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The French Student Revolt

by Mary-Alice Waters

Positivism and Marxism in Sociology

by George Novack

The Cultural Revolution

by Ernest Germain

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editorial

END DE GAULLE'S

REPRESSION OF REVOLUTIONARIES !

Charles de Gaulle's repression of the main revolutionary groups in France has been vigorously condemned by virtually all the leftist political tendencies in that country except the Communist Party. It was answered by a wave of demonstrations at French consulates and information centers across Canada and the United States. And it is vital that these efforts be supported and reinforced. There can be no question of a democratic future for the peoples of France if the vanguard of the revolutionary struggle is banned and in danger of persecution and arrest without warning.

June 18, the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, the World Party of Socialist Revolution founded by Leon Trotsky in 1938, condemned the Gaullist repression in a brief statement:

"On June 14, 1968, the French secret police raided the offices of the French section of the International, the offices of their publishing enterprise and the private homes of many militants. This followed by a day the official government dissolution of the PCI [Parti Communiste Internationaliste—Internationalist Communist Party, the French section of the Fourth International] and the JCR [Jeunesse Communiste Revolutionnaire—Revolutionary Communist Youth].

"Many comrades were arrested and held for questioning and their personal papers seized. Most of them have since been released. However, Pierre Frank is still being held." (Frank, secretary of the PCI, was released June 24 after a three-day hunger strike. He had been held incommunicado for ten days.)

The United Secretariat statement called for the organization of protests and solidarity actions. The United Secretariat also requested that material aid be sent to the following address: Emile Van Ceulen, secretary, Fonds de Solidarite contre la Repression en France, 111 Avenue Seghers, Brussels 8, Belgium.

In this issue of the *International Socialist Review* we are printing documents which we hope will be of use in clarifying the world historic importance of the French revolutionary upsurge and the burning necessity of building international support for the victims of the French regime.

Alain Krivine

"THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES!"

(Following is the full text of a June 12 statement by Alain Krivine, secretary of the Jeunesse Communiste Revolutionnaire (Revolutionary Communist Youth) on de Gaulle's order for its dissolution.)

The Jeunesse Communiste Revolutionnaire has been dissolved. The Council of Ministers has decided it has the power to invoke a law passed on January 10, 1936 against "combat groups and private militias."

What combat groups are "provoking armed demonstrations in the streets"? There are such groups—the CRS [Compagnies Republicaines de Securite—paramilitary security police], the Gardes Mobiles [Mobile Guards], to say nothing of their "private" counterparts, the SAC [Sections d'Action Civique—Civic Action Committees] and CDR [Comites de Defense de la Republique—Committees for the Defense of the Republic].

Who are the "private militias" which for example, attacked the workers at Sochaux for the benefit of the Peugeot family? They are the fascist right wing. We demand the dissolution of these armed bands. A Council of Ministers has spoken, but in whose name? This government does not represent the real power. The real power has asserted itself in the factories, in the streets, by the action of ten million strikers. Nor does the de Gaulle government speak in the name of the Assembly, which has been recognized as powerless and dissolved.

General, who made you president? Who did you consult in 1958? Who did you consult at Baden-Baden in May '68? We demand the dissolution of the government of "armed bands." The ministers and the president have proposed that we "participate." We are not consulted about participating; hence we're not concerned with participating.

The bourgeoisie is offering the elections to the workers. Everyone is supposed to be able to express himself, or almost everyone. The Place de l'Etoile [rich neighborhood] tolerates the Place Kossuth [neighborhood of the CP and CGT headquarters] which accepts it, but not the Place Edmond-Rostand [student center in the Latin Quarter], which scares both of them.

If the CPF [Communist Party] and the CGT [General Federation of Labor] do not defend these first organizations to be victimized by the repression, who will stand up to the next moves of the Gaullist gov-

ernment? Will the ballot safeguard all workers organizations tomorrow, all organizations that stand for democratic right and civil liberties?

The choice is not between de Gaulle and Mitterrand, but between the bourgeois elections and the socialist revolution. The power of the workers is in the streets, not in the ballot boxes. The government understands this perfectly.

We were expelled from the UEC [Union des Etudiants Communistes—Federation of Communist Students] for refusing to support the candidacy of Mitterrand, and the JCR was formed. Today, for having confronted the Gaullist armed bands in the streets, for having participated in the general strike which is still continuing, the JCR has been dissolved by the government.

But the revolutionary movement cannot be dissolved, the socialist revolution remains on the agenda. The need for action has already led to the formation of action committees. It is only the beginning—the struggle continues.

Pierre Frank

“WE WILL EMERGE STRONGER THAN EVER !”

(The following statement by Pierre Frank, secretary of the Parti Communiste Internationaliste (Internationalist Communist Party—the French section of the Fourth International) was issued June 13. Pierre Frank was one of the first revolutionists arrested after the Council of Ministers decree.)

I learned from a press agency that the Parti Communiste Internationaliste [PCI] has been placed on the list of organizations whose dissolution has been decreed by the Council of Ministers. I have had no official notification of this measure but it does not surprise me.

The PCI, it should be remembered, was built in the underground during World War II through the fusion of various Trotskyist groups of that time. It has been active in public life since the liberation. Among other things, since 1946 it has run candidates in legislative elections many times.

Our members were persecuted and arrested during France's war with Vietnam and again in the war with Algeria. The government measure, which has struck at various revolutionary youth organizations along with us for allegedly organizing commando groups, is a completely arbitrary administrative directive. The government does not dare to present its case in the courts, where it would have to formulate exact charges and present evidence.

The government move coincided with the frenzied campaign which the leaderships of the PCF [Parti Communiste Francais— French Communist Party] and the CGT [Confederation Generale du Travail— General Federation of Labor—the CP-led union] are conducting against the "leftists." These leaderships have not protested at all against the repression which can turn in their direction in the future.

We are studying the legal aspects of the measure and are reserving our right to challenge it. We are confident that many labor and civil liberties organizations will speak up against the dissolution measures taken by the government against a series of vanguard organizations, and will struggle against these decrees until they are abrogated.

In any case, the Trotskyists, who have undergone many repressions before, will emerge from this attack stronger than ever.

FIRST LESSONS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY UPSURGE IN FRANCE

(The following statement was issued June 10 by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, the World Party of Socialist Revolution founded by Leon Trotsky in 1938.)

May 1968 will enter the history of the class struggle as the month of the biggest revolutionary upsurge yet seen in an industrially developed capitalist country. Ten million workers on strike, all the big and medium-sized plants closed down, the most backward and least politically conscious layers of the proletariat and civil service employees brought into action, the technicians and foremen widely involved, the peasants joining the students and workers in the struggle, broader and broader and more and more militant demonstrations confronting the harried and increasingly demoralized forces of repression, a "strong" government out of control of events and more and more paralyzed for two weeks—this was the picture of France in this exceptional spring.

The determination of hundreds of thousands of university and high-school students, of young workers, to bring down the capitalist regime

exploded in such a glaring way that no one seriously questioned what had happened. The workers, too, demonstrated in just as resounding a way their determination to battle not only for immediate demands and against the Gaullist regime but also to overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie and capitalism. This determination was expressed in the occupation of plants, railway stations, power plants, post offices, over which the red flag was raised. It was expressed in the slogans calling for "workers power," for "power to the workers," repeated with increasing frequency in chants and on banners in the demonstrations. It was expressed by numerous spontaneous moves to take control or to take over the means of production, by the moves of committees or collective groups of workers and citizens to assume power.

Thus, before the eyes of the entire world, a new power was being born, the power of the future French Socialist Republic, confronting the decaying Fifth French Republic. It was completely possible during the week from May 24 to May 30 to draw a general conclusion from these facts, to cover the country with a network of organs of dual power, to federate them, to take the necessary initiative to topple the tottering Gaullist regime and to bring the revolutionary crisis to a conclusion by the working class taking power in order to build socialism.

If this did not occur, if the bourgeois state was finally able to pick up the reins of power, this was due exclusively to the betrayal committed by the leaders of the workers, particularly the leaders of the French Communist Party [PCF] and the General Federation of Labor [CGT], who controlled the great majority of workers. These leaders of the PCF and the CGT did everything possible to isolate the students and the revolutionary vanguard from the mass of workers, turning the strikes and factory occupations toward purely economic aims, blocking a test of strength in the streets where the relationship of forces was eminently favorable to the revolution, paralyzing the reaction to the repressive violence, blocking the arming of pickets and the organization of a student and worker militia, compelling acceptance of elections offered by a power at bay, and splitting and smothering the strikes, until their own irresolute attitude and the resolute speech of de Gaulle brought about the first pause in the movement.

This betrayal is a consequence of their adherence to the Kremlin's doctrine of "peaceful coexistence." The Kremlin views de Gaulle as weakening the position of American imperialism in Europe, and the Kremlin is mortally afraid of the perspective of a revolutionary upsurge in France.

The betrayal is also a consequence of the long years these leaders have spent in electioneering and the parliamentary routine. The refrain "along the peaceful and parliamentary road to socialism" was voiced for years with the excuse that a revolutionary crisis could in no case occur in France. When such a crisis did actually occur, the same reformist strategy was used to dissipate the possibility that was objectively present to take power.

The PCF leadership has lost credit completely with the revolutionary students; its prestige has been broken by and large among the entire

vanguard of the youth. This liberation of the youth from the bureaucratic stranglehold has enabled it to enter into action as a new revolutionary vanguard on a scale never before equalled in France.

But within the working class, the PCF and CGT apparatus, although it has been shaken many times over the years, and now again when the workers in the big plants rejected the miserable agreements worked out with the bosses and the Gaullist government to bring the strike to an end, still maintains preponderance and has many ways to stifle workers democracy and free expression of the rank and file will. The scattered elements for a new leadership, which is ardently desired among the young workers, are still too weak and unorganized to be able to assure the building of the organs of dual power on a general scale.

That is why the betrayal committed by the apparatus of the PCF and CGT was able to save French capitalism once again as in 1936 and in 1945-47.

But, in contrast to the outcome of the two preceding revolutionary upsurges in France, the Stalinist betrayal this time was not able to smash the spring 1968 upsurge outright, nor bring about a rapid reversal of the relationship of forces. The revolutionary battles of May 1968 were mounted from bastions like the revolutionary Sorbonne, forces such as those seeking the right to control the ORTF [Office of the French Radio and Telephone], and bodies like the committees of action. The resumption of work in the plants did not liquidate them. Moreover work was resumed at a much slower rate than the Gaullist regime and the PCF leadership hoped for. Considerable sections of the working class in the big plants displayed exemplary militancy and capacity for resistance.

The bourgeois state could not permit these embryonic forms of dual power to be consolidated and extended. But it did not have the strength to eliminate them with a single blow. Thus a transitional period opened in which the repressive forces are making tests, as in the effort to break the strike at the Renault plant in Flins through the use of police. These sallies could become points of departure for resumption of the revolutionary movement.

In addition, the industrial and economic weakness of French capitalism does not permit it to grant the considerable material advantages which it had to accord to the workers in order to assure resumption of work. Price rises, inflation and unemployment will rapidly erode these gains. This, in turn, will set off violent responses from workers.

Finally, the internal crisis in the unions and the traditional workers parties has only begun. This crisis will deepen in coming weeks, particularly after the elections which the PCF is utilizing as the last means to reknit its ranks. The repercussions of this crisis will likewise soon stimulate a powerful resumption of the workers struggle.

All the elements thus exist for forecasting that the dip in temperature that began May 31 will prove to be only temporary, that new explosions and new confrontations are absolutely inevitable. Preparations must be made for these confrontations with maximum lucidity and organization. All the lessons of the struggles of May 1968 must be

drawn in order to assure assimilation of the gains so that the next wave can begin at a higher level and make it possible to surmount the insufficiencies of the first wave.

The first wave revealed the extraordinary weakness of neocapitalism under the apparent stability of the "consumer society," "economic expansion" and the "strong state." The development of the productive forces, the rise in the level of culture and technical education of the masses, the deep industrialization of the country, the explosion in size of the universities, the drop in average age level of the population—all these changes which the capitalist regime congratulated itself on as merits and signs of modernity, turned definitively against it. This was so because under the capitalist system every development of the productive forces increases the economic and social contradictions. The masses felt by instinct that the immense possibilities to satisfy their fundamental needs were being wasted, cut off or shunted aside under the reign of profit-making and private property.

The youth no longer took it for granted that there should be close to 1,000,000 unemployed while a workweek of 30 hours for everybody was clearly in sight. The students, the highly skilled workers,

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the technicians, no longer felt obliged to accept the dictates of the bosses, management, or specialists in the pay of capital on how they had to work, what they had to produce and what they had to consume. In the same way the workers have become less and less tolerant of the lack of rank and file control in their organizations and of the rule of an authoritarian bureaucracy.

The Fourth International has worked out a transitional program that corresponds to these essential needs of the masses. This program will be further elaborated and concretized in the light of what has been learned from the explosion of May 1968. Some of the elements can be outlined as follows: the sliding scale of wages; workers control over production; opening of the bosses' bookkeeping system; workers control over hiring and firing; the outlawing of banking secrets; publication of how all the big companies calculate net costs and profit margins; registration of the holdings of the landlords; the democratic elaboration of a plan for the economic development of socialist France by a Congress of Workers called for this purpose; completely free medical care, drugs, urban transportation, education and school supplies; wages for all high-school and university students beginning at the age of sixteen; administration of the universities by the entire university community; nationalization of all the big companies, private banks, and all credit institutions; elimination of all the representatives of big capital in the administrative boards of the nationalized enterprises; recasting of the government budget by eliminating the nuclear armaments program and drastically reducing military expenses while simultaneously sharply increasing expenditures for cultural and social equipment (hospitals, low-cost housing, construction of highways, sports areas and leisure centers).

These planks culminate in the demand for a workers government based on the representative organizations of the working class — today the unions, tomorrow democratically elected committees. Unquestionably this demand is equivalent in the immediate future to calling on the big workers parties, in association with the unions, to take power; they still enjoy the support in actuality of the majority of the working class. But these parties show no desire whatsoever to take the road to winning power through extraparliamentary means. The deeper and more extensive the revolutionary crisis becomes, the more these traditional parties will be outflanked by the masses and the more the slogan of a workers government will acquire for them the meaning of the workers themselves, organized in committees, taking power.

