such a movement, and a large part of this work has been equally well approa-

ched. Thus, the first two sections of his book (*Historical Background and Principles and Practices of the C.G.T.*) contain valuable information, even if there are some errors.⁽²⁾

On the other hand, the last section of the book (*Ideological Context*) has no bearing whatsoever on revolutionary syndicalism. It is true that during its lifetime this current certainly interested various intellectuals and bourgeois or petty-bourgeois schools of thought because of its characteristics (such as 'direct action', the use of violence, anti-parliamentarianism, hostility to the parties, etc.). But the revolutionary syndicalists themselves were never interested in these bourgeois or petty-bourgeois ideologies. The fact that later on some of these ideologists flirted with fascism is something totally alien to these revolutionary syndicalists. For none of the syndicalists (with perhaps the exception of an odd individual who had abandoned all militant action) ever associated himself with a fascist formation.

After the 1914-18 War the French revolutionary syndicalists either entered the reformist factions or joined the Communist Party. Some even, in vain, attempted to resurrect the tradition. But we will return to this later. Instead of proceeding to study what became of the revolutionary syndicalists after the war and the October revolution (this would have enabled him to better understand the pre-1914 syndicalist movement) the author has engaged himself on a series of reflections on the reactionary intellectual tendencies, i.e. those tendencies who are prone to substituting irrationalism for rationalism. Revolutionary syndicalism had nothing in common with Bergson and others; nor was it any more responsible for the ideas of Sorel than Lenin was for the eulogies Sorel bestowed upon him in his 'Reflections on Violence'. The revolutionary syndicalist movement was not a backward current of the French Labour Movement, but was the most militant and most revolutionary current of the time; this in spite of its pragmatism, its inadequacies and its errors.

However, let us leave aside this part of the book which smacks of pedagogy, and sum up those aspects of the work which are particularly correct and useful.

- (1) First of all Ridley mentions the peculiarity of the social structure of syndicalism. The movement found its echo not among those layers of the French working class employed in the big factories, but amongst the workers who were employed in small factories or in workshops, thus men of high professional qualifications. (We must remember that during this period the unskilled working class was numerically still small).
- (2) Revolutionary syndicalism expressed a reaction from these workers towards reformism and electoralism which had become of prime importance for the socialist factions. Three men in particular mark the principal socialist tendencies existing in France prior to 1914. These were Jaures, Guesde and Vaillant.

The Jauresian current was openly reformist even though Jaures himself was a reformist of a more sophisticated type. Guesde claimed to be a Marxist, but his Marxism was of a 'Kautsky' type. That is to say, revolutionary rhetoric coupled with reformist action. Because of his very rigid and sectarian attitude towards the syndicalists he had secured their hostility. Vaillant, the old Blanquist leader, had also settled in reformist politics. Nevertheless he had personally good relations with the C.G.T.

- (3) In the formation of the revolutionary syndicalist movement elements of anarchistic origins play a very important role. After their failure in certain 'experiences' the anarchist workers looked for a media to propagate their ideas in the working class. They found this in the developing syndicates. What the author does not appear to know was that around 1907 a break occurred between the 'real' revolutionary syndicalists and the so-called anarcho-syndicalists. This break presents interesting features because of its nature; it was not the result of tactical divergencies about the course of action to be taken, but because the anarcho-syndicalists felt it was necessary to build up an organisation which would elaborate the orientation the movement was to take, whereas the revolutionary syndicalists rejected the principle of any other organisational formation apart from the syndicates.
- (4) What the author says about the methods of the syndicalists is usually correct; these refer to the strikes, their anti-militarist propaganda, their struggles for certain general demands (such as for the 8 hour day, or for adequate labour exchanges). One cannot really talk of specific revolutionary syndicalist 'methods' in as much as these are the same as those of the syndicalist militants in other countries under similar conditions. But we will come back to the issue of the general strike.

In spite of these correct evaluations Ridley's book unfortunately remains very fragmentary and fails to give a synthetic view of the movement. This is because only a revolutionary Marxist interpretation could have given it. This was later done by the Communist International, particularly under Trotsky who followed the French movement very closely in the first years of the International. He himself was personally very well acquainted with the most prominent members of the movement.

The revolutionary syndicalist movement was a political revolutionary current of a very specific nature. Its essential characteristics were a certain 'ouvrierism', anti-parliamentarianism, anti-electionism, anti-militarism and anti-patriotism. It had taken up these positions largely because of its hostility to the reformism of the French socialist movement, both before and after the latter's unification in 1905. The revolutionary syndicalists saw the dangers in reformism and the corruption in 'politics', i.e. in reformist and parliamentary politics. They be-

believed that salvation was only to be found in direct confrontation with the bosses and the state. They believed that the syndicate would provide everything the working class needed to overthrow capitalism and to emancipate itself. Their view of the future society was tainted with anarchism. They rejected the state; future society would be constituted around local federations of producers. We cannot but repeat that the whole movement was marked by its social structure, by the fact that it was composed of small groups of very highly skilled workers.

Under the direction of the revolutionary syndicalists the C.G.T. of before the war was a hybrid organisation, midway between a political formation, a syndicalist party without any formulated ideology, and a real syndicate, that is to say a mass organisation. They were unable to find a solution in the dialectical relationship between the party and the syndicate. The same theoretical weakness prevented them also from finding a relationship between the revolutionary struggle for reforms, and the struggle for the overthrow of the Capitalist state. Their phobia of the State, inherited from anarchism and aggravated by the reformist politics of the socialists, disarmed them in the daily problems posed by the immediate workers' demands and the struggles in strikes. As revolutionary syndicalists they had to reject the State and Parliament, but, at the same time, as leaders of the syndicates and of the strikes they had to ask the State and Parliament for legislations, and they had to ensure the bosses would respect these.

A clear distinction must be drawn between the revolutionary syndicalists and the trade union militants of other countries (such as Germany or Britain). The latter were already bureaucratized to the extreme and although the revolutionary syndicalists abhorred this, at the same time they aspired to have strong trade unions like those of these countries.

An aspect of revolutionary syndicalism which has not yet been stressed is its organisation, or rather its absence of organisation. Their opposition to all centralism (again, of anarchist origins) found its expression in the non-existence of any organizational plan. The militants would meet as individuals in the committee meetings or sometimes in the local unions or federations to which they belonged. But they never worked together on the national level and only met on the occasion of a C.G.T. congress.

Under these conditions the "independence of syndicalism" which the militants proclaimed also became the independence of each individual member vis a vis the others.

We will now approach the essential defect of the book. Towards the end of the first decade of the 20th century a crisis was to occur in the revolutionary syndicalist movement. The leading militants of the C.G.T. began to realise the inadequacy of their ideas and of the organisation as it then stood. The turn-

over rate in the syndicates was very high and they would have liked to replace these by organisations similar to the German unions, i.e. stable and numerically strong organisations. Some of the members were also intent on better understanding the capitalist mode of production they were fighting. Amongst the latter were Monable, Merrheim and Rosmer who around 1909 grouped themselves around a review 'La Vie Ouvriere'. Curiously enough, although Ridley cites this review in his bibliography he totally omits mentioning it in the study. We consider this a grave error. For, if an important section of the revolutionary syndicalists and anarcho-syndicalists collaborated after August 1914 with the French bourgeoisie (in the same manner as the leaders of the Socialist Party) the group that had gathered around 'La Vie Ouvriere' was to become the first centre of opposition to the war and to the policies of the Sacred Union. They were also the first to turn to the October revolution and to organise a mass opposition force around themselves. This opposition would indeed have taken the direction of the C.G.T. had the reformists, under Joulaux, not deliberately provoked a schism in 1921.

Certainly this group, and the numerous militants that had assembled around it after the War, did not easily abandon the ideas of revolutionary syndicalism to become communists. In Alfred Rosmer's book 'Moscow under Lenin' we can find a faithful account of all the discussions that took place at the time on this issue.