To promote and to inspire the revolutionary activity of the masses along the road of resuming the struggle of May 1968, the first task is to reinforce the revolutionary vanguard. This must be carried out on several levels, among others the broad vanguard, by force of circumstances regrouping diverse tendencies and organizations around solid unity in action based on precise common revolutionary objectives and observance of workers democracy.

On another level, the revolutionary Marxists themselves must seek

to move as rapidly as possible toward the building of a revolutionary party which already has a hearing among the masses. The United Secretariat of the Fourth International points to the admirable way in which the members of the Jeunesse Communiste Revolutionnaire [Revolutionary Communist Youth] and the Parti Communiste Internationaliste, the French section of the Fourth International, have met the test of May 1968. We express our conviction that they will play a capital role in carrying out this double task, without which the French socialist revolution cannot win.

The revolutionary process in France is of supreme importance to the entire world and to the forward march of the world revolution. May 1968 released the brakes on the political situation throughout Europe, bringing the student struggles to a higher level in Italy, Spain, Great Britain, Belgium, and Sweden, stimulating the resumption of the workers struggles in various countries, unleashing the process of the European revolution. May 1968 has already exercised a profound influence in unleashing the student struggle in Yugoslavia, and is contributing in preparing political revolutions in all the bureaucratically degenerated or deformed workers states. May 1968 will assure to the new vanguard now forming in these countries a high level of revolutionary Marxist consciousness. It will compel imperialism to redeploy its forces on a world scale and thus constitutes important aid to the Vietnamese revolution, the Latin-American revolution, and the entire colonial revolution.

But the primary importance of the May 1968 movement was to bring the proletariat of a highly industrialized country into the center of the world revolution for the first time in more than twenty years. This fact has already swept away a whole series of prejudices, of false conceptions, of revisions of Marxism fostered by the subsiding of the European revolution after 1948.

It has cleansed the atmosphere by raising the demand for 100 percent workers democracy from the very beginning of the revolutionary upsurge. It has assured the present phase of the world revolution a higher political and theoretical level than in the past, a revival of the best traditions of the revolutionary, internationalist workers movement.

On this foundation it has created conditions propitious for a rapid development of the international Trotskyist movement and the Fourth International to which the revolutionary Marxist militants are duty bound to respond at once in view of the completely new possibilities which have now been opened up.

Long live the French socialist revolution!

Long live the world socialist revolution!

Mary-Alice Waters

THE FRENCH STUDENT REVOLT

(Mary-Alice Waters is the national secretary of the Young Socialist Alliance and former editor of the Young Socialist. She was in France during the revolutionary upsurge covering those events for The Militant. This interview with the International Socialist Review was obtained shortly after her return to this country, June 24.)

Q. One of the big impacts of the French events in this country was to reinforce the idea that students can and will play an important role in revolutionary struggles. But at the same time a debate developed within the student movement where some people see the French upsurge as proof that students can "spontaneously," as they say, and without much organization, create a revolutionary situation. Could you discuss this in terms of what happened in France?

A. I think one of the main lessons that is going to be drawn from the French events is precisely around these questions. They are questions that are going to be debated in France and around the world revolutionary movements in the months to come. Of course, first of all, it is absolutely true in France that the student movement did play a very important role in the whole revolutionary upsurge. The term they use most frequently to describe their role is that of being a "detonator": The struggles they were leading and their willingness to fight, and the fact that through the fight they forced the de Gaulle government to retreat, to grant demands, had an important impact on the consciousness of a whole section of the working class. When the workers saw what students were able to gain through their fight in the streets, and not limiting their fight to petitions asking the government to give them a few concessions, and that the students were

able to win, this opened the way for a massive struggle of the working class.

Of course it also has to be placed in the context of the social and political situation in France. Because of the tremendous contradictions that existed in French society at this point the student struggle was able to detonate a much broader struggle. But it has to be absolutely clear that the students alone were not capable of creating the kind of social crisis that existed in France during the months of May and June.

Q. Were there students in France who would disagree with the statement you just made?

A. I am sure that there were some but I think the overwhelming majority understood this very clearly. They understood that what they were able to do alone was very minimal. They were able to win a few concessions on the university level but without the tremendous upsurge that took place in the working class itself, they would have done very little. There was no question in their minds but that the center of the struggle passed from the students to the working class. And at that point it became a question primarily of how do students link up with this struggle, how do we express our solidarity with workers, how do we help to encourage their struggle and do whatever we can to influence it in a revolutionary direction.

You see, once the general strike was actually underway, the students' main concern was how to link up with it. They recognized that the main leadership of the unions was totally reformist, under the leadership of the Communist Party or one or another of the various reformist political formations, and that these unions had strong control over the French working class.

They also knew from their own experiences with the Communist Party in the student movement that it was not a revolutionary force. From the way the Communist Party had attacked the students, had made attempts to prevent them from linking up with the workers, the students knew the CP would try to prevent any fraternization between students and young workers. So the main question was how to get around this.

One of the first things they did was right at the beginning of the strike the students at the Sorbonne sent a delegation that marched out to the Renault plant at Boulogne-Billancourt to demonstrate solidarity with the workers occupying that factory. It was a minor thing, a symbolic thing, but it was very important in that it did give a lot of the students at the Sorbonne an opportunity to talk with workers, particularly the young workers involved in the strike, who were very angry at the attempts of the CP to prevent them from having any contact with student revolutionaries. It was also the way the students invited many of the workers to come to the Sorbonne. And from this kind of contact you had the beginnings of the formations of the *action committees* that were formed all over Paris particularly, but also in the other cities as well.

The main struggle was in the factories themselves, but the policy of the CP was to prevent any political activity from taking place there, even any political discussion. They were afraid that if they kept all the workers together in the plants, the impact of the radicalization would make it very difficult for them to control this strike which they never considered a general strike and never called a general strike. So they sent most of the workers home.

But there was a significant layer of workers looking for political activity, looking for political leadership, for some way to influence the outcome of this battle they were in. The focus of political activity shifted from the factories into the districts of Paris and the other cities.

The formation of these action committees in each district brought together a genuine cross section of the population that included workers and housewives and students, where they were able to get together on a regular basis, plan political activities, make political decisions, discuss the occupations of factories, discuss the occupation of stores, plan what they should be doing to aid these and so forth. The formation of these action committees was for the most part initiated by the students, but they rapidly became much broader.

The students weren't trying to control them, they didn't want them to be student committees, they wanted them to be what they turned into, although they were patterned on committees that had been formed at the Sorbonne.

Q. You mentioned that the CP didn't call this a general strike. How could they possibly not call it a general strike when 10 million workers were on strike?

A. This was for very conscious political reasons. That is, if you have a general strike, it implies a solution to that strike, and this immediately raises the struggle to a political level. The solution has to be reached with the government as a whole and the employers as a whole. From the very beginning, the CP's attitude was that it was not a general strike but you simply had strikes going on all over the country in all the various enterprises simultaneously, but they were very careful never to call it a general strike.

When it came to de Gaulle's speech May 30 where he announced the elections, the CP immediately accepted his "generous" offer. From that point on, most of the negotiations that took place were on an industry level, in various factories, precisely to get away from a general confrontation between the workers and the ruling class. They consciously broke it up and reached agreements in one factory after another, and as soon as an agreement was reached in one factory, the CGT [Confederation Generale du Travail—General Federation of Labor] insisted that the workers go back to work and not wait until there was a general agreement reached in the entire economy.

In this way they isolated the most militant centers of the working class. In Renault and Citroen, where the workers held out to the bitter end, just reaching agreements in the last few days, the CP-CGT leaders knew that those factories would hold out, that they would be

the toughest strikes to break but that if they could get the rest of the economy going, there would be much more pressure on the Renault workers to go back also.

A couple of days before I left, the headline in *l'Humanite*, the CP newspaper, a banner headline—I can't remember the exact wording—was to the effect that "by the united efforts of the workers, we have finally forced the bosses to allow us to go back to work."

Q. We know from the newspapers that the Communist Party slandered Daniel Cohn-Bendit; what was their attitude in general toward the students?

A. Their attitude all the way through was pretty consistent, but under the pressure of events they had to modify this from time to time. At the very beginning of the struggle, in the beginning of May, they opened up a vicious attack against the "student provocateurs," the "student agitators," and "adventurists" who were "preventing the other students from taking their exams," and "finishing their school year." This was for the first 10 days.

The night of May 10-11, the first huge night of the barricades, with the savage police brutality against the students, forced the CP to retreat a little bit, to the extent that the next day *l'Humanite* didn't attack the students. They simply reported what had happened without taking sides.

But the reaction throughout all of France to the frightful police brutality of that night was such that the CP simply could not remain completely aloof and so they began to attack the police brutality at the same time they attacked the students who "provoked" the police brutality. They were very careful never to attack just the government alone.

Following that, the gigantic reaction amongst the working class itself forced the CP to call a national one-day protest strike and march on May 13, in solidarity with the students in reality, and against police brutality.

Throughout the entire two-month period however, they repeated "we feel it is our duty to make a distinction between the masses of the students and those small sections of adventurers and provocateurs who from time to time have gained leadership over these students." And they never stopped doing this. You see, even today, even in the face of this tremendous repression that has come down on revolutionary groups, the banning of all demonstrations, the arrest of the leadership of some of these organizations, the Communist Party had as one of the three main planks in its election campaign platform "condemnation of the adventurers and provocateurs." And there has not been one word that has come out of the CP in opposition to the banning of these revolutionary organizations.

As a matter of fact, to show you the extent to which the students understood this role of the CP, the day after the Minister of the Interior announced the banning of these organizations, the newspaper *Action*, the daily organ of the action committees (which has now been

banned also and cannot be sold publicly), had a little box on an inside page in big italics: "A new event for *l'Humanite*. For the first time in their history they have opened their pages to the Minister of the Interior. They printed without comment the order banning all revolutionary organizations." There was no other comment! It is a good example of their total comprehension of the treacherous role of the Communist Party throughout these events.

Their attitude toward Cohn-Bendit is well-known, their infamous comments labeling Cohn-Bendit as a German, leaving off the "Jew"

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that everyone knew automatically followed, their refusal to offer any solidarity to Cohn-Bendit even when he was not allowed to enter the country.

Q. But there must be Communist Party youth—what role did they play and did the CP make any attempt to reach new forces of young people?

A. The main student organization for the Communist Party is the Union of Communist Students [Union des Etudiants Communistes—UEC] but they have numerous youth organizations. They have an organization for girls, an organization for boys, Young Communists, which is nonstudent, and so on. But even before this upsurge the Communist student union had been reduced to a very weak organization by one split after another of students leaving it and moving toward the left. You had the break off in 1966 of the group which formed the JCR [Jeunesse Communiste Revolutionnaire—Revolutionary Communist Youth]; shortly after that you had the break off of another group which was essentially Maoist; almost the entire activist and militant wing of the UEC had disappeared. So they began with a very weak base in the student milieu but even that has been weakened under the impact of the May and June events.

The Communist students, like all the other students had a table up in the Sorbonne. But they were constantly beseiged, hour after hour, by students demanding an explanation of the Communist Party's position: Why do you attack the students? Why do you attack the student leaders? Why do you try to prevent us from having any connections with the working class? And they would sit there trying to answer these questions. I think you can say without any question that the influence of the CP on students has been reduced to an all-time historic low. As some of the French students commented, far from its being the revolutionary groups which are the "grouplets," it is the Communist Party itself which is the "grouplet" in the student milieu.

Another anecdote gives you an idea of this attitude: Some students pointed out to me that the table the CP had in the courtyard was set up everyday without fail at 10 a.m. and it was taken down every night without fail at 8 p.m.; they took their hour for lunch and when their time was over they left. It was so obvious that these people were paid to sit at this table and yet it was so incongruous in the context of this tremendous political ferment that was going on at the Sorbonne and throughout Paris. It was another example of the total lack of communication—that is putting it too mildly—the inability of the Communist Party to have any impact on the students, to draw any students towards them.

One other thing on this should be added. What the CP was most fearful of was the link between many of the young workers and the students. They tried to educate these young workers to the "dangers" of these "provocateurs," putting up a big wall poster at the Renault plant, for instance, warning that "in any period of social crisis there are always agents of the bosses who operate as ultra-lefts and provoc-

ateurs—and you could be almost certain that the students which come to the factories themselves were the ones to be most wary of." There was a sustained campaign in the newspaper along this line, day after day, and those young workers I talked to verified it was going on in the factories as well.

Q. You have been talking about the roles of the CP and the youth in general, could you be more specific about the various student organizations involved in the rebellion?

A. I think you have to start by seeing the way the whole struggle developed. In the very beginning, it is unquestionable that much of what happened did take place spontaneously, in the sense that the vanguard organizations didn't try to organize it. It wasn't their idea, for example, to build the barricades; it wasn't their idea to organize the students in the fight against the cops. As soon as they saw this developing, of course, they participated in it and helped to provide the leadership. But in the beginning much of what happened was spontaneous. Let me give you two examples.

Take the formation of the March 22 Movement in the university at Nanterre. It wasn't the kind of thing where members of the JCR, or the Maoist organization, or the anarchists said "now, what we have to do is draw all these people together, and then go in and occupy the university and set up an organization," and so forth. What happened was that in response to the arrest of one student, they had called a rally of protest; at the rally the suggestion came up of occupying the university in order to force the release of the student; everyone was for it; they went in and occupied the university and took it over. Once the student was released, they had a general assembly meeting and decided that they would continue to occupy the university and to raise new demands.

Again, on May 3 in Paris, when the cops first came into the Sorbonne and arrested those students who were in the courtyard, those comprised most of the vanguard students at that point, and it was the students outside the courtyard who initiated the fight against the cops when they saw these people being arrested.

Thus the March 22 Movement included members of the JCR in the leadership, it included members of various anarchist organizations—apparently at Nanterre there are a number of small anarchist groups all of which took part in this, and you had various leading individuals like Cohn-Bendit who wasn't associated with any of these other groups although ideologically he was definitely an anarchist. In the beginning it did not include any of the Communist students or any of the Maoists. From different standpoints they both condemned the movement: The Communist students considered it "adventurist," the Maoists considered it "petty bourgeois." Neither of them wanted anything to do with the organization and neither of them participated in it at first. Later on some of the Maoist groups did come into the March 22 Movement, but to my knowledge none of the Communist students ever did.

So it was a very conglomerate organization, with no structure and no program of any kind. Really it was simply a name given to the students of Nanterre who had occupied the university.

Q. You mentioned anarchist groups several times, what kind of views did they have?

A. Of the various anarchist groups, there is no one group that stands out from the rest of them—and how many there are is almost impossible to tell. By and large what this consists of is students who are for the socialist revolution in France but they were opposed to organization. They felt that somehow or other this was going to be accomplished, particularly without any centralized or democratic-centralist type of organization and that it could be done through something like the March 22 Movement, without any structures, without an elected leadership, with no control, really, over the leadership. For instance, nobody had any control over what Cohn-Bendit said and many of the other people that spoke for the leadership of the March 22 Movement. The anarchists also consistently condemned the organized political tendencies for being centralized, "bureaucratic" and so forth, and not giving enough room for the spontaneity, the spontaneous development and the creativity of the masses.

But as I started to say before, as the struggle developed, it became increasingly clear that the spontaneity became less and less important and less and less effective, and the students themselves came to recognize this and realize this. So whereas at the beginning it is probably unquestionable that Cohn-Bendit and his general political outlook presented the views of the majority of the students, but as May and June progressed, these tens of thousands of students, their political ideas, developed under the impact of events and they moved more and more toward understanding the role and necessity of organization. I don't want to exaggerate this, and to say that it was completely clear, but it was the direction in which they were moving.

As it took place, Cohn-Bendit didn't move in this direction. He maintained his political line, essentially as it was in the beginning and he found that towards the end of May and June, he had less and less of a political impact, that he represented a smaller and smaller section of the political leadership. And frequently as he spoke at the Sorbonne—although personally he got tremendous acclaim because he had become a symbol of the struggle, particularly with the combined attack on him by the Gaullist government and the Communist Party, he had become a very well-known figure and the students rallied to him in solidarity against the Gaullist government and against the Communist Party. (You know, several of the slogans that became very popular were "We're all German Jews," this may be a little complicated, but perhaps you remember that reporters asked the head of the CGT, Seguy, what his attitude towards Cohn-Bendit was. And Seguy responded, "Cohn-Bendit, who is that?" So the Students took up as one of their central slogans that they chanted on

demonstrations, "Seguy, who is he?" And again, the government labeled Cohn-Bendit an "undesirable" and wouldn't let him in the country so the students' response was "we're all undesirables.") So in this sense he was a very important symbol. But politically, when he spoke at the Sorbonne, he received much less response.

It is interesting to compare this with the development of the JCR which went in just the opposite direction. The JCR is the organization I mentioned before, formed two years ago from a left-wing split off of the Communist Party, from a section of the Union of Communist Students who were expelled for refusing to support Mitterrand, a capitalist candidate in the last general elections. (At that time, the CP dissolved the entire Sorbonne section of the UEC because the majority of it was left wing and they decided the best thing to do with it was to liquidate it.) Many of these students and others around the country formed the JCR.

Politically, the JCR has evolved over this time to the point where it openly considers itself a Trotskyist organization. During the May and June events it has gone through a tremendous upsurge in membership.

While the composition of the JCR is almost entirely student and it is based in the universities around the country, they have a socialist program which is aimed at providing a revolutionary leadership for the working class. The JCR received a crucial test during the course of these events in its ability to provide a leadership for the revolutionary upsurge and also to reach out to significant layers of the working class.

The JCR played a major role in helping to initiate and to lead the action committees that formed in Paris and other parts of the country. They played a role at the Sorbonne itself in helping to educate the thousands and thousands of students who were becoming politically conscious. They held daily meetings at the Sorbonne throughout the crisis drawing however many people you could get into the room; the larger the room the more people turned out; there seemed to be no upper limit to the thing. Thousands and thousands of students were coming day after day to the meetings called by the JCR to learn what its explanation was, its analysis was—just searching for some coherent explanation of what was going on around them in this tumultuous social upheaval.

Consequently through the months of May and June, the JCR emerged as the central revolutionary vanguard organization in the student milieu. And one of the main reasons for this was that they didn't isolate themselves in the student milieu, they didn't direct all of their attention toward the student milieu. They very consciously tried to orient the students they were leading towards establishing links with the working class. Either through the action committees or through the organization of the JCR itself, a large part of their activities were oriented toward reaching a working class base, at the factories, in the districts, and through the action committees. Thus they also pro-

vided a revolutionary leadership to sections of workers who were disgusted with the Communist Party's leadership and looking for alternatives.

One measure of the JCR's impact was simply the growth that they experienced between the beginning of May and the middle of June where they somewhere between doubled and tripled their size, not only in Paris but throughout the entire country.

Q. What about the faculty, professors and intellectuals?

A. The overwhelming majority of the faculty was either with the students or not actively against them. You had the University Teachers' Union which was on strike the entire time, as well as the union which represents the secondary school teachers. The professors themselves played a very secondary role to the role of the students, but by and large they were with them.

One of the clearest indications of this is with the Communist Party itself and the problems it is having with intellectuals in its ranks. It was from the intellectuals that you had some of the first real protests within the CP against the CP's policies. Towards the end of May, I think the letter was actually dated May 26, a significant group of CP intellectuals wrote a letter to the central committee of the party strenuously criticizing them for failure to provide any leadership for the student milieu, their lack of communication with it, the total inability to lead it in any sense, and condemning the CP for its hostile attitude towards the students. This letter didn't come to light for several days [it was first mentioned in *l'Humanite* June 5—Ed.], but from stories that we heard from some of the people who participated in this and went to a meeting of the central committee to discuss this letter, apparently what happened was that the members of the central committee finally got quite disgusted with the whole thing and simply walked out of the room, leaving the CP intellectuals there who occupied the national office of the central committee of the Communist Party for a few hours and continued this discussion themselves.

Q. You left practically immediately after the decree of the Council of Ministers, but did you gain any impression of what the repression would be like and what the response would be to it among the students?

A. The initial response of the organizations that were banned was very positive, particularly the JCR and the PCI [Parti Communiste Internationaliste—Internationalist Communist Party, French section of the Fourth International]. They refused to recognize the legality of this ban against them. The ban itself was based on a law of 1936 outlawing organizations which had paramilitary structures, a law aimed against fascist groups. None of the organizations banned by de Gaulle had paramilitary organizations.

They announced that despite the ban the organizations were going to continue to function and they would not accept the government ruling. The response from individual members was also very positive: their attitude was optimistic in the sense they felt that the gov-

ernment wouldn't be able to crush them or prevent them from functioning.

Of course it has been very difficult to get some of the specific information on the repressions and arrests. The most complete information I have is about the JCR and the PCI. After those organizations were banned, the police came to three different places to search. They came to the office where the newspaper is printed, *Quatrieme Internationale* and searched it; and they also went to the apartments of two other comrades. At those places they picked up five comrades for questioning and all of them have now been released except Pierre Frank, who according to the last information we have, is still being held. French law allows the police to hold a person incommunicado for an almost indefinite period of time, without access to lawyers or anyone.

The other comrades have been released without charges but we know that they are also looking for other leaders and at any point they may decide to bring charges against them on the basis of the bannings of the organizations.

The international response to the banning of these organizations has been quite good, particularly considering the fact of an almost total press blackout. Even in France it was impossible to find out exactly who had been arrested. The newspapers reported, sometimes conflictingly, that a certain number of persons had been arrested but they did not give names or identify them as to groups.

In France itself you have had the formation of a committee composed of many of the left intellectuals including Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir against the repression, demanding that the ban on the organizations be dropped, that demonstrations be permitted and that all the people being held be released.

Outside of France I think one of the most important things was the series of demonstrations that took place here in the United States. What we have to do here and internationally is to organize a defense for these French revolutionaries arrested and being persecuted. The impact and importance of the international solidarity with the French students and workers, particularly now that they are in a situation where they are being victimized, where the persecution is beginning to affect them, can hardly be underestimated.

The campaign *The Militant* and the *Young Socialist* have been waging around the French events had a good impact on the French revolutionary youth and workers themselves. As some of them commented when they saw the issues of *The Militant*, copies of *l'Enrage*, the material that was put out here in solidarity with their struggles, for the first time it gave them a real sense of what an international movement was really like, what it could do. And it was very important for their morale too, faced with this kind of persecution, for them to know and have a concrete idea of the tremendous international impact of the events that have taken place in France in the last month and a half.

Trotsky Memorial

THE CASE OF LEON TROTSKY

On August 20, 1940, Leon Trotsky was murdered in his exile fortress at Coyoacan Mexico. The man, who together with Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, led the Bolshevik party to victory in the Russian revolution of October 1917 was killed by a hireling assassin of Stalin. Stalin hoped thereby to put the finishing touches on his bloody purges, from 1936 to 1938, of the leaders and followers of the Bolshevik party. This would silence once and for all the most forceful voice of the world revolution; it would end Trotsky's tireless critique of of the Kremlin bureaucrats who had usurped the conquests of the first socialist revolution.

On this 1968 anniversary of Trotsky's assassination it is fitting to announce the republication of one of the most important documents about the history and ideas of the Bolshevik movement: The Case of Leon Trotsky, which will be printed in August by Merit Publishers.

This book centers around the Moscow Trials and the investigation made by the International Commission of Inquiry in 1937 into the charges against Trotsky and his son Sedov. It contains a background introduction by George Novack, Secretary of the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky, who was present at the subcommission hearings headed by the philosopher John Dewey in Coyoacan.

But this famous counter-trial, which concluded that Trotsky and his son were not guilty of the monstrous charges against them is more than a valuable account of the infamous Moscow frame-ups.

In the course of his testimony, Trotsky discussed many other matters. Here is a partial list: his career as a revolutionist; the history of the Bolshevik party after the revolution; the struggle of the Left Opposition; the Marxist attitude toward terrorism; the Marxist position on democracy and socialism; the origins and nature of Stalinism; tactics in the fight against fascism; right and wrong methods of defending the Soviet Union; the Marxist conception of the proletariat; and the difference between the united front and the popular front.

This 617-page book is, in fact, a handbook of many of the most important theoretical and historical questions of revolutionary Marxism by one of its foremost exponents. And the lessons are

presented in an easy-to-grasp question and answer format.

Following is the full text of George Novack's introduction to The Case of Leon Trotsky.

This book contains the verbatim transcript of the hearings held by the Preliminary Commission of Inquiry into the Charges Made Against Leon Trotsky in the Moscow Trials. The Dewey Commission, as it is known, was an independent, impartial body initiated in March 1937 by the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky. Its sole purpose was to ascertain all the available facts about the Moscow Trial proceedings in which Trotsky and his son, Leon Sedov, were the principal accused and to render a judgment based upon those facts.

Its subcommission conducted 13 hearings at the home of the exiled revolutionary in Coyoacan, Mexico, D.F., from April 10 to April 17, 1937. During these sessions it received Trotsky's testimony and that of his secretary, Jan Frankel, cross-examined both witnesses, heard Trotsky's answer to the charges against him and his countercharges against the Soviet government. It accepted, subject to verification, such documentary evidence as he had to introduce.

The reasons for the commission's formation and its work were bound up with one of the most momentous and tragic political events of the 1930s: the prolonged blood purges and frame-up trials through which Stalin consolidated his personal terroristic tyranny over the Soviet Union.

His henchmen staged four key trials from 1936 to 1938. The first was "the trial of the sixteen," with Zinoviev, Kamenev, Smirnov, Mrachkovsky, and others as defendants; the second, "the trial of the seventeen," which included Pyatakov, Radek, Sokolnikov, Muralov, Serebryakov, and others, took place in January 1937. Then came the secret trial of Marshal Tukhachevsky and a group of the highest Red Army generals in June 1937; and finally, "the trial of the twenty-one" (Rykov, Bukharin, Krestinsky, Rakovsky, Yagoda, and others) in March 1938.

The men in the dock included all the members of Lenin's Politbureau, except Stalin himself. Trotsky, though absent, was the chief defendant in these proceedings. He and the Bolshevik old guard were charged with plotting to assassinate Stalin and other Soviet leaders, of conspiring to wreck the country's economic and military power, and of killing masses of Russian workers. They were likewise accused of working, from the earliest days of the Russian revolution, for the espionage services of Britain, France, Japan, and Germany and of making secret agreements with agents of Hitler and the Mikado to cede vast slices of Soviet territory to imperialist Germany and Japan. The defendants in Moscow abjectly confessed to their guilt; Trotsky alone did not.

The trials of these notables were accompanied and followed by a frightful purge of people from every walk of Soviet life: party members, military men, Comintern leaders, intellectuals, officials, ordinary work-

ers and peasants. It is still undetermined how many were caught in its bloody net, since the post-Stalin regimes still refuse to divulge such facts. But the victims numbered in the millions.

Stalin did not spare his closest associates or members of his own family. Even the secret police chiefs, Yagoda and Yezhov, who organized the early trials, were later slaughtered.

Stalin arrested and executed almost every important living Bolshevik participant in the revolution. Of 1,966 delegates to the 17th Soviet party congress in 1934, 1,108 were arrested. Of 139 members of the Central Committee, 98 were arrested. Along with the three Soviet marshals, one-third to one-half of the 75,000 Red Army officers were arrested or shot.

The purges of the 1930s were so sweeping that no major party figure of the October revolution, which gave power to the Bolsheviks, survived to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the event, except Stalin's faithful lieutenant, Vyacheslav Molotov, who was retired in disgrace in 1958. The terror has left enduring scars upon Soviet society. There are few families there today which did not in one way or another suffer from its effects.