We must add that the revolutionary syndicalists, by entering the young Communist Party, contributed largely in rooting this party in the French working class and in making it the strongest working class party of the country. When the Communist International and its sections bureaucratized those who came from revolutionary syndicalism (as well as those who had come from the old socialist party) were unable to fight it and continued to furnish important working class cadres for the P.C.F.

Monatte and a few others attempted to revive revolutionary syndicalism, but with no result. Today the majority of those who claim to descend from revolutionary syndicalism are gathered in 'Force Ouvriere' and continue (to the best of their ability) to 'oppose her majesty' in this central union. A few remained faithful to the 3rd International by joining the Trotskyist movement.

As for the formula 'the independence of syndicalism':- this has more than once after 1920 been used as an excuse by syndicalist militants to leave the Communist Party (which in those days was still revolutionary!) and to join the reformist sections. For them the 'independence of syndicalism' came to stand for the independence from the revolutionary struggle.

There is another interesting feature of Ridley's book which deserves more mention than we can give it here. This is the issue of the 'general strike'. It is obvious that the concept of the general strike was conceived and presented

by the revolutionary syndicalists as an utopian and even mystified concept. It reminds us somewhat of the Chartists who talked about the 'grand national holiday'. It is equally evident that it served as a springboard for men like Briand who were later to become bourgeois politicians of sad repute. Nor is it any less evident that the pseudo-marxist critique Guesde formulated on the general strike was reformist in essence.

One of the greatest failures of the revolutionary syndicalists, when they spoke about the general strike, was to ignore the discussions that had taken place amongst the German Left (especially Rosa Luxemburg) who referred to this as the 'mass strike'. In these discussions, especially with reference to the 1905 Russian Revolution, the general strike left the domain of utopia and was considered as a concrete step which in certain cases could become the immediate prelude to an insurrectional struggle for power.

It is easy today to criticize this unreal and utopian conception the revolutionary syndicalists had on the 'general strike'. It is, however, not pointless to recall (as Ridley does) that this 'myth' of the general strike has certainly taken shape, especially in France since 1936. Only recently May 1968 has shown that a general anti-capitalist mobilisation of the working class spontaneously took the path of a general strike. And if this massive mobilisation did not lead to a revolutionary insurrection it was because the traditional leaders refused to call for a general strike precisely because it would have placed them before the question of power. Thus we see that this 'myth' of the general strike can indeed become a reality.

To conclude, revolutionary syndicalism was, in the period proceeding World War I the true vanguard current of the French labour movement. The best elements of this current defended the October Revolution and joined the Communist International. In doing so they contributed to make of the Communist Party a party that was well and truly rooted in the French proletariat.

Today there is no current in the French labour movement that revives revolutionary syndicalism and a return to it is not possible. The present composition of the French working class offers no objective basis for such a movement and the experience of the French proletariat has taken it well ahead of this.

Pierre Frank, January, 1971.

(1) Problems of Political Theory and Institutions at Liverpool University.

(2) We are not so much alluding to certain minor historical errors in the description of the socialist forces in France prior to 1905 (the 'Tower of Babel' to which the author refers is indeed an apt description of this). We are thinking of those errors which are visibly the result of a misunderstanding of Marx and Marxism.

After the September War

This document is part of the assessment which the Democratic Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DPFLP) made of the situation after the September 1970 Civil War in Jordan. It is interesting not simply as a first hand assessment of the situation, but also because of the criticisms it makes of the policy of the Palestinian Resistance before and during the September war. Basically the criticism appear very sound although they are couched in a terminology which can only lead to confusion. For example the Maoist concept of principal and secondary contradiction was the one used by most Maoists to justify their support for El Fatah's suicidal course of collaboration with the Jordan regim. Similarly the Maoist theories of "the people" and the "state of an alliance" of classes" are those used to justify the attitude of various of the resistance groups towards, for example, Nasser's Egypt.

All that having been said it still remains the case that this is one of the best analyses to emerge out of what is one of the heaviest defeats suffered for the world revolution for a considerable period. — Eds

**PRESENT REALITIES IN THE SITUATION OF THE RESISTANCE
MOVEMENT - Analysis and Critique**

Firstly - Internal Structure of the Resistance

The offensive campaign of September has tangibly demonstrated the correctness of the critiques presented by the Democratic Popular Front throughout the past period concerning the internal (ideological, political and military) structure of the Resistance. The Resistance Movement has paid the full price of 'the absence of theory' from its life and daily tactical practices (political and military) whether on the Jordano-Palestinian ground or on the Arab ground or in its international relations with the national liberation movement and the socialist forces and countries - a fact which again confirms that 'there can be no revolution without a revolutionary theory'.

The absence of the revolutionary attitude from, and the prevalence of the spontaneous nationalist trend, in the life and practices (strategic and tactical) of the Resistance have stripped it of the ability to build internal revolutionary realities, cultural, political and military, whether in the ideological structure, which should throw full light on the current national class struggle in the Jordano-Palestinian ground between the Resistance movement and the reactionist and imperialist class forces ruling in Jordan and on the link-up of Jordano-Palestinian and Arab reactionism with the imperialist and Zionist designs in the Middle East; or in the internal political structure and the consequent daily national practices as regards understanding the movement of the reactionist forces, as regards understanding and practising the law of the unity of the people in the Jordano-Palestinian ground, and as regards implementing the national class programme favouring the nationalist and revolutionary classes in the country against the programme of the imperialist and reactionist classes which controls the political, economic and cultural life of the country; or in the internal military structure which should be based on revolutionary volunteering without any bureaucratic privileges (material or moral) in the ranks of the Resistance; or in understanding and practicing the laws of peoples' liberation wars against the counter-revolution.

The absence of the revolutionary theory which serves to guide the daily movement of the revolution led to the following results in the structure and practices of the Resistance Movement:

- A. The Resistance was overwhelmed by a flood of privileges and by material and moral ease of life, away from the class and mental suffering of the people. For the Resistance lived in great abundance (A Rich Revolution) brought about by Arab reactionism and bourgeois classes in the area, a fact which produced several malignant diseases in the body of the revolution, the most prominent of which were the low level of revolutionary awareness against enemy designs and spread of bureaucratic life (offices, cars, money, semi-classical military relations between commands and bases ... etc.) and the anxiousness to perpetuate these privileges by the insistence on maintaining all the Arab relations which bestowed upon the 'revolution' this easy life.
- B. Absence of realist and scientific understanding of the relation with the masses in the Jordano-Palestinian ground: This fact led certain commands of the Resistance in the direction of Palestinianizing the Palestinian cause under the slogan of 'non-interference in the internal Arab affairs'. This trend was translated in the Jordano-Palestinian ground into a series of wrong practices which 'effectively helped to disrupt the unity of the people' through the insistence on maintaining the Palestinian social institutions (the Red Crescent, the Martyrs Establishment, the Children

the unification of the people in its struggle against the Imperialist-Zionist-Reactionary trinity, the agrarian struggle against big land-owners and semi-feudal capitalists, the resolutions of the 7th National Palestinian Assembly, the problems of the national Palestine-Jordanian front, the elected popular communes, the establishment of nationalist rule, the struggle aiming at the overthrow of the stooge Government and the purge of the State machinery from the reactionaries and the agents of Imperialism). This prevailing trend in the policy of the Resistance movement led the Jordanian masses to seeking isolation from the Revolution in practice and contenting themselves with a broad national sentimentalism. This explains the scarcity of the east-Jordanian elements in the ranks of the Resistance on one hand, and the success of the ruling reactionary elements in mobilizing large sectors of soldiers and officers against the Resistance movement, on the other hand.

- b. The September experience has proved that the *fundamental field* of the Resistance movement lay in the 'cities and refugee camps' which constitute the dense human forests for the Resistance to melt in, as well as the main bases of 'asylum and supplies' in the human, material and political sense, owing to numerous factors such as the density of the population, the spread of nationalist political culture, the historical fact that cities and camps have always been the cradle of nationalist movements, the extension of the nationalist organizations, trade unions, working classes and the middle class of lawyers, engineers, teachers, doctors, artisans and small trades people.