Subcommission hearings in Coyoacan

The subcommission hearings in Mexico took place in April 1937 between the second and the third Moscow trials. In the trials of August 1936 and January 1937, Trotsky and Sedov had been declared convicted without any opportunity for their cases to be heard. They had denied their guilt through the world press and in their turn had accused the Soviet government of having based their "conviction" on false evidence. Indeed, the forced confessions of the defendants in the public trials were the only basis for the verdicts.

Trotsky was the only one among the accused Bolshevik leaders who was beyond Stalin's grip. When Zinoviev and Kamenev were put on trial, Trotsky had challenged Moscow to request his extradition from Norway, where he was then living as an exile from the Soviet Union. This procedure would have brought his case before a Norwegian tribunal. Instead, the Norwegian government, under heavy economic and diplomatic pressure from the Kremlin's ambassador, interned Trotsky and his wife. For six months he was gagged and unable to answer the monstrous charges against him.

As soon as he gained asylum in Mexico in January 1937, Trotsky publicly demanded the formation of an international commission of inquiry, since he had been deprived of any opportunity to reply to the accusations before a legally constituted court. He asked that such a body be constituted of unimpeachable personages who would take his testimony and consider documentary proofs of the innocence of himself and Sedov.

In a speech prepared for delivery by telephone from Mexico City to a large meeting at the New York Hippodrome on February 9, 1937, Trotsky made the following dramatic declaration: "If this commission decides that I am guilty in the slightest degree of the crimes

which Stalin imputes to me, I pledge in advance to place myself voluntarily in the hands of the executioners of the G. P. U. [Soviet secret police]."

Such an inquiry was imperatively justified in view of the controversy and consternation stirred up by the trials, the widespread suspicion of their authenticity, the many lives at stake, and the gravity of the issues they posed. Trotsky was entitled to have his day in court and establish the credibility of the charges, not only to defend his honor and reputation as a revolutionist but to try and forestall further trials and executions.

The members of the full commission were John Dewey, its chairman, America's foremost philosopher and liberal; Otto Ruehle, biographer of Karl Marx and former member of the Reichstag who alone with Liebknecht had voted against war in 1914-15; Benjamin Stolberg and Suzanne LaFollette, American journalists; Carleton Beals, authority on Latin-American affairs; Alfred Rosmer, who in 1920-21 had been a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist International; Wendelin Thomas, leader of the Wilhelmshaven sailors' revolt in November 1918 and later a Communist member of the German Reichstag; Edward A. Ross, Professor of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin; John Chamberlain, former literary critic of the *New York Times*; Carlo Tresca, well-known Italian-American anarchist leader; and Francisco Zamora, Mexican journalist.

The first five made up the subcommission which went to Coyoacan. John Finerty, famous as defense counsel in such great American political trials as those of Tom Mooney and Sacco-Vanzetti, acted as the commission's legal counsel. Albert Goldman of Chicago was Trotsky's attorney.

The commission members held widely divergent political and ideological views, none was a follower of Trotsky. They were concerned with the interests of historic truth as well as the desire to ascertain the facts in the case. They had been mandated by similar committees in France, England, and Czechoslovakia to fulfill that responsibility.

The taking of testimony in Mexico was followed by months of assiduous investigation. The commission made its findings public

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in New York on September 21, 1937. It stated: "(1) That the conduct of the Moscow trials was such as to convince any unprejudiced person that no effort was made to ascertain the truth. (2) While confessions are necessarily entitled to the most serious consideration, the confessions themselves contain such inherent improbabilities as to convince the Commission that they do not represent the truth, irrespective of any means used to obtain them."

The commission therefore concluded that the Moscow trials were frame-ups and Trotsky and Sedov were not guilty of the 18 specific charges of the prosecution against them. (The complete report of the findings was published by Harper & Brothers in 1938 under the title of *Not Guilty* in a companion volume to this one.)

Trotsky's testimony is vindicated

That verdict was rendered thirty years ago. Since then enlightened opinion the world over, not only in the capitalist but in most Communist countries, has come to recognize the monstrous falsifications perpetrated by Stalin against his political opponents.

Stalin's successors at the head of the Soviet government have likewise acknowledged this truth in their own manner by their indictment of the dead dictator and posthumous rehabilitation of some of his victims (Trotsky is not yet among these). In his famous secret speech to the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in February 1956, Khrushchev partially disclosed the enormity of Stalin's pogroms and the means by which his agents extorted false confessions from the self-defamed defendants. Stalin now clearly emerges as the real criminal of the proceedings, the sinister figure who mounted to unrestricted supremacy over the mountain of corpses he had besmirched.

Thus history has already vindicated the work and conclusions of the Dewey Commission. A full and final accounting for these crimes will very likely have to wait until Stalin's bureaucratic disciples are themselves replaced by honest representatives of the Soviet people who will undertake a thorough review of the trials and purges and restore all their victims to honor. This volume will facilitate that task.

It has still another value. In the course of the thirteen-day counter-trial Trotsky was subjected to the most searching examination by his attorney and cross-examination by the commission members and their counsel. He had to do more than expose the falsity of Moscow's allegations. He had to recount the main events of his career, expound his beliefs, describe and explain the bewildering changes that had taken place in the Soviet Union from Lenin to Stalin. He had to analyze the issues in the factional disputes within Russian and world communism, portray the leading personalities in the struggles, and touch upon every phase of the terrible contest between Stalin and himself which led up to the trials.

I attended the hearings as a national secretary of the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky and vividly remember the tension in the long, narrow barricaded room as day after day Trotsky strained to answer all the questions directed at him in the

unfamiliar English tongue. It was a prodigious intellectual performance.

"By the end no question had been left unanswered, no important issue blurred, no serious historic event unilluminated," wrote Isaac Deutscher in *The Prophet Outcast*. "Thirteen years later Dewey, who had spent so much of his life in academic debate and was still as opposed as ever to Trotsky's *Weltanschauung*, recalled with enthusiastic admiration 'the intellectual power with which Trotsky had assembled and organized the mass of his evidence and argumentation and conveyed to us the meaning of every relevant fact.' The incisiveness of Trotsky's logic got the better of his unwieldy sentences, and the clarity of his ideas shone through all his verbal blunderings. Even his wit did not succumb; it often relieved the gloom of his subject-matter. Above all, the integrity of his case allowed him to overcome all external restraint and constraint. He stood where he stood like truth itself, unkempt and unadorned, unarmoured and unshielded yet magnificent and invincible."

The record of the hearings is therefore an extensive and valuable compendium of information about the events, personalities, and problems of the Russian revolution and the Soviet Union. It presents the ideas and positions of Marxism, Bolshevism, and Trotskyism on a wide range of questions.

Trotsky made his summary speech on the last day of the sessions. It concluded with a reaffirmation of his confidence in the ultimate triumph of the case of socialism to which he had dedicated his life. The tragic backdrop of circumstances against which his words were spoken made them all the more moving and impressive.

"Esteemed Commissioners! The experience of my life, in which there has been no lack either of successes or of failures, has not only not destroyed my faith in the clear, bright future of mankind, but, on the contrary, has given it an indestructible temper. This faith in reason, in truth, in human solidarity, which at the age of eighteen I took with me into the workers' quarters of the provincial Russian town of Nikolaiev—this faith I have preserved fully and completely. It has become more mature, but not less ardent.

"In the very fact of your Commission's formation—in the fact that, at its head, is a man of unshakable moral authority, a man who by virtue of his age should have the right to remain outside of the skirmishes in the political arena—in this fact I see a new and truly magnificent reinforcement of the revolutionary optimism which constitutes the fundamental element of my life . . ."

A hush fell over the assemblage as the Promethean revolutionary ended his prolonged and passionate presentation. The shadows of late afternoon had begun to cut across the patio outside. "Anything I can say will be an anti-climax," the white-haired John Dewey remarked and pronounced the hearings closed. Their content is preserved in the following pages.

George Novack

POSITIVISM AND MARXISM IN SOCIOLOGY

**apropos of Professor Popper
and his methods**

*(The following article is part of the final chapter of George Novack's forthcoming book, *Empiricism and its Evolution—A Marxist View*, to be printed by Merit Publishers.)*

Does history have any regularities that can be scientifically known and used to foresee and shape the future? Marxism says yes, positivism says no, to this cardinal question of sociology.

Both the positivists and their ideological cousins, the pragmatists, are extremely dubious about the existence of sociological laws and the possibilities of ascertaining the direction of social developments. They disavow historical determinism, especially in connection with the prospects of capitalism, and are intent upon disqualifying the claims of Marxism to be scientific.

Their case is most vigorously argued nowadays by Professor Karl Popper of the University of London, author of *The Open Society and its Enemies*, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* and *The Poverty of Historicism*. This influential theorist of positivist method in the social sciences is a proponent of "piecemeal social engineering." He is also a pioneer of cold-war liberalism whose reputation in the West has been enhanced by the political consequences of his views. As early as 1945 he expounded the thesis that the central issue of our time was the world conflict between capitalist democracy and communist totalitarianism, the first safeguarding the values of reason, freedom, democracy, individualism and liberalism in "an open society," the other promoting collectivism, servitude and authoritarianism in "a closed society." The contending camps had their respective philosophies in a flexible empiricism versus a dogmatic dialectical materialism.

Prof. Popper is not conservative but progressive in his social outlook. He expresses agreement with Marx that philosophers should not simply interpret the world but help change it. He contends, however, that Marxist historical method is not suited for that purpose;

its pretensions to scientific knowledge of the laws of social development are spurious.

Although Prof. Popper believes in a kind of physical necessity, he does not extend any determinism to social phenomena. In an address on "Prediction and Prophecy in the Social Sciences," delivered at the Tenth International Congress of Philosophy at Amsterdam, 1948, and printed in *Theories of History*, edited by Patrick Gardiner, he asserts that "there exists no law of evolution" either for plants and animals or for man. Consequently there is no factual basis for forecasting economic, political or historical developments. He labels the irrepressible fondness for prediction shared by diverse schools of sociology as "historicism" and focuses his attack upon Marxism as the worst offender in the practice of "futurism."

Scientific socialism maintains that the purpose of both natural and social science is to know in order to foresee correctly and act most effectively. That is its practical value, the reason why so many people devote so much time to scientific work and governments today subsidize it so heavily.

Prof. Popper dismisses this aim in sociology as wishful thinking. It is the modern secular version of an age-old dream of prophecy—"the idea that we can know what the future has in store for us, and that we can profit from such knowledge by adjusting our policy to it." The kind of predictability pursued by historical materialists, who believe that human affairs are causally determined and lawful, is a chimera because history exhibits no regularities, he says. It is largely made up of singular cases. "Nonrepetitive events are the most striking aspects of historical development," he writes.

Obviously, no general laws can be derived from an endless series of purely unique events. If every occurrence in social life and the procession of history was as unprecedented as he proclaims, scientific analysis would indeed be impossible. So would any reasonable orientation and effective action.

Positivism claims to be superior to dialectical materialism because it is not dogmatic but faithful to the facts. The rival theories may therefore be tested by reference to the basic facts about the regularities and irregularities of social existence and historical development.

The society around the professor does undergo minor modifications from day to day but, barring overnight revolutions, he can count on meeting substantially the same institutions and customs in the morning as when he fell asleep on the previous evening. But he has not awakened to the philosophical import of this simple fact.

It is grossly unfactual to assert that history has no regularities or that nonrepetitive events are its decisive characteristics. Social relations themselves refute such a contention; they are definite types of perennially repeated mutual interactions among men arising from continuous activities of a definite kind. The regularities of society are primarily expressed in the productive activities and economic relations of its members. Since our species emerged from the primate stage,

men have acquired and produced the means of satisfying their needs in routine ways through repetitive labor processes. The tools they made for that purpose were fashioned according to traditional techniques and previous models.

Our prime source of knowledge about preliterate times comes from archaeology, that science of society which deals with the earliest human activities incorporated in artifacts. Although each of these products and instruments of labor has individual characteristics, almost all belong to specific types. These constitute the data of archeology. "If the implement be unique, it is not a datum for archaeology at all; it remains just a curio, until a similar implement, that is, one of the same type, be observed in a significant archaeological context . . . Archaeologists must ignore the small individual peculiarities of any given knife and treat it as an instance of one or another of the standard types, as a member of that class of knives," observes V. Gordon Childe in *A Short Introduction to Archaeology*, pp. 13-14. Jacquetta Hawkes tells us that "in the Lower Palaeolithic period the hard-axe, although it was gradually improved, remained in use as the dominant tool form for over a quarter of a million years." — *Prehistory*, p. 172.

The social relations of the most primitive peoples were as simple and standardized as their instruments of production. The small bands or tribes of Stone Age food-gatherers, hunters or fisherman, had collectivist institutions and customs. The scope of variations in their social organization were held within the narrow limits prescribed by their mode of production. They might live in caves or camps but had, as a rule, no permanent settlements.

The innovation of food production which gave rise to barbarism introduced the first epoch-making changes and extensive diversifications into primitive social structures. But the barbaric communities and kingdoms were based upon agriculture. What could be more repetitive than this kind of economy rooted in the natural processes of plant growth and reproduction, regulated by the round of the seasons and carried on by traditional techniques and rituals?

Mankind took more than a million years to go from savagery through barbarism to civilization. This crawling pace indicates how greatly recurrences outweighed novelties in daily life. Even after the most advanced sections of humanity became civilized, the fixity of social relations and the slow and intermittent rate of change in the agricultural societies culminating in feudalism betokened the predominance of repetition in the lives and labors of their human constituents.

Change becomes the rule rather than the exception in society and history only with the advent of capitalism—precisely because of the peculiar nature of its mode of production. Unlike previous master classes, the bourgeoisie is impelled by the dictates of its economic interests to keep modernizing and revolutionizing the conditions of production. This is imposed by competition, the necessities of capital accumulation, the drive for the maximization of profits. Incidentally, that is why the peasant is "history-less," the proletariat is so historical

mind, and theorists like Prof. Popper are so preoccupied with the problem of changeability.

However, bourgeois changeability has inherent limits. As much as the capitalist class may reform the economy and other parts of society, it cannot replace the mode of production and appropriation upon which its property, profits and power rest. It must safeguard these at all costs. This conservative basis of its socioeconomic position clashes with the cumulative changes in the rest of the system. The intensification of these contradictions in its system has led to grave social and political crises that have already resulted in the overturn of capitalist relations in countries on three continents.

What about the nonrecurrent features of events? These may be interesting and dramatic, but they cannot be the decisive causal factors, the main determinants and driving forces of history. Random events are usually the unessential, accessory, incidental, superficial and trivial aspects of the historical process. However, this is not always the case. Qualitatively new events or deviations from the norm, which ordinarily have little historical consequence or a negligible scientific significance, can be converted into causally important factors. They become determinative to the extent that they are reduplicated. In the further course of development, the previously unprecedented can become more and more of a causally effective precedent. History would never progress if unique events did not contribute to its making. But novelties acquire weight in the total process of determination only as they forfeit their originality and become recurrent.

This dialectical process can be seen at the dawn of humanity. According to the labor theory of social origins, tool-using and tool-making differentiated man from the beasts. The occasional use of natural objects as tools for some momentary purpose by other anthropoids had no enduring evolutionary consequences and brought about no fundamental changes in their animal mode of existence. The *regular and collective* use and fabrication of tools and the habitual skills associated with them converted our primate progenitors into human beings.

The same is true of that sound-tool, language. Sporadic cries of other species had no social significance and made no essential difference in their relations. The reiteration of verbal utterances by our ancestors, in conjunction with their cooperation in labor, created speech. Language is rooted in the reproduction of words, the conventionalization of meaningful references to things, the stabilization of grammatical elements and structures to which Prof. Popper has to conform in order to communicate with us.

The main task of historical and social science, according to Marxism, is to find out the pattern of all those regularities and formulate them into laws that express the necessary connections of objective realities in their evolution. Such regularities are not confined to established social structures. They also operate within the evolutionary and revolutionary changes which bring new and higher types of social

organization into existence. These processes begin with occasional variations from the customary pattern which massively recur until they acquire power enough to overthrow and replace the old order.

Prof. Popper avers, in defiance of the facts, that only variables and not constants shape history. Actually, history is made by the interplay of its constant and variable elements. In the course of development constants turn into variables and variables into constants—and they do so, not in an arbitrary manner, but in lawful, materially determined ways.

Let us review a case from the history of politics, the relations between monarchy and democracy. In the earlier stages of civilization the sacred monarchy was the predominant form of sovereignty from Egypt to China. For several thousands of years states rose and fell and dynasties came and went while kingship persisted as the rule. Democracy was unknown in Mesopotamian civilization. This remarkable uniformity in the political constitution of the ancient empires was rooted in the essential stability of the economic and social substructures of these agricultural despotisms.

Political democracy first emerged in seventh century Greece as a result of profound changes in the economic conditions and class relations of its most progressive commercial city-states. But this novel kind of government was exceptional, unstable and short-lived, enduring here and there for little more than two centuries. Kingship in one form or another remained the normal form of the state through all the subsequent stages of class rule, until the more thoroughgoing bourgeois revolutions deposed the monarchies and set up democratic republics in their stead. Even so, parliamentary democracy did not become widespread or deep-seated until the peak of capitalist expansion and stability was reached in the 19th century and then was largely restricted to the richest, most favored nations of the West.

The monarchy that in its twilight monopolized political life at the dawn of class rule has become a rarity, a curious decorative relic, because the fundamental historical conditions for its survival and revival are no longer at hand. Popular sovereignty, on the other hand, which was absent in the first civilizations, is today regarded as the normal and most desirable form of government to which even antidemocratic regimes pay lipservice. What was once constant has become variable and vanishing; what was nonexistent is on the rise and constantly growing.

The second case, taken from technology, deals with an analogous transformation in the relations between the two major consecutive types of means of labor. Until two hundred years ago men used nothing but hand-tools in production; machines were an insignificant exception. This historical constant was set aside by the large-scale introduction of machinery, an innovation which came about lawfully and comprehensibly by transferring the function of handling the working tool from a human being to a mechanism. The more complex and efficient means of production displaced the more primitive and less

productive implements as the capitalists recognized their greater profitability. In factory industry the use of hand-tools is exceptional while machine production is its basis; their roles have become reversed.

This fundamental change in technology generated a host of others which together constitute industrial capitalism. Under this system tens of millions of people get up five to six days a week and go to work for eight hours or more for wages in enterprises operated by capitalist owners for their private profit. Whatever their individual differences and personal preferences, the wageworkers must submit to this standard type of labor relation in order to get their daily bread, pay the landlord monthly and meet installment loans regularly. This is not an accident but a necessity of capitalism, its fundamental law, the source of its exploitation.

Prof. Popper denies that there are any such essential necessities in economic activities and social relations or that the aim of sociology is to discover and explain them in order to foresee their development. He even contends that social systems or "wholes" do not exist as "empirical objects"; they are only "ideal objects." What really exists are "individuals and their actions and reactions," which presumably never acquire a definitely organized or systematized character.

He therefore assigns an entirely different task to the social sciences. Their main task, he tells us, "is to trace the unintended social repercussions of intentional human actions." That is to say, sociology must revolve around an explanation of the accidents rather than the necessities of history.

This is a legitimate subject of social science, although it is not central to it. Sociology should be more concerned with demonstrating the interplay of accident and necessity in history and the conversion of the one into the other as it develops. Nevertheless, the discrepancies between the conscious purposes of human beings and the real results of their activities, which Hegel called "the cunning of reason," that is to say, the irony of history, does pose an important problem for social science.

In order to clarify why this anomaly has been such a pronounced and persistent trait of human affairs to date, it is essential to find out the social and historical circumstances that have prevented the outcome of man's collective activities from coinciding with their avowed aims or will. Prof. Popper apparently believes that this is an eternal law and irremediable flaw of history. Actually, this prime feature of past and present history originated in the exchange of commodities and man's consequent loss of control over his social relations issuing from the expansion of exchange relations. This lack of control is most accentuated in the capitalist phase of commodity production. The phenomenon so overwhelms Prof. Popper because capitalism is an inherently anarchic system, beyond regulation by its most powerful agencies and privileged beneficiaries.

The conflicting private interests of its constituent parts make it impossible for the plans of an individual, a corporation or a state to

be assured of realization. The main objective of the socialist movement is to do away with the economic sources of this social disorder and establish the material preconditions for bringing man's aims into consonance with his results, by eliminating the private ownership of the means of production, and planning economic development.

This is abhorrent to Prof. Popper, who is a partisan of individualism and free enterprise. The last sentence of his liberal polemic against Marxism reads: "The fight against avoidable misery should be a recognized aim of public policy, while the increase of happiness should be left, in the main, to private initiative."

The theoretical justification for his program is that social science in general, and Marxism in particular, possesses no predictive power that could contribute to effective social control over the next stage of human progress. He would have us believe that our contemporaries, who have proved capable of the intricate computations and constructions required to send spacecraft and their instruments to the moon and to Mars, are unable to discern the forces at work around them on earth and figure out the main lines of their evolution. Or, having analyzed and ascertained these trends, they cannot act consciously and collectively to realize the best alternative.

Fortunately, even pre-Marxist revolutionaries have not been as myopic as the positivist scholar. They have grasped historical necessities before these became actualities. Indeed, a clear and conscious recognition of these was a prerequisite for their realization. In the Declaration of Independence the colonial patriots proclaimed that it was imperative to break loose from English crown rule at least seven years before they succeeded in doing so. Sam Adams saw its urgency much sooner. The Abolitionists understood the necessity for eradicating the institution of slavery as the biggest block to national progress decades before that was done through the Civil War.

Prof. Popper maintains, however, that history has no discernible progressive direction. To assume, as historicists and Marxists do, that we can know where a social structure is—or is not—heading is to arrogate a divine foresight forbidden mere mortals. According to his highly subjective and idealist conception, history can have only the meaning individuals ascribe to it.

This is contradicted by the entire march of history. Every primitive people and outlived ruling class expected to perpetuate themselves and projected that wish upon their historical horizon. In North America the Indians, the feudalists and the slaveholders asserted their will to survival through furious resistance. Yet all were swept under by the invincible forces of bourgeois civilization. Their subjective desires could not prevail over historical necessities.

Why, then, should scientific socialism be prohibited from analyzing the structure and functioning of capitalism, identifying the strategic forces and factors which affect its development, foreseeing their further trends (at least in outline if not in concrete detail) and devising a practical program of revolutionary action? Is there any empirical

evidence that this can be done? The *Communist Manifesto* of 1848 was so prescient that even today it is more pertinent to contemporary realities than any other political document of its time.

Here are two examples of Marxist foresight, one confirmed in a positive, the other in a negative manner. In 1906 Trotsky set forth his theory of the permanent revolution, which predicted that the proletariat would have to take power and adopt socialist measures in the coming Russian revolution. That is what happened in 1917.

Twelve years later the exiled Russian Marxist declared in a series of writings that German capitalism had been plunged into so severe a crisis by the crash of 1929 that the shaky Weimar Republic was doomed. The crisis could be resolved only by victory for the socialist working class or its defeat at the hands of the fascists. He warned that the mistaken policies of the Social-Democratic and Communist leaderships were preparing a catastrophe and forecast that Nazism in power would crush the entire German labor movement, destroy democracy, unleash world war and attack the Soviet Union. Although his alarms went unheeded, their correctness was substantiated by the events of the next fifteen years.

This example is pertinent to another one of Prof. Popper's strictures. The conclusions of the historicists are unfounded and unverifiable prophecies rather than scientific predictions, he contends, because they are unconditional. However, Marxist prognoses, which should flow from an all-sided diagnosis of the given situation, are not presented with such absoluteness. Where there are opposing necessities at work, the outcome must be conditional on their further interaction and relative weight.

Proceeding from a knowledge of the laws of the class struggle and their specific refraction in the Germany of the Weimar Republic, Trotsky concluded that the rickety bourgeois democracy could not be saved and only two opposing roads were open under the given circumstances: fascism or socialism. He stated that all the objective conditions for another October 1917 were present but that the subjective factors of correct leadership would have to be brought to bear for the favorable variant to be achieved. If the divided leadership of the working masses failed to apply the right policies in time, Hitler would win. The perspectives which guided his recommendations for action were conditional, although the possible outcomes were categorical.

The same conditionality applies to judgments on the prospects of the conflict between capitalism and socialism on a world-historical scale. The triumph of the socialist cause is not predetermined in the same way as an astronomical eclipse, since the factor of human consciousness and timely action is involved and decisive. If a cosmic catastrophe or a nuclear war should blow up the planet, that would end human history and dispose, among other things, of the controversy between positivism and Marxism.

Assuming, however, as one must, that mankind will have a future and a better one, victory for the international working class depends

upon many factors: the course of development and degree of disintegration of monopoly capitalism, the growth in power of the workers states, the advances of the colonial revolution, the actions and consciousness of the industrial workers in the imperialist strongholds, the kind of political organization and leadership they get.

It is possible for all the conditions required for a successful socialist revolution to be met. The overthrow of capitalism is no longer the wholly conditional or conjectural prospect it was when Marx and Engels predicted its advent in the *Communist Manifesto*. It is already an accomplished fact in countries on three continents.

As an empiricist, Prof. Popper would maintain that no amount of precedents establishes a rule. He does not understand that what has been more or less possible becomes more and more probable, and eventually necessary, as the conditions for its occurrence and recurrence pile up and come together. What has hitherto been conditional, at a certain critical turning point in the processes of development, becomes necessary.

His death is conditional and avoidable at any time of his life; it is more and more probable as he ages and is inevitable in the long run because of the laws of his biological constitution. Social systems are no more immortal than the human beings whose activities sustain them. Like capitalism, they can perish piecemeal before they are abolished in toto.

Let us consider a fresh historical instance which is most favorable to his viewpoint. The Cuban revolution developed in an unexpected fashion which surprised not only the Cuban property owners and the corporations and government of the United States but also the July 26th leaders and the entire world socialist movement. Yet, even if it was not specifically predicted before the fact, its line of development can be explained after the fact.

Political analysts should first ask: Why did the Cuban revolution follow a different path and have an outcome different from its Latin-American predecessors in Mexico, Bolivia and Guatemala? There were numerous reasons for its unprecedented turn. Among these was the fact that Castro and his associates learned from the military coup in Guatemala in 1954 that, if colonialism was to be stamped out and popular power preserved, the officer corps and the old army had to be destroyed and replaced by a revolutionary armed force. In addition, they learned how to expropriate the capitalists and start building a planned economy from Russia, Yugoslavia and China. The whole experience of 20th century history since 1917, plus the international balance of forces issuing from it, were indispensable preconditions for the unanticipated course taken by the Fidelistas.

The transformation of the armed insurrection against Batista's capitalist dictatorship into a proletarian-peasant revolution is a spectacular example of the law governing the present stage of world history that the fundamental problems of backward countries cannot be solved except by a revolutionary struggle directed along socialist lines.

This theorem of the permanent revolution formulates an irrepressible and growing tendency inherent in all the insurgent colonial movements of our time.

The positivist professor must protest against this logic of contemporary history. The Cuban experience, he will expostulate, was unique; it cannot be taken as a sample of a law. "Society is changing, developing. Its development is not, in the main, a repetitive one." Contrary to his shortsighted philosophy, the Cuban revolution is not regarded as unique either by its leaders or its enemies. Its general import and impact is what makes it such a touchy issue in American and world politics.

Official Washington does not view Cuba as an isolated incident that can have no sequel, although it would like to have it that way. That was demonstrated by its armed intervention in the Dominican Republic in 1965 and declared intention to dispatch troops elsewhere in Latin America if a comparable threat arises. Both sides recognize the potential for further Cubas in the Western hemisphere and are taking appropriate measures to promote or prevent them.

The policies of Washington to contain and crush, and of Havana to aid and extend, the socialist revolution have a lawful character. They correspond to the logic and dynamics of current history, which is determined and directed by the necessities of the mortal combat between capitalism and socialism.