Cities and camps have therefore constituted protecting human forests for the Resistance movement. At the same time, the birth of the Resistance movement along with the awakening of the nationalist and working masses sympathizing with the Resistance and hostile to Imperialism, Zionism and local exploiting Capitalism, combined with the decay of reactionarism, all these factors led the poor working masses and the lower classes as well as certain sectors of the middle class to sympathize with the Resistance movement in front of the reactionary regime opposed to their nationalist and democratic aspirations, as shown by their hostility to Imperialism and Zionism, their refusal of the domination of the semi-feudalists, big land-owners and compradors over the economic and political life of the country, the nationalist opposition to the country's subservience to Imperialism, the trend towards modernizing the State, setting up the basis for a healthy national economy and establishing political democracy, etc...

- c. The same experience proved that there is a great difference between the situation of the villages and that of the cities as far as the role they play in the life of the nationalist movement and resistance is concerned, due to

got (for the result is one) that the law of giving priority to the main contradiction with imperialist zionism over the secondary contradiction with reactionism applies only to the extent that reactionism responds positively to the nationalist programme of mobilising class forces (irrespective of their ideological and political positions) against the zionist and imperialist enemy (the main contradiction). But reactionism, considering its permanent insistence on liquidating the revolution, forcefully pushes the secondary contradiction to the fore and makes it supersede the main contradiction in its daily programme, because reactionism, by virtue of its class formation and its linkage with imperialism, refuses practically and objectively to take up arms against the national enemy (i.e. zionism and imperialism). Hence the thesis of 'giving priority to the main contradiction over the secondary ones' crumbles in consequence of the non-fulfilment of its basic requirements; and it becomes incumbent upon the revolution to deal first with the internal contradictions (with reactionism) to be able to resume its struggle with the main contradiction (the zionist imperialist) on ground safe and solid not on ground strewn with mines and bullets.

The absence of a revolutionary theory and a revolutionary culture, and the prevalence of rightist culture in big sectors of the Resistance lost the revolution the ability to react and to confront reactionist designs and attacks and placed it in a defensive position in the grip of the pincers of Israel and reactionism.

D. The relation with Arab regimes.

Throughout the last three years, most of the Resistance groups did not base their relations with Arab regimes on the attitude that these regimes took towards the laws of the Palestine liberation process, and the 'struggle against imperialism and colonialism', for there is an active and daily connection between 'the struggle against Israel and the struggle against imperialism and the reactionist Arab classes tied up with imperialism'. Because bourgeois ideology prevailed in most of the Resistance groups (particularly in the political cadres), therefore the relation between those groups and the Arab regimes was governed by the slogan of 'non-interference in the internal Arab affairs' for the sake of obtaining temporary material gains - weapons, money, communications. This resulted in the absence of a revolutionary programme alternative to the programmes of the defeats of 1967 and 1948, a fact which led the aforesaid groups to practise a demagogical (misleading) relation with the Palestinian and Arab masses and to give national deeds of absolution to the reactionist regimes in return for their handful of subsidies as well as to connive at the programmes of the nationalist regimes which have been unable to attain the objectives of national democratic liberation.

The foregoing facts have inevitably caused the relation with the Arab masses to be emotional and unorganized and have prevented the development of close and well-arranged organic alliance with the forces of the Arab liberation movement, alliance which would have enabled the Resistance to give the struggle against the unholy trinity (zionism + imperialism + Arab reactionism) its full and objective size. That relation superseded the 'theory of self-reliance and dependence upon the masses' and helped to fetter and chain the revolutionary popular renaissance movement, which was supposed to be a well-organized movement on the local and pan-Arab levels, and left the Resistance movement dependent, for its material and political requirements, upon the Arab regimes, and victimized by the contradictions that govern these regimes and their designs for the Middle East area and the Palestinian problem, while the role of the Arab masses was confined to emotional attachment and limited material (financial and human) support. To sum up, the situation of the Resistance described above was translated in the September campaign into loss of the initiative and cramping of the Resistance forces into defensive positions which were of a nature nearer to regular wars than to the popular warfare which is multiform (streets, houses, ambushes, raids, etc.), long-breathed and capable of carrying the Resistance from defensive positions to equilibrium and to attack. The war of positions alone cannot be in the interest of the Resistance owing to the quantitative and technical superiority on the side of a regular army. Furthermore, the unrevolutionary internal structure, political and military, of certain cadres motivated them to impede the participation of most of the revolutionary capabilities in the class national conflict against reactionism despite the decisions already taken to set up a nationalist government in the North and to advance upon Amman. This episode prompts us to wonder whether it was alone the absence of the revolutionary understanding, political and military, that brought about that situation or there were other factors. In the light of the political consequences of the campaign and in view of this type of relation with the Arab regimes, the Resistance has fallen in the trap of those regimes and their designs for the area, namely the Cairo agreement which has rescued the Bashemite throne and conferred upon it new privileges (the reward of the aggressor for his aggression). Of these was the control of the towns with the repressive machines that slaughtered the people and the Resistance. This was made possible under cover of the 'return of the state machinery, under civil administration', to the control of the country. Thus, the Cairo agreement protected the throne and gave it a new lease of life to continue its offensive against the revolution and the masses, and made an American landing superfluous. It was in the interest of the Arab regimes that met in the Cairo conference to take this attitude, otherwise why did they not take a different one when the massacre was divulged to the Cairo Conference delegation which had arrived in the Jordanian capital?

this depends, in the first place, upon the size and influence of the nationalist or socialist revolution in the society, and in the second place, upon the nature of the class structure in the institutions of the state.

In Jordan, the Jordanian reactionism (the Palace, feudalism, the comprador class) and imperialism used the state institutions before 1948 for its class reactionary and imperialist repression, which made Jordan a farm 'for a handful of the members of the ruling family which British Imperialism had imposed upon the country, and for a handful of big feudalists, landlords and capitalists', and a centre of conspirations against the Jordanian and Arab national liberation movement, as well as a historical safety valve for the zionist movement and the British Mandate plans of 'Judaizing Palestine'. After 1948, when the two Banks were united, the Jordano-Palestinian reactionism tied up with imperialism continued its policy of employing the State institutions - particularly the army and the security forces - as an instrument of class repression in favour of the counter-revolution (reactionism + imperialism + zionism). But the national and popular movement grew in the country and compelled the imperialist-reactionist-monarchic trinity to give a series of concessions to the national movement in 1956, and led to the growth of the nationalist attitude amid the basic and middle sectors (soldiers, junior officers), a fact which helped the national movement impose the concessions which were in the view of the counter-revolution a mere temporary tactical retreat. The Jordanian army was denounced, after a series of repressive operations against the national movement and the masses and after the failure to affiliate Jordan with the Baghdad Pact (revulsion of 1955 against Templer, emissary of Baghdad Pact and British imperialism). This retreat, however, effected no changes in the structure of the reactionary regime or the State institutions. Shortly afterwards, therefore, the Palace, in co-operation with the American CIA, planned and carried out, in April 1957, the famous reactionary coup⁽¹⁾ the objectives of which were destroying the nationalist movement, purging the army of nationalists and strengthening the position of super-reactionaries and clients at the head of the supreme basic commands, in order that the Palace, reactionism and imperialism might be able to impose black autocratic dictatorship upon the country and to make it once more a fortress and centre serving the purposes of the counter-revolution. Until 1970 the State institutions remained subject to consecutive purges so that they might remain fit to play their full part in the repressive and terrorist operations and launch successive campaigns of 'siege and annihilation' against the Resistance movement and the nationalist forces in the Jordano-Palestinian ground, and to strike at the masses with blind artillery and tank-guns to terrorize the people and make them bow in the face of the counter-revolution attacks.