Standing helplessly between the class adversaries, Prof. Popper would advise them that no such necessities exist. Since both sides know better, his advice would fall on deaf ears.

Prof. Popper is acclaimed in scholarly circles for his special definition of the nature of scientific method. He teaches that the essence of science consists, not so much in the verification of hypotheses, as in their falsification. The greatest scientific progress is registered when it is disclosed, not what theories and laws can tell us about what exists and what can be done, but when they advise us what does not exist and what cannot be done. Laws above all set limits to the possible.

The timidity of his skeptical epistemology is evident in this lopsided conception of scientific lawfulness. To be sure, the clarification of the conditional limits, inadequacies and errors of existing theories are an indispensable and fruitful function of scientific activity, a prime source of its growth, the starting point for fresh advances and breakthroughs. That happened in the 19th century and early 20th century with Euclidean geometry, Newtonian physics and classical political economy.

But exposures of this kind, which have stimulated progressive crises in science, represent only one phase, one step in the totality of scientific investigation and advancement. It is the negative side of the unending process of acquiring more precise and deep-going understanding of the phenomena in question. Such revisions in the light of further experimental facts pave the way for the elaboration and verification of more comprehensive, complex and correct theories. Darwin

banished incorrect doctrines from biology as part of his positive demonstration of the evolutionary mechanism and unity of living beings. The eventual outcome, the net result, is a steady accumulation of more ample and dependable information with which to foresee and control natural and social processes.

Ironically, positivism shies away from acknowledging this growth of positive knowledge about the world, does not properly assess its significance and its role and relevance in providing foresight and facilitating action. It is badly named and should be more precisely termed "negativism."

Finally, Prof. Popper, who insists that the social sciences cannot and should not forecast historical developments and that unconditional laws are taboo, fails to abide by these two precepts of his own position. Despite his contention that the future is opaque, this liberal does not hesitate to affirm most categorically that revolution in general, and above all the socialist revolution heralded by Marxism, is bound to be ruinous. "I am convinced that revolutionary methods can only make things worse—that they will increase unnecessary suffering; that they will lead to more and more violence; and that they must destroy freedom."

On what scientific grounds, empirical or rational, can such an unconditional assertion be justified? Many past revolutions have benefited mankind and enlarged freedom for the masses. The very bourgeois democracy he defends and cherishes was the offspring of revolutionary struggles. The American people have had two revolutions which made things much better rather than worse for them. Is it then only contemporary proletarian, and not previous bourgeois revolutions, that are full of evils? He will not convince the peoples of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, China and Cuba that their revolutions brought no good, whatever their shortcomings. Nor will his timid admonitions prevent other peoples from seeking and finding the revolutionary socialist method of solving their otherwise insoluble problems. This empiricist turns rigidly dogmatic when he confronts the prospect of socialist revolution. In order to uphold gradualism and piecemeal reform at all costs, he is compelled to throw overboard the principles of his own method and relapse into "ahistoricism," an absolute rule that revolutions always and everywhere have baneful results.

Such inconsistency is a congenital vice of positivist epistemology. It is engendered in the last analysis by the predicament of the middle-class liberal under monopoly capitalism who wishes to work toward a better society but fears to overstep the framework of the established order in his views, perspectives, and actions. Others, who refuse to be hemmed in by these arbitrary and essentially reactionary standards, are told that they are "unscientific." This demonstrates how different conceptions of science and its methods, which appear so remote and detached from everyday life, have their social implications, class affiliations, and political uses.

Ernest Germain

THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

an attempt at interpretation

The "cultural revolution" undoubtedly constitutes the most complex phenomenon faced by revolutionary Marxists in recent decades. Because of the scale of the masses set in motion, the social conflicts it has revealed, and its extremely contradictory aspects, it demands a sensitive and painstaking analytical effort on the part of those concerned with discerning its objective meaning. Simplified answers such as "Mao is only another Stalin," "Mao has started the political revolution," which derive far more from preconceived schemas than from a scientific analysis of reality, cannot possibly account for the complexity of the phenomenon. They are, consequently, theoretically sterile and politically debilitating.

The attempt to overcome these difficulties by using historical analogies is understandable. This runs no less risk of falling into serious errors. Of course history is the only laboratory of the social sciences. The history of past revolutions is the only source for formulating the objective laws of current revolutionary convulsions. But references must be chosen with the greatest care so as to separate national *peculiarities* from the *general* characteristics which are common to all revolutions.

It is here that we are confronted by a major difficulty. The concrete course followed by the Russian revolution, particularly after the defeat of the German revolution in 1923, can in no way be considered as typical for all contemporary revolutions.

In any case, Trotsky's contribution, which constitutes the high point up to now in the Marxist analysis of societies in transition from capitalism to socialism, reached this clear conclusion: "In the bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet state it is not the general laws of modern society from capitalism to socialism which find expression *but a special, exceptional and temporary refraction of these laws* under the conditions of a backward revolutionary country in a capitalist en-

vironment." (L. Trotsky: *In Defense of Marxism*, Pioneer Publishers, 1942, p. 7. Emphasis added.) And further on, with even greater precision, Trotsky pointed out that the all-powerful character of the bureaucracy had *two causes*: the backwardness of the country and imperialist encirclement, which will disappear with the victory of the world revolution.

The victory of the world revolution still remains ahead. But the historical period that began with the fall of Mussolini in 1943 and the transformation of the Yugoslav resistance movement into a proletarian revolution obviously marked the progression of the world revolution. Since that time, the major factor carrying it forward was the victory of the Chinese revolution in 1949. Again, according to Trotsky, the immediate link in the chain of causes that brought about the victory of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the USSR was the fact that "the tired and disappointed masses were indifferent to what was happening on the summits." (L. Trotsky: *The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 105.) The historical problem is consequently this: Are the new victorious revolutions in the economically backward countries condemned to follow a course similar to that of Stalinist Russia, or will the international extension of the socialist revolution and the higher degree of political activity by the masses which this inspires constitute a sufficient braking force to prevent a repetition of the Stalinist phenomenon? It is on this point that the "cultural revolution" in China and the political crisis which has been unfolding there during the past eighteen months furnish us with very useful lessons.

Achievements and international context of the Chinese revolution

Before proceeding to an analysis of the "cultural revolution" as such, it will be useful to examine the great historical achievements of the Chinese revolution and the international context in which it has developed in the recent period. Such a summary is indispensable since it constitutes the objective background against which the political crisis has been unfolding since the end of 1964.

Although the Maoist leadership undoubtedly erred by overestimating the capacity of the peasantry to make sacrifices in order to industrialize the country rapidly, although these errors are at the bottom of the serious setbacks suffered by Chinese agriculture and economy during the 1959-61 period, it appears to be a fact that the correction of these errors permitted a rather rapid rehabilitation of the situation. Of course the Chinese leaders had to slow down the rate of economic growth considerably; there is no longer any question of overtaking Great Britain quickly. But most observers agree that the production of grains is approaching 200 million tons per year, that the production of steel has passed the 15-million-ton mark, and that China can cover its own oil requirements. These three successes are all the more remarkable when compared with the picture of relative stagnation presented by India, let alone such countries as Indonesia or Brazil.

The major success of the Chinese revolution is unquestionably in having very largely solved the problem of food. The rationing introduced after the relative failure of the "great leap forward" made it possible to satisfy the basic needs of the working masses in the sphere of food. For several years now, the abundance of fruits, vegetables and poultry in all the cities has struck foreign visitors. Beggars, barefoot children, men or women dressed in rags, are now rarely seen. They are obviously far from socialism, not to speak of communism (the Maoist leaders, moreover, make no pretentious claims about being on the point of achieving the construction of socialism). But progress is colossal in comparison with India, a victim of endemic famine which has become acute in the past two years. This progress is closely related to the conquests of the Chinese revolution: the achievement of a unified national market, the radical suppression of speculation in foodstuffs, the reduction in waste and losses that were due to scattered and unproductive use of the social surplus product.

These successes are in part explained by the more favorable international context in which the industrialization of China took place, in contrast to that which characterized the first two decades of industrialization in the USSR. China was not encircled by a hostile world. It did not have to carry out the whole task of "primitive socialist accumulation" by its own unaided efforts. It was not subject to the effects of an almost uninterrupted decline of the world revolution. It was not directly threatened by imperialist aggression, so long as the Soviet nuclear umbrella provided adequate protection under the conditions of a "balance of terror."

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But after the first decade of completely favorable international conditions for the accelerated economic growth of China, toward the end of the 1950s the situation began to change. Paradoxically, the fundamental cause for this change did not lie in a retreat of the world revolution but rather in a new advance, especially in the colonial and semicolonial areas. This advance—exemplified by the victory of the Cuban revolution and the intensification of the revolutionary struggle in South Vietnam—impelled a gradual reorientation in the whole global strategy of American imperialism. For the latter, the main center of gravity for a confrontation with the anti-capitalist forces shifted from Europe to Latin America and Asia.

The Kremlin, in the face of this change in strategy, and fearing the ever-increasing scale and independence of the new revolutionary forces, gave a sharper turn to its conservative course, under the banners of "peaceful coexistence" and "economic competition." The Chinese leaders correctly interpreted this to mean a turn toward a more and more temporizing attitude, if not one of complete betrayal, with regard to the colonial revolution. The October 1962 crisis in the Caribbean and the subsequent escalation of imperialist aggression in Vietnam were to them ample confirmation of the soundness of this evaluation. Hence the Sino-Soviet break, the immediate causes for which were the refusal of the Soviet bureaucracy to give nuclear weapons to China or help it manufacture them, together with an abrupt cessation of economic aid to China.

As a consequence, the task of economic and social development which the Chinese revolution had to carry out was made considerably more difficult. With foreign aid thus suddenly removed, the costs of "primitive accumulation" became the exclusive burden of a still very poor Chinese society. In addition, military costs were considerably increased since a direct confrontation between American imperialism and China now became possible and even probable. But the spread of world revolution—above all the heroic struggle of the Vietnamese people, the weight and gains of which have for the time being neutralized defeats such as those in Indonesia and Brazil—is continuing to act in a more favorable direction than was the case in the situation of the USSR during the period 1923-45. Revolutionary enthusiasm is still high, especially among the youth. Nor is there a capitalist encirclement of China, even though the Chinese leaders currently speak of Soviet-American "collusion" against their country.

The deterioration of the international situation for the Chinese revolution during the past seven years is, in the final analysis, due to the Soviet bureaucracy. Because of this, it bears the chief responsibility for the political crisis now raging in China. The Maoist leaders undoubtedly have their share of responsibility. The ultra-opportunistic policies which they followed in relation to the bourgeois Indonesian government and the Indonesian Communist Party helped to prevent a revolutionary victory in that country, a victory which could have changed Southeast Asia. The sectarianism they have demonstrated on the question of a united front in defense of the Vietnamese revolution has cost them the support of important parties such as the Viet-

namese, the Korean, and the Japanese, which were formerly aligned with them. But however serious these errors may be, they cannot obscure the main source of the Chinese crisis: the sabotage of economic aid and the subsequent economic blockade of China by the Soviet bureaucracy; its refusal to arm the People's Liberation Army effectively; its failure to reply adequately to imperialist aggression in Vietnam. Even the rejection of a united front by the Maoist leaders must be examined in the light of the fact that the Kremlin has not up to the present time publicly repeated its determination to defend China in the event of direct American aggression against this country.¹

Tensions within Chinese society

It would be wrong to consider the main tensions which have come to light in Chinese society during recent years to be due primarily to this change in the international situation. It would be more correct to view these tensions as essentially domestic in origin. They reflect both the achievements of the revolution and the distance still separating it from ultimate goals.

This emerges more clearly if we examine the tension which probably is not the greatest at the moment but which holds the weightiest consequences for the future of the revolution and the country: the tension in social relations in the countryside. Despite the scarcity of source material, it appears certain that a substantial social differentiation has been gradually taking place in the villages of China since the "rectification" of the excesses in the "great leap forward." The fact alone that the Maoist authors themselves constantly confound the formula "former poor peasants and middle peasants" with the formula "poor and middle peasants" and that an "Association of Poor Peasants" has even emerged are clear evidence to this effect.² It appears that this differentiation has operated not only at the village level—where the crops and incomes of the "working teams" based on former "rich peasants households" are substantially greater than those of the teams based on former "poor peasants." It is also operating interregionally. The people's communes near big urban centers appear to have specialized in the production of vegetables, fruits, poultry, hogs and cotton, which they are producing to the point of relative abundance, and which are yielding much larger incomes than is the case for the communes which are, properly speaking, grain producers. (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, February 16, 1967.) The insistence in Maoist propaganda on the priority to be accorded to grain production is undoubtedly related to this differentiation.

Closely connected to the new tension between rich and poor peasants is the tension between the peasantry (except for the poorest layers)

¹ This rejection stands in contrast to the declaration by the Chinese leaders that they will defend the USSR in the event of an imperialist attack, repeated as late as March 22, 1966, in the letter replying negatively to Brezhnev's invitation to attend the Twenty-third Congress of the CPUSSR. (Hsinhua News Agency (HNA), March 24, 1966.)

² See especially the April 4, 1967, HNA dispatch from Shanghai: "The poor and lower middle peasants on the outskirts of Shanghai have responded whole-heartedly to the appeal of Chairman Mao . . ."

and the state. In general the price which the peasants receive in exchange for their agricultural products is a very modest one. An important part of the agricultural surplus product is siphoned off for investments in industry. The proportions in this tapping process vary. They had a tendency to rise without limit during the course of the "great leap forward," to decrease at the beginning of the 1960s, to increase again in 1964 and to diminish in 1965. It is hardly likely that the peasantry as a whole remains indifferent to these fluctuations, or that it joyfully offers this nationalized ground rent on the altar of socialist construction.