The September Campaign proved the 'cohesiveness' of the State institutions (the army, the security forces, the administration) as an effective instrument in the hands of imperialism and monarchic reactionism. Despite bombard-

houses ... etc.) and trade unionist and vocational organizations (Students' Union, Labour Union, Women's Union, Artists' Union, Lawyers' Union, Journalists' Union, Writers' Union, etc.). The Palestinianization process existed vertically also because the anti-revolutionary classes were not separated from the nationalist and revolutionary classes in the ranks of the people. This narrow regional policy resulted also in the absence of a nationalist class programme organizing the relation with the Jordanian masses.

This led to the reinforcement of the regional leanings (basically nurtured by the reactionary regime) and placed the Jordanian masses in a narrow corner because they found that they had nothing in common with the revolution such as nationalist or class interests, except the common nationalist emotions. Despite our endeavours to provide a revolutionary alternative to that line (by stressing the unity of the ground and of the people, the unity of the Jordano-Palestinian nationalist front, the unity of the social and trade unionist institutions and the need for establishing other institutions on this line) and despite the victory in the Seventh National Council of our call for abolishing the existing regional institutions (Vide the resolutions of the emergency session of the Palestinian National Council held in Amman, August 1970 ... etc.), these steps came late and only after a bitter conflict and were not fully implemented.

Of this situation the reactionary regime made the most advantage, and the Resistance reaped most painful consequences in the offensive campaign of September and in what is currently taking place.

- C. Wrong analyses and practices in the process of understanding the nature and size of the conflict between the ruling and Arab reaction as a whole on the one hand and the national liberation movement in the Palestine-Jordanian ground on the other.

Under the slogan of 'giving priority to the main contradiction with the enemy (i.e. the national contradiction) over the secondary contradiction with the reactionism (i.e. the class imperialist contradiction), several Resistance groups were unable to deduce the laws of conflict between 'secondary' contradictions. And despite the insistence of reactionism on settling the secondary contradiction (i.e. liquidating the Resistance) before the main one, the Resistance movement failed to understand and appreciate the 'real size' of this conflict, and to see that the struggle against reactionism (particularly visavis its permanent insistence on winding up the Resistance) required the deliverance of the revolution from the permanent bleeding inflicted upon it by reactionism and imperialism, bleeding that paralysed most of its capabilities in the face of the Zionist imperialist enemy. To put it more precisely, those groups ignored or for-

historical and economic factors, as well as other factors related to the policy of the Resistance movement.

HISTORICALLY: the nationalist movement remained without effect upon the extension of cultural, political and democratic currents to the villages. It was rather confined to the cities and camps owing to its general nationalist programme directed against imperialism, zionism and reactionarism, with the absence of any democratic programme for the rural areas (dealing with such problems as the agrarian issue, the struggle against feudalism, big land-owners and rural capitalism, struggle against the close relations between feudalism and capitalism in rural productions, demand per the mechanization of agriculture and of scholrization in the rural areas etc...). During the past twenty years, the programme of the nationalist movement remained confined to taking general nationalist positions in support of the struggle of the working masses for certain demands, among a lot of 'socialist' mottos. Thus the rural areas remained excluded from the efficient organic adhesion to the nationalist movement in Jordan.

ECONOMICALLY: within the general sphere of under-development in the rural areas (prevalence of primitive means of production) and the scarcity of agricultural production (primitive means of production, dependence on the raining season, with the consequence that the eastern Bank experiences practically three years of drought for one rainy year), in addition to the class exploitation in the countryside, it is no surprise that the economic life of villages depends largely on the state machinery and the reactionary ruling class. Fifty per cent of the villages income is due to the salaries received by the State employees especially in the army, which is considered the main source of income and the basic employment field for villagers and bedouins. At the same time, bad crops put the villages at the mercy of the regime, which intendedly follows a policy of 'alms' distribution and non-productive expenditures, in ways of services and aids, for drought-stricken villages, without promoting any agricultural development projects or soil improvement etc... It is to be noted that the dependence of the Jordanian villages on 'the Army and the alms of the regime' increases steadily from northern to southern areas where it reaches 60-90%, with the result that less than a third of the village's income is drawn from agriculture.

THE RESISTANCE POLICY: in its dealing with the villages, the Resistance movement confined its activities to extending some medical and social services and to certain simple economic deals such as buying supplies for the neighbouring bases, without undertaking any democratic programme within the frame of the Resistance activities in the rural areas.

As a consequence, Jordanian villages remained isolated from taking class interest in the struggle and in such vital issues as the agrarian problems and the economic difficulties encountered by peasants. At the same time being far from Zionist occupation, Jordanian villages had no immediate incentives to protect the national revolutionary interests or to take an effective part in defending the homeland and the farming land of the peasants.

These facts were reflected in the relation of the village with the reactionary regime, with the result that it continued to see its economic interest linked with the existing regime and did not find any class interest in taking the side of the Resistance because of the absence of a democratic programme to be implemented by the Resistance in the countryside. Also the village did not find a national interest in defending the homeland. So its relation with the Resistance remained emotional. The conspicuously regionalist policy of the Resistance and the exploitation of this tendency on the part of the regime, pushed the village into the lap of its national and class enemy (reactionism and imperialism) and made it fight on his side or remained neutral when the regime launched the barbarous campaign of September to beleaguer and annihilate the Resistance.

Because of these factors combined, we behold at the present a wide reactionary relapse in the country against the revolution, a relapse which grows wider as we move from the north to the south.

The value of the role of the countryside in the popular national war against the Zionist enemy or the attacks of reactionism which aim at imposing capitulatory solutions upon the people and black reactionist dictatorship on the State does not lie in the density of the population in comparison with the towns, but in the nature and size of its role whether in backing or fighting the Resistance and in the role of country soldiers in the army whether in supporting the Resistance or in executing repressive operations against the revolution and the people. Here is the real danger in the matter, especially if we take into consideration the quantitative weight that the country soldiers have in the army.

THE STATE AND THE REVOLUTION:

It is no news that 'the state is an instrument of class repression in the hands of one class or class alliance against one class or class alliance'. This thesis applies to the situation in the under-developed countries as well as to the situation in the developed countries. But it does not mean, for a moment, that the state institution (the army, the security forces, the police, the administration), under a rule opposed to the nationalist democratic revolution or to the socialist revolution, cannot be partly won over to the revolution, especially the low and middle sectors. This is a well-known phenomenon in history. However,

By Arab concurrence also the Resistance has been shackled and placed under the 'tutelage of Arab regimes' so that the battle of the Resistance may stop after it had retreated two steps in favour of the 'Jordanian-Palestinian reactionism', which continues its attacks under the ears of the Cairo agreement and the signatory governments. The agreement is meant to perpetuate the rift between Jordanian and Palestinian in favour of an outcome connected with the final settlement of the Palestinian problem, namely, the 'Palestinian State'.

Resistance in towns and villages (Eastern Bank of the River Jordan)

- a. The regionalistic policy followed by certain groups of the Resistance in the past three years (i.e. the Palestinization of the Palestine cause politically, nationally, professionally and on the level of the trade-unions in the Palestine-Jordanian ground and the application of the motto of 'non-interference in the internal affairs of the Arab world') has resulted in widening the gap of dissent between the members of the same people: the Palestine-Jordanian one. The ruling reaction has exploited these errors, which overlook the historical, economic, social and political unity of the battle-ground and the people, for the benefit of its aims which are opposed to all nationalist and revolutionary classes of the country and for the service of the reactionary and imperialist plans aiming at liquidating the Resistance movement and inciting the people to civil war, under the false and reactionary pretext of 'safeguarding the political entity of Jordan' especially within the Army and the Security Forces.

Still more important than the reactionary exploitation of the Palestinian regionalist practices is the fact that some large sectors of the east-Jordanian nationalist class forces remained *isolated* from the Resistance movement, because their ties with the Resistance were mainly *confined* to simple patriotic sentimentalism. All this was due to the lack of a class-nationalist programme in the daily practices of the Resistance, in spite of the fact that Jordanian masses eagerly waited for such a programme, which might have facilitated the solution of the problems of the national democratic Palestine-Jordanian liberation in the Eastern Bank.

As for the programme set up by the leftist radicalist wing of the Resistance it was not able to take *deep roots* among Jordanian masses for several reasons: the short period of practice, the theoretical and practical insistence of the other Resistance groups on continuing their regionalist policy, the alertness of the reactionaries, the rapidity of their military campaigns to prevent the spread of the revolutionary practices in its daily dialectical relations to the problems of the Palestine-Jordanian revolution (especially the struggle and the strikes of the workers' trade-unions in support of their demands, the attempt of arousing the revolutionary nationalist class conscience in the ranks of the pe. s in the rural areas,

ment of Amman and as-Zarqaa' with every weapon for ten days running, defections to the revolution were limited and individual and went beyond the worst expectations of the Resistance movement⁽²⁾

The dominant basic feature in the ranks of the security forces was neutral-its between the Resistance and the army, an attitude contrary to that taken by the supreme cadres tied with the regime. However, in the areas that were occupied by the armed forces, the security forces were before an accomplished fact and so carried out the duties with which they were charged by reaction-ism (searching, detention, torture ... etc.) so that a terrorist atmosphere might be imposed upon those areas.

As for the administrative machine, it was not possible to test the basic attitude of its rank and file because of the war which impeded its daily routine⁽³⁾ while the leading cadres (ministers, senior officials, ambassadors) which are rightist and reactionary in structure, remained loyal to the reactionary monarchy in keeping with their ideological and class reality⁽⁴⁾.

The September campaign inexorably painted a detailed picture of the structure of the army and the reactionist rightist ideology prevalent among its members:

1. The Jordanian army is a 'professional institution', and the internal (ideological and material) relations that govern it are those that govern the employer and the employed. Royal reactionism did its best - in every possible way - to isolate the army from nationalist and progressive ideological and political currents. Nationalist culture is taboo, political affiliations are banned, and the nationalist elements inside the army are continually chased and purged. In contrast, the permissible and prevalent culture is the reactionist one which places the King in the position of the employer, and not an ordinary employer at that, but one around whom there is a halo of deification according to the theory of the 'Divine Right of Kings'. This culture is presented in a religious framework connecting the royal family with the Prophet of Islam, and bedecked with appropriate slogans such as 'God, King, Homeland'. And the homeland which the King blesses is one where reactionism, imperialism and counter-revolution are safe and prosperous. To keep the army isolated from the movement of the masses and under the control of the reactionist ideology in its daily life, the reactionary regime refused to introduce conscription and volunteering in the army despite the existence of the State of Israel on a part of Palestine and the false pretences of the regime of wanting to liberate Palestine. For conscription will expose the army to the nationalist currents, multiply nationalist cadres within its ranks and train the people in the use of arms. In 1969 the regime briefly introduced conscription as a means of intercepting young men

who might desire to join the Resistance forces, but it soon repealed the law when it found that it was a two-edged weapon (it absorbed young men in camps very much like the camps of detainment to keep them away from the Resistance but at the same time practised them in the use of arms and allowed them to mix with other members of the army).

Despite all these precautions, the 'professional institution' was all the time subjected to unremitting purges seeking to close the army to all elements of any nationalist conviction.

2. The basic corps of the army depended for their soldiers and commanders on the bedouin, particularly, so the armoured divisions and the security brigades - forces of direct repression ⁽⁵⁾. Nor did the army confine itself to the Jordanian - Palestinian bedouin; it went further to enlist Iraqi, Syrian and Saudi bedouin ⁽⁶⁾. The idea is that these bedouin feel strong attachment to the ruler who wrests them from poverty and misery to place them in the lap of a regime that secures them permanent material and moral gains. In fact the regime takes over their education from childhood. Non-Jordanian bedouin (Iraqis, Syrians, Saudis) form about 30 per cent of the army, the same rate as that of the Jordanian bedouin. In the case of the Jordanians the regime selects the majority from the poor villages, particularly in the south where the inhabitants are very much under-developed and depend on the regime for their economic life; whereas soldiers taken from the big towns, where there is education and nationalist consciousness, form little more than 10 per cent, and many of these are employed in military administrative affairs and technical works. Even this small rate is subjected to unremitting purges that seek to oust nationalist elements. (It should be noted also that there are some nationalist elements among the bedouin officers who, through their training missions and courses in the United States, Britain and Pakistan, have acquired general culture and some knowledge of the outside world).
3. The soldiers from the West Bank form about 30 per cent of the army. The dominant characteristic among the soldiers, non-commissioned officers and a sector of the junior commissioned officers is a broad nationalist attitude without clear-cut commitments; whereas in the ranks of the senior officers there are many stubborn reactionaries and stooges of the throne. The nationalist commitment which lacks a clear-cut programme among the soldiers and the low ranks has paralysed the capabilities of this sector inside the army. Another paralysing factor is the watch maintained over them by their brothers-in-arms who are imbued with the monarchic reactionist ideology and tied to the regime by economic and other interests.

This is a picture of the ideological and social structure of the army from which we deduce the following results:

- A. The core of the contention is not between Jordanian and Palestinian; it is rather due to the economic, social and ideological structure of the army. (Note that countrymen and townsmen in the West Bank do not depend on the army in their economic life because of the nature of the economic structure of the Palestinian village: non-existence of feudalists (only big landlords), fertility of the land, seasons of rain, developed means of production, binary and tripartite agricultural cycle, briskness of the town market, purchasing power of the countryside, spread of vocational and scientific education, there being doctors, engineers, tourism, emigration to the Arab area and America ... etc.).
- B. The dominance of the bedouin element makes the army a blind repressive instrument in the service of the royal reactionism.
- C. The September campaign proved the impossibility of rebellion in the army, though it is refused politically and ideologically. This does not mean that there are no nationalist and progressive trends in the army; on the contrary, such trends are existent, and this very fact makes it incumbent upon the nationalist movement and the Resistance to devote special efforts to the deliverance of the army from the imperialist and reactionary grip and to the development of the army into a nationalist institution (by purging it, introducing conscription, dismissing mercenaries and agents, injecting its ranks on an extensive scale, with educated and knowledgeable elements and cadres ... etc.). This also specifies the role of the nationalist sectors in the army, that they should form an organic part of the nationalist movement and the Resistance throughout the process of popular struggle.
- D. To achieve a nationalist attitude against imperialism and zionism and a class nationalist attitude against-monarchical reactionism among the Jordanian soldiers who come from the Transjordanian country, it is incumbent that the Resistance and nationalist forces treat this rural problem in such a manner as to make the population of the Jordanian countryside feel that they have a class and a nationalist interest in the revolution and in rallying round it.

As for the bedouin there can be no speedy solution. The policy here should be a long-breathed one aiming at promulgating nationalist culture in the army and liberating it from the control of the monarchical reactionist culture. The promulgation of a nationalist programme and fighting for its realization all over the Jordano-Palestinian ground will make the Transjordanian feel the existence of national and class interest for himself in the revolution and will prompt him to participate in the solution of the problem in the interest of the nationalist democratic revolution in the country.

The trial of September came to emphasise with tangible evidence and under the bombshells tank guns and machine guns, the reality and the nature of the structure of the state institutions and their role as instruments of repression in the hands of the counter-revolutionary trinity (the monarchy + imperialism). Will the Resistance movement learn this lesson? Will certain Resistance groups have the ability to realise what is going on around them? And where will the reactionist ideology, with which they are flirting, lead them?

* * * * *

(1) It is no coincidence that Rabis al-Majali held the position of General Military Governor during the coup of 1957 to destroy the nationalist movement and purge the army of nationalist officers and with zeal stepped forward in July 1970 to hold the same position, ignoring the different subjective and objective circumstances in the country and the area. But a reactionist always remains loyal to his reactionary and imperialist masters.