In the cities, we can distinguish three different kinds of social tension. Working class discontent rose slowly, especially after the lean years which succeeded the end of the "great leap forward." It can be assumed that the Chinese proletariat, out of patriotism and class consciousness, reacted to the Soviet blockade and the extreme difficulties of the years 1959-61 by accepting substantial sacrifices in consumption. But it is hardly likely that this proletariat stoically accepted the wage freeze, which has been in effect since 1959, after the very obvious economic revival in 1963-64, while the real incomes of important peasant and bureaucratic layers increased by leaps and bounds in the same period. The readiness with which the working class responded to the appeals of "economism," according to avowals of the Maoists themselves, demonstrates that the proletariat felt that the time had become ripe to make economic demands.

The intellectuals had been hungry for freedom of creation, discussion and criticism, a hunger which had revealed itself as far back as the "hundred flowers" episode, and which manifested itself again, even though more prudently, at the beginning of the 1960s, notably through the multiplication of works having an allegorical content.

The tension between the workers and the bureaucracy also became more definite as inequalities in income became increasingly obvious. By a decision of the Council of State, July 18, 1955, a system of graduated wages for all state personnel was instituted, the scale going from one to 26.³ To these substantial differences in wages⁴ must be added the excessive privileges of the top leaders. The Maoist press has exposed and condemned these—but in a suspiciously belated and one-sided way. For example, here is how it describes the material privileges of Tao Chu, the powerful first secretary of the Communist Party's South Central Regional Bureau (Canton), one of Mao Tse-tung's principal lieutenants during the first phase of the "cultural revolution":

"In order to satisfy his new desire for pleasure, Tao Chu had a great many luxurious town and country houses built at public expense. Not only did he own several residences on an island but also a magnificent country house, which was located near the Tsunghua hot

³ Collection of the Laws and Regulations of the People's Republic of China, Vol. II. Cited by Ezra F. Vogel: "From Revolutionary to Semi-Bureaucrat," in *The China Quarterly*, No. 29, January-March, 1967, p. 51.

⁴ As a gauge: Average wages for an unskilled worker are 40-50 yuan a month; for a skilled worker, 70-80 yuan; for a university professor, 100 yuan. A pair of shoes costs 10 yuan; 750 grams (about 1 lb. 10 oz.) of rice, from 0.1 to 0.2 yuan.

springs. But that was not enough for him. He also had various black houses [No doubt, illegal.—E. G.], such as the 'floating club' and 'crystal palace' . . .

"Tao Chu's requirements for these projects were more exacting than those of emperors of the past. Because Tao Chu crossed the bridge over the Tsunghua hot springs three times, raised his eyebrows three times, and uttered three sentences, a hundred workers had to provide supplementary labor each time for several days. Three million yuan were spent on this bridge alone.

"Tao Chu was also a fan of dancing. In order to set up an ideal place for dancing, he spent four million yuan on building a dance pavillion." (*Red Rebels of Canton*, No. 3, January 15, 1967.)

We can wager that the workers did not prize this open-handedness very highly—at a time when the people as a whole had to pull in their belts a notch!—even if this was when Tao Chu was still a faithful "comrade in arms" of Mao Tse-tung and a booster of "Mao's thought" . . .

Finally, a conflict between generations, which had been gestating in Chinese society for several years, was also a source of serious tension. The number of students in China with a high-school or university education is now close to 20 million; the number of positions in the entire state sector (economy, state apparatus, army, mass organizations, etc.) available to this group is undoubtedly not greater than five million. Moreover, these positions were in the main occupied by men who are not about to retire because of their age, since most of them were appointed during the 1950-58 period. For the mass of the youth, a professional career seemed blocked, nor did there even seem to be a perspective of finding a position as an industrial worker within a reasonably brief period. Their only future appeared to lie in a return to the land and this perspective was all the less alluring because they had experienced their first taste of urban life. It was hardly difficult, therefore, to incite a feeling of revolt against the bureaucrats⁵ in this youth.

Differences within the Chinese CP

These social tensions, together with the international context in which the Chinese revolution has developed, constitute the background of the differences which have progressively broken out inside the leading nucleus, and which have ended by completely blowing up this nucleus during the course of the "great cultural revolution."

It is not easy to make out the history of these differences. In the first place, the Maoist leadership does not permit any direct informa-

5 To these major social tensions, one must add the tension between the mass of the urban population and the privileged survivors of the former bourgeoisie, who receive about 50 million dollars annually in interest and who often live in great luxury. But even though the Red Guards have attacked the restaurants and clubs frequented by these former bourgeois, as well as their homes, there is no indication at the moment that Mao, who is so determined about combating the "roots" of capitalism in the writings of his factional opponents, has suppressed the tangible advantages of the real Chinese capitalists.

tion to filter out about the real opinions of its various adversaries. Under the pretext of not permitting "representatives of the bourgeoisie who have infiltrated into the party" to speak, it systematically smothers their opinions. The tenor of these opinions can be garnered only from the polemics of the partisans of the Mao Tse-tung faction, where these opinions are reflected in a distorted and at times completely falsified way.

Then, too, the various oppositions, with but a few exceptions, are careful to refrain from a frank expression of their own opinions.⁶ They are especially careful to avoid attacking the Mao myth, in the creation of which virtually all of them had a hand, and they carry on any polemics solely in cryptic phrases, obliquely, and with innuendoes that make interpretation a dubious affair.

It is possible that new information will change the picture of the various tendencies as we are able to establish it by crosschecking presently available information. However, a general outline of these different tendencies emerges quite clearly from such crosschecking.

First of all came the *Peng Teh Huai tendency*, which had a fairly coherent line as opposed to that of the Central Committee. This was demonstrated at the Lushan Plenum of the Central Committee in the summer of 1959.⁷ Marshal Peng Teh Huai came out in opposition to the "great leap forward" and demanded a radical retreat with regard to the excessive goals for industrialization and for the appropriation of the agricultural surplus product. Probably (but this already becomes a matter of speculation), Peng Teh Huai also favored a more conciliatory orientation with regard to the Soviet bureaucracy, mainly in order to obtain a renewal of economic and military aid for China from the Kremlin.

In the debates of the Central Committee at Lushan, all of the present adversaries of Mao seem to have opposed Peng Teh Huai while at the same time suggesting to Mao that he take over some parts of the Peng program, especially those relating to economic policy. The years 1960, 1961 and 1962 were marked by considerable retreats by the Maoists and by successive concessions to the peasants as well as intellectuals and technicians. During this period, various intellectuals and middle functionaries of the party publicly aired views very close to those of Peng Teh Huai, but in allegorical form. Anecdotes and historical plays were the means used to formulate indirect criticisms—quite transparent to party functionaries and to the literate in general—regarding Mao's "general line." This is how "Hai Jui Dismissed from Office," by Wu Han, "Evening Talks at Yenshan," by Teng To, and "Hsieh Yao-huan" by Tien Han came to be written. And as is known, it was the criticism of these works which inaugurated the "cultural revolution," in its specific sense. Although the Maoist interpretations of these authors are often malicious and excessive—particularly the statement that Wu Han and Teng To wanted to "restore capitalism"—

⁶ We must, however, point out the case of the economist Sun Ken-fang, whose ideas are clearly hostile to those of Mao and have been made public. In this connection, see Livio Maitan: "The 'Great Cultural Revolution,'" (*Quatrieme Internationale*, No. 29, November 1966.)

⁷ See the editorial in *Renmin Ribao*, July 1, 1966.

it seems true enough that the intent to criticize Maoist policy obliquely and to defend Peng Teh Huai and his group was definitely present.⁸

A second oppositional tendency appeared around Peng Chen, mayor of Peking and a powerful member of the Political Bureau of the Chinese Communist Party. This tendency was not opposed to launching the "cultural revolution." On the contrary, as we learn from a circular which the Central Committee sent to the regional, provincial, municipal and departmental offices of the party, under date of May 16, 1966, and which was published belatedly, it was Peng Chen personally who headed a group of five members charged by the Central Committee to supervise the "cultural revolution." It was in this role that Peng Chen wrote a report on "the current academic discussion," which was published February 12, 1966, as an internal Communist Party document.⁹ Within this "group of five," differences appeared between a majority headed by Peng Chen and a minority headed by Kang Sheng. Mao Tse-tung and the majority of the Central Committee (Liu Shao-chi and Teng Hsiao-ping included) supported Kang Sheng against Peng Chen. The report of February 12, 1966, was withdrawn. The campaign against Peng Chen and the whole group in the municipal committee of the Peking Communist Party was unleashed.

What was the real nature of the differences between Peng Chen and the majority of the Central Committee? There is no proof that Peng Chen supported the views of Peng Teh Huai in matters of economic or international policy; his anti-Khrushchevist convictions seem obvious. Rumor even attributes to him the paternity of several of the most virulent article-replies by the Central Committee to the "Open Letter" of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party. We can be sure that if Peng Chen had written the slightest item which might support an accusation that he had defended a Khrushchevist rightist line (not to mention the slanderous accusation of his being counter-revolutionary or a partisan of the restoration of capitalism), the Maoist press would have been delighted to quote it.

In fact, the circular of May 16, 1966, regarding Peng Chen's report of February 12, 1966, is not only byzantine in most of its criticisms but often indulges in the most vulgar sophistry. Thus the Maoist circular reproaches Peng Chen for having written that "the discussion in the press should not be limited to political questions but should fully probe the various academic and theoretical questions," as well as the following sentence: "Not only is it necessary to beat the other side politically but also to surpass it and beat it decisively in accordance with academic and professional criteria as well."

The authors of the circular draw from this the wild conclusion that Peng Chen is here "violating" the rule according to which every ideological debate is a political debate. It is enough to reread the sentences themselves for which Peng Chen is blamed to see that nothing of the sort is involved. Peng Chen is merely defending an elementary

⁸ See the article from the Shanghai Jiefang Ribao, May 10, 1966, reprinted in Peking Review, May 27, 1966.

⁹ The circular was made public in the May 17, 1967, London bulletin of the Hsinhua News Agency.

principle of all theoretical discussions, asserted many times by Marx, Engels and Lenin, according to which it is *not enough* to condemn a theory as untrue because it has a reactionary class character, is bourgeois, etc.; it is also necessary to *demonstrate* the erroneous character of this theory within the very framework of the scientific disciplines involved in the polemic, by utilizing the material of these disciplines and by demonstrating that Marxism *combines* a better understanding of this material with a superior method for explaining and organizing it. The best works of Marxist criticism—beginning with the "Theories of Surplus Value" by Marx himself—were born from this real appropriation of the material under criticism. Moreover, Marx explicitly rejected as alien to his method that technique which consists of "refuting" theories on the basis of preconceived criteria, without demonstrating their erroneous character on scientific grounds (that is to say, economic, sociological, historical, esthetic, etc.). The statement regarding their class character should complete this demonstration; it must never be a substitute for it. Peng Chen is in the orthodox Marxist-Leninist tradition here—the Maoists raise against him a schematic, mechanistic and vulgar revision of Marxism.

What remains of the accusations leveled against Peng Chen is consequently the "democratism" and "rotten liberalism" of his organizational ideas, the fact that he dared launch the formula "everyone is equal in face of the truth"—which the Maoists imprudently define as a bourgeois slogan by declaring that there are only "class truths" (as if bourgeois ideology could be true!)—and the fact that he pleaded for respecting minimal norms of proletarian democracy *among the masses*.¹⁰

The fact that some of the writers and cadres under fire were collaborators of Peng Chen and that he sought to protect them from brutal treatment even though he condemned them politically, probably impelled the mayor of Peking to adopt these positions. But it is also quite possible that he favored a major democratization of the party, state apparatus and military apparatus, and that he was engaged in organizing a tendency on such a platform.¹¹

A third oppositional tendency, headed by Liu Shao-chi and Teng Hsiao-ping, apparently made its appearance at the Central Committee Plenum of August 1966. Here the allusions by Maoist commentators to specific differences are more numerous, bearing mainly on agricultural policy. Liu Shao-chi is accused in particular of wanting to increase the size of private plots, to encourage production for the market, to expand the portion of the net product of the communes which is distributed to the peasants at the expense of the portion serving the purposes of accumulation, to set production norms based on the peasant household or work teams, etc. Some of these accusations are ob-

10 On the occasion of the 16th anniversary of the People's Republic of China, Peng Chen declared: "In these circumstances, it is all the more necessary for cadres at various levels to know how to listen to the opinion of the masses, and to allow different opinions to be fully expressed." (See F. Charlier: "The Purge Spreads in People's China," *Perspective Mondiale*, Vol. I, No. 5.)

11 Support for this hypothesis can be found in the fact that Vice Prime Minister Ho Lung, who has been associated with Peng Chen in some of the Red Guard denunciations, is the author of an article which is rather remarkable for the democratic theses it defends: "The Democratic Tradition of the Chinese People's Liberation Army."

vious lies and contradict each other. But there is no reason to believe that these differences on the agricultural question are a complete invention. On the contrary, the extreme violence of the public struggle against Liu Shao-chi and Teng Hsiao-ping leads one to believe that the differences are on *fundamental* questions of Communist Party policy. There is no problem in China which is more likely to crystallize violent differences than that involving the attitude toward the peasantry.

The internal logic of the debates on this question during the years 1958-63 leads us to the same conclusions. Liu Shao-chi supported the line of the "great leap forward" along with Mao. More than Mao, however, he became identified with the policy of retreat, once peasant resistance expressed itself in a catastrophic drop in agricultural production. He even replaced Mao as the head of the People's Republic of China on that occasion. Thanks to this retreat, agricultural production quickly recovered and resumed its advance. After that, the same kind of problem which had already arisen in 1957-58 again became posed in 1965-66: At what rate and in what proportions should the agricultural surplus product be taken from the peasants in order to serve as the funds of accumulation for accelerated industrialization? Undoubtedly the first response of the majority of the Central Committee was to be prudent. The goals of the third plan have not been published, but they hardly seem to have included any new "leaps forward" for industrial production. There is no indication of a desire to break records. The "rectification" of the "great leap forward," which consisted of viewing the development of agriculture as the basis for economic growth, is completely preserved.