(2) Fateh did not expect that the army would storm Amman with tanks and with that violence. It rather expected that considerable splits would occur and that the Palestinian soldiers would in the majority quit the army.

The Democratic Popular Front ruled out from the beginning possibilities of a military coup; moreover it refused in principle such a coup except as a part of the national popular operation. But it also did not expect the events that did take place. Splits in the army were highly expected if the Resistance held out in its battle with the Regime for several days (a week for instance).

As-Sa'iq'a's estimates of nationalist capabilities in the army and in the ranks of the people of both banks were great.

The Popular Front (Arab Nationalists) was certain that early splits would take place in the army. During the September campaign its estimates were that the army would split if the struggle with the regime continued between 48 and 72 hours.

The Arab Liberation Front was sure that schisms would happen in the ranks of the army and that it had the capability to paralyse many sectors of the army in favour of the revolution.

(3) During the revulsion of 1955 against the Baghdad Pact, the administrative machine responded to the call of the nationalist movement by declaring civil sedition and going out to the streets in demonstrations with the masses to frustrate the reactionist efforts to join Jordan to the Pact.

(4) One single incident took place when Antoun Attallah, foreign minister in the government of al-Rifa'i, declared his refusal to deal with the sanguinary military government. Attallah was in New York at the time and was dismissed from his post.

(5) The security brigades, such as the desert Brigade and the Internal Security Brigade, are different from the Security Forces in that the said brigades are like the other corps of the army in respect of their training and arms-tanks, armoured cars artillery.

(6) From the very beginning the British policy decided to build the army from the bedouin for well-known ideological and political considerations - non-existence of nationalist culture among the bedouin, their strong attachment materially and morally to the ruler (the employer) who provides their material needs and exploits religion to make of himself a holy symbol around which they would rally.

Trotsky

on the

Commune

Each time we look at the history of the Commune we see it in a new light. This is due to the experiences acquired in later revolutionary struggles and especially during the later revolutions, not only the Russian Revolution, but also the German and Hungarian Revolutions. The Franco-German War was a bloody explosion, the omen of an immense world-wide slaughter. The Commune was a flash of lightning, the omen of a world-wide proletarian revolution.

The Commune shows us the heroism of the working masses, their capacity to unite in a single block, their willingness to sacrifice themselves for the sake of the future, but, at the same time, it shows us the inability of the masses to choose their road, their indecision in guiding the movement, their fatal inclination to check the movement after the first successes, thus allowing the enemy to revive itself and re-establish its position.

The Commune came too late. It had every possibility to take power on the 4th September, and this would have enabled the Parisian proletariat to put itself in one fell swoop at the head of the entire country's working class in its struggle against the forces of the past, against Bismarck as well as against Thiers. But power fell into the hands of the democratic 'talkers', the deputies of Paris. The Parisian proletariat had neither a party nor were they bound by previous struggles to any leadership. The petty-bourgeois patriots who considered themselves socialists and sought the support of the workers, had, in fact, no confidence in them. They shook the proletariat's faith in itself, they were continually looking for famous lawyers, journalists, deputies to put in charge of the movement, yet whose only qualification for this consisted of ten vaguely revolutionary phrases.

The reason why Jules Favre, Picard, Garnier-Pages and co. took power in Paris on the 4th September is the same as that which allowed Paul-Boncour, A. Varenne, Renaudel and several others to become for a period the leaders of the party of the proletariat.

The Renaudels, the Boncours and even the Longuets and the Pressemanes by their sympathies, their intellectual habits and conduct are far nearer to Jules Favre and Jules Ferry than to the revolutionary proletariat. Their socialist terminology is only a historical mask which allows them to thrust themselves upon the masses. And it is because Favre, Simon, Picard and others have used and abused the democratic liberal terminology that their sons and grandsons have been forced to resort to socialist terminology. But these sons and grandsons have remained loyal to their fathers and continue their work. And when it becomes necessary to decide not the question of the composition of a ministerial clique but the more important question of knowing which class is to take power in France, Renaudel, Varenne, Longuet and their like will be on the side of Millerand - the accomplice of Gallifet and executioner of the Commune ... When the reactionary 'talkers' of the salons and parliament find themselves face to face in life with the Revolution, they never recognise it.

X [The workers' party - the true one - is not a machine for parliamentary manoeuvres, it is the accumulated and organised experience of the proletariat. It is only with the help of the party which leans on the whole of its past history, which theoretically foresees the roads of development, in all its stages and extracts the formula for necessary action, that the proletariat can free itself from the necessity of continually remaking its history: its hesitations, its lack of decision, its errors.] X

The Parisian proletariat did not have such a party. The bourgeois socialists who swarmed the Commune, raised their eyes to the sky, waited for a miracle or a prophecy - they hesitated - and meanwhile the masses had to grope, they were lost because of the indecision of some or the fantasy of others. The result was that the Revolution broke out in the middle of them, too late, Paris was encircled. Six months passed before the proletariat had time to remember the lessons of the past revolutions, of the past fights, of the repeated betrayals of the democracy, and took power.

These six months were an irreparable loss. In September, 1870, there had been a centralised party for revolutionary action leading the French proletariat, the whole history of France, and with it the whole history of humanity would have taken a new course.

If on the 18th March the power was in the hands of the Parisian proletariat, it was not because they took it consciously - but because their enemies had left Paris. The enemy was losing ground, the workers were scornful and

hated them, the petty-bourgeoisie did not trust them any longer, and the upper bourgeoisie believed that they wouldn't be able to defend them any more. The soldiers were hostile to the officers. The government fled from Paris to concentrate its forces elsewhere. And it was only then that the proletariat became master of the situation.

But they only understood this the following day. The Revolution came upon them without being expected.

The first success was a new source of passivity. The enemy had fled to Versailles. Wasn't that a victory? At that time the governmental clique could have been smashed practically without bloodshed. In Paris all the ministers - with Thiers being the first - could have been imprisoned. No one would have raised his hands to defend them. It was not done. There was no centralised party organisation with an over-all view of the situation to make these decisions.

The remainder of the infantry did not want to march back on Versailles. The thread which tied the soldiers to the officers was very thin indeed. And if there had been in Paris an active party centre it would have sent into the retreating armies - since there was a possibility of retreat - some hundreds or at least some tens of devoted workers with the following instructions: Stir up the discontent of the soldiers against the officers and make good use of the first favourable psychological moment by freeing the soldiers from the officers and bringing them back to Paris to be united with the people. This could easily have been done according to the very confession of the partisans of Thiers. But no one thought about it. There was nobody to think about it. Besides, when such important events are taking place, such decisions can be taken only by a revolutionary party which is expecting a revolution, which is prepared for it, which doesn't lose its head, by a party which is used to having an over-all view and is not afraid of acting.

But the French proletariat did not have any party of action.

The Central Committee of the National Guard is, in fact, a soviet of the armed workers' delegates and of the petty-bourgeoisie. Such a soviet which is directly elected by the masses who have taken the revolutionary road, is an excellent body for action. But, at the same time and precisely because of its direct and elementary link with the masses who are in the state where the revolution found them, it reflects not only all the strong but also all the weak features of the masses, and moreover it reflects these weak features before it does the strong ones. It shows a spirit of indecision, of expectation, and the tendency to be inactive after the first few successes.

The Central Committee of the National Guard was lacking leadership. It was necessary to have an organisation embodying the political experience of the proletariat and intervening at all levels, not only in the Central Committee

but also in the legions, in the battalions, in the deepest layers of the French proletariat. By means of these soviets of delegates - in this case it was the organs of the National Guard - the party would have been able to be in contact with the masses, to judge their mood; its leading centre would have been able to put out a slogan every day - a slogan which would have penetrated the masses through the party militants, thus uniting their thought and their will.

No sooner had the government retreated to Versailles than the National Guard freed itself of its responsibility, at the time when this responsibility was immense. The Central Committee pictured setting up 'legal' elections at the Commune. It entered into negotiations with the mayors of Paris to cover itself, on the right, with 'legality'.

If, at the same time, a violent attack against Versailles had been prepared, these negotiations with the mayors would have been a fully justified military trick, adapted to its aims. But, in reality, these negotiations were only intended to be an escape from any sort of struggle. The petty-bourgeois radicals and the socialist idealists, who were respecting legality, and the people who were embodying part of the 'legal' state, the deputies and the mayors, etc., all of them at the bottom of their hearts were hoping that Thiers would stop respectfully before the revolutionary Paris, as soon as Paris was covered by the 'legal' Commune.

The passivity and indecision were in this case supported by the sacred principle of federation and autonomy. Paris, you see, in only *one* commune among other communes. Paris does not want to impose anything on to anyone. It does not struggle for dictatorship, but for 'dictatorship by example'.

On the whole, it was only an attempt to replace the proletarian revolution which was developing by a petty-bourgeois reform - the communal autonomy. The real revolutionary task consisted of ensuring the power of the proletariat throughout the country. Paris had to be used as a base, as a prop, as a place of arms. And to realise this aim it was necessary, without losing any time, to triumph over Versailles and send agitators, organisers, armed forces all over France. It was necessary to contact sympathisers, to consolidate those who were hesitating and break the opposition of the enemy. Instead of this offensive and aggressive policy - the only one to save the situation - the leaders in Paris tried to shut themselves up in their communal autonomy: they would not attack the others if these others did not attack them; each town had its sacred right to self-government. This idealist chat - a kind of mundane anarchism - was in fact covering cowardness in front of revolutionary action which would have had to have been carried out to the end. Otherwise, it shouldn't have been started ...

The hostility towards the centralist organisation - a heritage of the petty-bourgeois localism and autonomism - is without doubt the weak point of one

fraction of the French proletariat. The autonomy of the sections, of the wards, of the towns, is for some revolutionaries the most important guarantee of true progress and individual independence. But that was a great error for which the French proletariat has had to pay dearly.

Under the form of a 'struggle against despotic centralism' and against the 'stifling' discipline, a fight for the conservation of the various groups and sub-groups of the working class is carried out; a fight for their petty interests, with their petty leaders and their local oracles. The entire working class, while conserving its cultural originality and its political nuances, can act with method and firmness, without lagging behind events and each time striking a mortal blow at the weakest part of its enemies, provided that at its head, above the wards, the sections, the groups, there is a centralised apparatus bound by an iron discipline. The tendency towards particularism, in whatever form it assumes, is a heritage of the dead past. The sooner French communism - both socialist communism and syndicalist communist - gets rid of it, the better it will be for the proletarian revolution.

"THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY"

[The party does not create revolution at its will, it does not choose the moment when it takes power, but it intervenes actively in the events, penetrates all the time the mood of the revolutionary masses and evaluates the strength of the enemy's resistance, and determines the most favourable moment for decisive action. This is the most difficult aspect of its task. The party does not have a ready-made decision valid for all cases. One needs a correct theory, a close link with the masses, understanding of the situation, a revolutionary judgement, a quick decision ability. The more deeply a revolutionary party penetrates into all fields of the proletarian struggle, the more it is unified by the unity of the aim and that of the discipline, and the quicker and better it can succeed in achieving its tasks.]

[The difficulty lies in tightly linking this organisation of a centralised party, welded internally under iron discipline, with the mass movement with all its flux and reflux. The taking of power can be attained only under powerful revolutionary pressure from the working masses. But in this act the preparation phase is absolutely unavoidable. And the better the party understands the conjuncture and the moment, the better the bases of the resistance will be prepared, the better the forces and the roles will be distributed, the more certain will be success and the victims will be fewer. The correlation of a carefully prepared action and of the mass movement is the strategical-political task for the seizure of power.]

The comparison of March 18, 1871 with November 7th, 1917 is very instructive from this point of view. In Paris there was an absolute lack of initiative from the leading revolutionary circles. The proletariat, armed by the

bourgeois government is, in fact, master of the town, possesses all material means for power - cannons and guns - but is not aware of it. The bourgeoisie attempts to take back its arms from the giant, it tries to steal the cannons from the proletariat. The attempt is a failure. The government flees in panic from Paris to Versailles. The field is open. But it is only the following day that the proletariat understands that it is master of Paris. The leaders are tail-ending the events - they register them only after they've happened, and do their best to blund their revolutionary content.

The Lessons of the Commune to Russia
In Petrograd the events went in a different way. The party went firmly in a decisive manner to the seizure of power, with its men being everywhere, reinforcing each position, enlarging all fissures between the workers and the army on the one hand and the government on the other. During August, September, October, there was a tremendous revolutionary movement. The Party thrived and increased enormously its support inside the working class and the army. Later on, the harmony between the preparation of the conspiracy and of the action of the masses is practically automatic. The Second Congress of the Soviets was fixed for Nov. 7th. All our previous agitation was meant to lead to the seizure of power by the Congress. Thus the seizure of power was decided upon for Nov. 7th. This fact was very well known and understood by the enemy. Kerensky and his advisers could not do anything to consolidate themselves at the decisive moment. For that, they had to have the most revolutionary part of the army leave the capital. On our side we profited by this attempt to turn into the source of a new clash which had a decisive importance. We openly accused Kerensky's government—our accusation was later proved by the discovery of an official document which planned the removal of one-third of the army (not out of military considerations but for counter-revolutionary purposes). This clash linked us even more tightly to the army and posed in front of the latter a very well-defined task: that of supporting the congress of the Soviets on the 7th November. And since the government were insisting on—even if in a mild way—the removal of the army, we created a revolutionary committee of war beside the Soviet of Petrograd, which already was in our hands, under the pretext of checking the military soundness of the government's projected course of action.

Thus we had a purely military organ at the head of the army of Petrograd, which in reality was a legal organ of armed insurrection. We allocated at the same time, to all the military units, to all military shops, etc., communist commissars. The clandestine military organisation was carrying out special technical tasks and was providing the war revolutionary committee with militants on which one could count for important military events. The main job of preparation, realisation and armed insurrection was carried out openly but as though it were a matter of course. The bourgeoisie, with Kerensky at its head, did not realise what was happening.

As far as the strategy is concerned there were in our party many different opinions. One part of the central committee declared itself, as we all know, against the seizure of power thinking that the moment had not come to do so, that Petrograd was separated from the rest of the country the proletariat from the peasantry etc. Other comrades thought that we were not giving enough importance to the elements of the military plot. A member of the Central Committee demanded in October that the Alexandrine Theatre be encircled where the Democratic Conference was and demanded that the dictatorship of the CC of the Party be proclaimed. They were saying : by concentrating our agitation as well as the preparatory military work for the 2nd congress we displayed our plan to the adversary, we gave him the possibility of preparing himself and even the possibility of giving us a preventive blow. But there is no doubt that the attempt of a military plot and the encircling of the Alexandrine Theater would have been to alien a fact for the developments of the events, and that it would have been a puzzling event for the masses. Even at the Soviet of Petrograd, where our fraction (tendency) was in control, such an enterprise would not have appeared the logical development of the struggle but would have provoked great disarray (especially amongst the army where some regiment particularly the Cavalry were hesitating and had little confidence in the undertaking) it would have been much easier for Kerensky to smash a plot unexpected by the masses than to attack the army, which was consolidating itself more and more on its positions: the positions of defense of the future Soviet Congress. The majority of the CC rejected the project of encircling of the democratic conference and it was right. The conjuncture was very well judged. The armed insurrection, with hardly any bloodshed, triumphed precisely on the day which had been openly been fixed beforehand for the convening of the 2nd Soviet Congress.

This strategy, however, cannot become a general rule; it requires special conditions. No one believed in a war with Germany anymore, and even the least revolutionary soldiers did not want to leave Petrograd for the Front. And even if initially that was the only reason why the army was on the side of the workers, it became more and more convinced it was right when the various manouvring of Kereansky were discovered. But this mood of the army of Petrograd had a much deeper root in the situation of the peasantry and in the development of the imperialist war. If there had been a split in the army and if Kerensky had had the possibility of being supported by a few regiments our project would have been a failure. Purely military elements (the conspiracy, and the great rapidity of the action) would have prevailed. We would have had to choose another time for the insurrection. In the same way the Commune had the possibility to get hold of the regiments, even the peasant one, because they had lost all confidence and all respect for the power and their commanders -

yet it did nothing of the kind. The fault did not lie in the relationship between the working class and the peasantry but in a failure of revolutionary strategy.

What will be the situation in relation to this point in the European countries today? It is not easy to predict anything on that. Yet, as events develop slowly and as the bourgeois government try their best to use the past experiences one can foresee that for the proletariat to attract the sympathies of the soldiers it will have to fight against a great resistance and a well organised one at that. A skillful attack at the proper moment will be then necessary - The duty of the party is to be ready for it. That is why it has to keep and develop its character of centralised organisation, which openly leads the revolutionary movement of the masses and is at the same time a clandestine apparatus for armed insurrection.

The question of the acceptability of the commanders was one of the reason for the clashes between the National Guard and Thiers. Paris refused to accept the commanders appointed by Thiers, Varlin, then claimed that all the commanders of the National Guard from top to bottom, should be elected by the national guards themselves. It is on this point that the C C'tee of the National Guard found its support.

This question must be seen from 2 sides, political and military, which are linked but must be kept distinct. The political task consisted in getting rid of the counter-revolutionary elements from the National Guard. Total election was the sole means as the majority of the N.G was composed of workers and revolutionary petit-bourgeois. Moreover, as the slogan 'acceptability of the commanders' had to be applied to the infantry too, Thiers at one go would have been deprived of the essential part of his army, namely the counter-revolutionary officers. To achieve this project, a party was needed which would have had men in all units of the army. In a few words, the acceptability question acted as a wedge to split the army along class line. This is how things went in Russia at the time of Kerensky, specially on the eve of October.

But removing from the army the old apparatus of command inevitably tends to weaken its organisational cohesion and to lower the combativity of the forces. Elected commanders most of the time are rather weak as regards the technico-military side and as regards the maintenance of order and discipline. Thus, at the moment when the counter-revolutionary leaders who were oppressing the army were removed, the question arises as to how to give the army a revolutionary leadership—which is able to achieve its mission. This question can in no way be solved by mere elections. If the revolutionary army is led by inexperienced men, the revolution will be beaten by the enemy who is guided in the choice of its commanders by centuries of experiences. The methods of shapeless democracy must be complemented and to some extent replaced by measures of selection from the top. The Revolution must create an organ of experienced organisers in whom one can have absolute confidence and who choose, nominate and educate the commanders. If demo-

cratic particularism and autonomy are extremely dangerous for the proletarian revolution in general, they are ten times more dangerous for the army. We saw this by the tragical example of the commune.

The Central Committee of the National Guard got its authority from its democratic election. At the time when the C.C. needed to develop its offensive to the maximum, deprived as it was of the leadership of a proletarian party, it lost its head, and hurried in transferring its powers to the representatives of the commune. Now, it was a big mistake at that time to play with elections. But once the elections had taken place and the Commune had been convened, one had to concentrate in the commune and create through it an organ with real power to reorganise the National Guard. But things went differently. Beside the elected Commune there remained the Central Committee; the character of eligibility of this Central Committee gave it a political authority, as a result of which it could emulate the Commune. But at the same time it deprived it of the necessary energy and firmness for the purely military questions which after the organisation of the Commune were the justification for its existence. Democratic methods are the only weapon in the hands of the proletariat and its party. The elections cannot be turned into a fetish, a remedy against all evils. One must combine the methods of elections with those of nomination. The power of the Commune came from the elected National Guard. But once it was created, the Commune should have reorganised the National Guard from top to bottom, should have given it safe leaders and established a rule of severe discipline. The Commune did not do this as it was itself without a powerful revolutionary leading centre. Thus it got smashed. One can flip through the whole history of the Commune and one will find one continual lesson: one needs a strong leading party. The French proletariat has made sacrifices for the Revolution. But more than any other also, it has been deceived. The bourgeoisie many times blinded it with all colours of republicanism, radicalism and socialism in order to fetter it in the capitalist chains. The bourgeoisie through its agents, its lawyers, its journalists, has brought a whole mass of democratic, parliamentary and autonomist formulas which are only obstacles for the proletariat.

The temperament of the French proletariat is a revolutionary lava. But this lava at the moment is covered by the ashes of scepticism. The result of many betrayals and much disenchantment. That is why the French revolutionary proletariat must be most severe towards its party and uncover relentlessly the gap between words and action. The French workers need an organisation for action, strong as steel, with leaders who can be controlled by the masses at each step of the revolutionary movement.

How long will we be given by history to get ready? We do not know. For 50 years the French bourgeoisie ruled the Third Republic on the bones of the

"Communards" These fighters did not lack heroism. What they lacked was clarity in methods and a centralised leading organisation. That is why they were defeated. Half a century went past before the French proletariat would pose the question of avenging the death of the Communards.

But this time, the action will be firmer, more concentrated. Thiers's heirs will have to pay fully their historical debt.

Zlatooste, 4th Feb. 1921.

SOLIDARITY WITH THE BENGALI PEOPLE

The massive explosion of popular discontent in East Pakistan which has claimed the lives of many Bengali workers, peasants and students, has highlighted once again the political and economic subjugation which has been the lot of citizens of East Pakistan ever since the Partition of the sub-continent in 1947.

It shows very clearly the total inability of the West Pakistani ruling class to solve any of the problems of the 70 million people of East Pakistan who represent a majority of the total population of the country. The last desperate resort of the West Pakistani bourgeoisie was to use the army to maintain its privileges in the East, but the magnificent resistance of the East Bengali nation has retarded this process. The continuous general strike has shown the depth of feeling on the national question which has determined the politics of virtually all the political organisations of East Bengal.

Bengal has a great historic past: it was in the vanguard of the struggle against British Imperialism, a struggle which gave birth to a strong and vigorous revolutionary nationalist tradition.

It is this which has made Bengal the best indicator of the future of the entire Indo-Pakistan sub-continent. The uprising in East Bengal is therefore only the first spark of a struggle which will ultimately transcend the political boundaries of both East and West Bengal and have revolutionary repercussions throughout India.

The United Secretariat of the Fourth International declares its complete solidarity with the heroic struggle of the Bengali people in their fight against national oppression.

Self-determination for East Pakistan!
For an independent, socialist, East Bengal!
Self-determination for the whole Bengali people!
For a United Socialist Bengali Republic!

March 23, 1971

*The United Secretariat of
the Fourth International*

DECLARATION ON ARGENTINA

The United Secretariat of the Fourth International has analysed the development of the Argentinian situation which is characterised by an accentuation of mass-mobilisations and where the class struggle has reached the stage of armed confrontation.

It draws the attention of the International and of the revolutionary workers' movement to the importance of the Argentinian events and to the tasks of international solidarity which flow from it.

The United Secretariat sends its warmest greetings to the PRT (Revolutionary Workers Party), Argentinian section of the Fourth International, which—through the audacious actions of the Revolutionary People's Army (ERP)—has established itself in the front ranks of the organisations which support armed struggle, and which conducts this struggle within the framework of large mass mobilisations.

The United Secretariat expresses its fraternal solidarity with the militants who are victims of the dictatorship's repression and imprisonment, to whom thousands of Cordoba militants during the recent general strike demonstrated a most moving homage.

March 22, 1971

*The United Secretariat of
the Fourth International*

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