But apparatus men like Liu Shao-chi and Teng Hsiao-ping, with their recollections of how close China was to catastrophe in 1959-61, could detect in the "cultural revolution," in the campaign to "put politics in command posts in agriculture," in the trend to consider that any economic problem can be resolved by applying the "thought of Mao Tse-tung," disquieting signs of a change in course in peasant policy as well. There can be no doubt that the extension of "voluntarist" methods to agriculture, the adoption of ritualistic formulas like "putting public interests before private interests," were courting the risk of a renewed tension in relations with the peasantry. Indications began to appear that destructive and reactionary methods were being resorted to for agriculture. It is probable that Liu and Teng, during the August 1966 plenum, had urged that the peasants be left outside the "cultural revolution," which had left them virtually untouched up to that time.

The Maoist faction has accused Liu Shao-chi and Teng Hsiao-ping in addition of misusing the method of "work groups" in the May-July 1966 period. These were groups which the central apparatus of the party sent into the universities and schools, as well as into certain enterprises and administrations, in order to channel and direct the "cultural revolution." These accusations are generally hysterical and factional in tone; they are also completely contradictory. Liu and Teng are accused simultaneously of having "directed the fire against the revolutionary masses" and of having wanted to "eliminate the great

majority of cadres."¹² It is apparently completely correct that they wanted to preserve a certain number of organizational norms in applying the "cultural revolution"; for instance, the rule of not bringing differences within party committees before the public until the party itself had settled them. In so doing, they probably came into collision with the most critical of the students and showed that they were just as hard as the Maoists, if not more so, toward elements which were politically suspect on the score of "democratism" and "rotten liberalism."

Finally, although the problem has not yet raised any echoes in the Chinese press, we can suppose that on the question of a united front with the USSR in defense of Vietnam, Liu Shao-chi and Teng Hsiao-ping, as well as Peng Chen and his group, held a more flexible position than Mao. On this score there is rather clear testimony from a Japanese Communist Party delegation which visited China at the beginning of 1966 and negotiated with the leaders of the Chinese CP. According to this testimony, these negotiations failed because of Mao's insistence on refusing any kind of united action with the Soviet leaders. All the other CCP leaders, including Chou En-lai, would have accepted a joint communique on this occasion in which they would have abstained from the usual virulent attacks against Moscow. Mao was the sole exception. This was the reason for the break between the Japanese CP and the Chinese CP.

The Maoist faction today presents things as if the whole opposition were united from the very beginning and as if Mao had succeeded in cutting it up in accordance with the "salami tactic." Wu Han and Teng To would allegedly never have dared to go as far as they did if they had not received encouragement from Peng Chen, who would not have entered this struggle without the secret support of Liu Shao-chi and Teng Hsiao-ping. Since Wu Han and Teng To were in fundamental agreement with Peng Teh Huai, there was thus, according to this reasoning, a "bloc," if not a "conspiracy," involving Peng Teh Huai, Peng Chen, Liu Shao-chi, and Teng Hsiao-ping. Certain bourgeois commentators maintain a similar interpretation.

Against this hypothesis stands the fact that such a combination would have had the support of a majority of the Political Bureau and the Central Committee, and a majority at the head of the People's Liberation Army. It is hard to see why such a majority would not have come forward openly in order to save at least Peng Chen, if not Peng Teh Huai. I am of the opinion, therefore, that this view is incorrect. It appears to me, contrary to this, that the Maoist faction is making a deliberate amalgam of some clearly rightist tendencies like that of Peng Teh Huai, a rather "liberalizing" tendency like that of Peng Chen (which is not rightist because of that), and a markedly leftist faction (but more prudent in certain areas than Mao) like that of Liu Shao-chi and Teng Hsiao-ping.¹³

What appears to be accurate, however, is that the plenum of August

¹² See, for instance, the article which appeared in Hongqi (The Red Banner) of March 1967 which states that the "work group" at the University of Tsing-hua dismissed 70 per cent of the cadres.

¹³ If proof is wanted of the frenzied anti-Khrushchevism of Liu Shao-chi, accused today of being the "Chinese Khrushchev," it is sufficient to refer to his speech of April 28, 1966, at the height of the "cultural revolution" on the occasion of a reception honoring Mehmet Shehu and the Al-

1966 lacked the majority needed to condemn Liu Shao-chi and Teng Hsiao-ping; and the famous 16-point resolution issued by this plenum was the result of a compromise which rendered it quite contradictory. We will return to this aspect of the problem when we analyze the contradictions in Maoist ideology. For the moment we want to emphasize the last paragraph of point No. 11 of this resolution:

"Criticism of anyone by name in the press should be decided after discussion by the Party committee at the same level, and in some cases submitted to the Party committee at a higher level for approval."

This paragraph undoubtedly explains why the Maoist faction, over a period of several months, never named Liu Shao-chi and Teng Hsiao-ping explicitly in its public attacks against them, using instead only such circumlocutions as, "the first person in a position of authority who, while of the party, has taken the capitalist road." It is also necessary to point out the obvious contradiction between points No. 6 and No. 7 of this resolution, which assert the right of all members of the party and of the people to participate freely in debates ". . . with the exception of cases of active counterrevolutionaries where there is clear evidence of crimes such as murder, arson, poisoning, sabotage or theft of state secrets, which should be handled in accordance with the law," and the last paragraph of point No. 8, which implies that party members exposed as "rightists" will not have the right to speak, even though they have not committed any of the crimes just enumerated: "The anti-party and anti-socialist rightists must be completely exposed, beaten down, rendered harmless and discredited, and their influence liquidated."¹⁴

On the "Red Guard" movement

We have just seen that the differences between Mao and Liu Shao-chi began to emerge during the period extending from May 1966 to the plenum of August 1966. It was during this same period that the Red Guard movement was in preparation, beginning with the launching of the *dazibao* (posters in giant letters) on June 1 at the University of Peking. That was how a movement was unleashed which took on a gigantic mass character—they speak of 20 million Red Guards! It is necessary to establish the social and political scope of this movement as closely as possible.

The objective meaning of the formation of the Red Guards is obvious: When Mao ran into an opposition which this time included a large part of the party and state cadres, he deliberately appealed over the heads of these cadres to the wide masses. Whether this appeal was simply a maneuver to bolster his power in the party and the state at any cost or whether it expressed his sincere anxiety over the fate of the Chinese revolution which was being threatened by degeneration, is not a very important question so far as determining the *social*

banian delegation which had come to China: "The Soviet modern revisionists have gone farther and farther along the path of capitulation to imperialism. They have already degenerated into renegades from Marxism-Leninism and accomplices of U. S. imperialism." (Peking Review, May 6, 1966.)

¹⁴ All these quotations are from Peking Review, August 12, 1966.

meaning of the Red Guard movement is concerned; basically such a question is relevant only to Mao's individual psychological outlook. What is important is that appeals were launched to the masses for action on their part to prevent such degeneration and that the response by these masses not only exceeded Mao Tse-tung's expectations but also swept beyond the objectives which the Maoist faction itself had set for the mobilization.

The faction first addressed itself practically exclusively to the student youth of the high schools and universities. The reasons for this selection are easily understood. To mobilize this youth all that was needed was to close down the schools. Mobilizing the workers on the same scale and for the same period would have meant disorganizing and even halting industrial production.¹⁵ Being less politicalized than the vanguard workers, particularly those who were members of the Communist Party, these youth were easier to indoctrinate in a narrow factional way, and more readily accepted certain accusations against long-standing leaders of the party and the state than would have been the case with the workers, who still retained memories of the history of the Chinese revolution.

Undoubtedly, the determining factor for this choice was the conviction of the Maoists that the student youth was much more likely than the workers to permit a *mass mobilization*, launched on an appeal for revolt against the established authorities, that is to say against the bureaucracy, *to be channeled toward reform of that bureaucracy rather than its overthrow*. To become aware of this, it is sufficient to look at the precautions taken to prevent the mobilization of Red Guards from exceeding this framework, precautions which show up particularly in the ambiguous attitude of the Maoist faction toward the cadres.¹⁶ What was involved at bottom, therefore, was a *partial mobilization* and not a general mobilization of the masses, a movement which was supposed to exert pressure on the bureaucracy rather than one which was supposed to sweep it out.

These specific traits of the Red Guard movement were not apparent at the beginning to the youth and proletariat of China. All the more so, they escaped the notice of most foreign observers. On the contrary, the movement appeared to be an eruption of elementary forces involving millions of youth, an eruption considered as destructive by some and as constructive by others, depending on their understanding of the current problems confronting the Chinese revolution. Those who believe that this eruption was completely guided and channeled by remote control at every turn of Red Guard activity are greatly deceived. Facts demonstrate incontestably that there was a very great diversity of opinions, a very wide autonomy in action, a harvest of posters, mimeographed or printed papers, the creation of organizations on the basis of different ideas. Despite the excesses which were committed and the Mao cult in which the whole movement was bathed,

¹⁵ The Maoists took a clear stand against shifting workers about after the manner of the Red Guards (Renmin Ribao, February 12 and February 14, 1967).

¹⁶ How can one reconcile the slogan declaring that "the rebellion is justified" with the one declaring that it is necessary to achieve "unity with more than 95 per cent of the cadres"? (Renmin Ribao editorial in Peking Review, April 14, 1967.) And why must millions of people be mobilized in order to eliminate a mere "handful of officials"?

this harvest of ideas and experiences undoubtedly constitutes an unprecedented experience for thousands of young Chinese, particularly in comparison with the evolution of the youth in most of the other bureaucratically deformed or degenerated workers states.

Those who advance the hypothesis that the movement was completely guided by remote control solely in the interests of the Maoist faction are unable to furnish a *social explanation* for this mobilization of the youth. The fact that the schools were closed down and free railroad tickets were given out is still insufficient to explain why immense masses of the youth took the road of political action. Many reactionary regimes have tried to mobilize the youth by means of some material advantages and have been unable to get results. And such reactionary movements as succeeded in the past in achieving such a base (the Nazis in Germany, notably), did so less because of material incentives than because of the fact that their demagoguery corresponded to the open or hidden needs of specific social layers.

It is in the same sense that Mao Tse-tung's incontestable success in mobilizing the Chinese student youth must be interpreted. The themes on which it was accomplished corresponded to the real preoccupations of a youth in which revolutionary fervor is still very much present, especially because of international developments of the revolution: rebellion against entrenched bureaucratic authority; democracy for the wide masses; egalitarianism; world revolution; struggle against the bourgeoisification of entrenched persons.¹⁷

As we have tried to show above, these ideological preoccupations correspond with very tangible material interests: The student youth could all the more easily be mobilized against the "authorities" because the latter in large measure barred the road to professional careers for this youth after they finished school.

But if the Maoist faction was not wrong in presuming it possible to bring millions of young people into the factional battle, it was wrong from the outset about its ability to channel this mobilization continuously on the basis of the absolute primacy given to "Mao Tse-tung's thought"—a primacy which the various oppositions still in existence do not question in the slightest. Mao Tse-tung became, in a way, the victim of his own legend. He greatly underestimated the explosive nature of the themes injected among the student masses. Above all he underestimated the rapid resurrection of a critical spirit in a vast mass movement, which could not help but thrust thousands of young people on the road toward consciousness regarding the contradictory aspects of Maoist ideology, a consciousness which would wind up in questioning the power of the whole bureaucracy, its Maoist faction included. Above all he underestimated the psychological effect that mobilizing the Red Guards would have on the other factions of the bureaucracy, particularly the powerfully entrenched groups in various regional bureaus.

Seeing that the compromise of August 1966 was being violated,

¹⁷ HNA distributed an interview datelined Peking April 6, 1967, with an American living in China, Erwin Engst, expressly stating that differences in salaries, with a spread from one to eight, according to this source, are not in conformity with the principles of the Paris Commune and ought to be gradually reduced.

and that point No. 6 of the resolution of August 8, which explicitly provided that debates "should be conducted by reasoning, not by coercion or force," was not being observed by extremist Maoist groups among the Red Guards, who were beginning to employ the most odious methods of physical and moral pressure against oppositionists,¹⁸ the other factions in turn began to appeal to the masses. Since a part of the laboring adult population did not view the incursion of the youth into all spheres of social life, including industrial life, with much sympathy, Mao's adversaries tried to create a mass base in the working class by making economic concessions to it and urging it to formulate its own demands. Because of this, the Maoist faction in its turn was compelled to extend its mass mobilization to the masses in the plants, the "revolutionary rebels" making their appearance alongside the Red Guards. The sharp crisis of December 1966-January 1967 and the turn it imposed on the Maoist faction were born from this internal dialectic of the Red Guard movement. Victory was no longer possible through legal party channels nor through the pressure of the Red Guards alone. It therefore became necessary "to seize power" through the intervention of the army, wherever the party committees remained hostile to Mao.

The turn of January 1967

Imperative considerations compelled the Maoist faction to modify its attitude on the Red Guards, to proceed to repression or suppression of its nonconformist left wing, or of its pro-Liu Shao-chi groups.¹⁹ The Red Guard movement was increasingly escaping from its control. A part of the working class was beginning to move independently. There was even a danger that the peasantry would in turn be drawn into the movement. Before the danger of a general flood, the Mao faction tried to reverse matters and reestablish an alliance with a majority section of the bureaucracy. The army intervened in a massive way in order to seal the "triple alliance for seizing power," which was supposed to unite the "revolutionary organizations" (that is to say, the Maoists), the part of the cadres which the Maoists could win over, and the army leaders. The necessity for calming the people and ending the chaos was one of the main arguments used in the framework of this struggle for "seizing power."²⁰

Many examples can be cited where the Maoist faction lost control over a part of the Red Guard movement, which subsequently acted independently. We will restrict ourselves here to citing the most revealing facts as mentioned by the Maoist press itself. The latter listed the

18 A particularly odious example: the way the Peking paper Shing kangshan of January 11, 1967, glorifies the fact that Red Guards "captured" the wife of Liu Shao-chi by a ruse, attracting her to a hospital by making her believe that her daughter had been victim of a serious accident.

19 The Peking paper Shing kangshan of January 23, 1967, states that on the previous evening several hundred Red Guards demonstrated under the flag of the "Committee for united action of the Red Guards of the capital," shouting: "Down with the Cultural Revolution group of the Central Committee!" "Long live Liu Shao-chi!"

20 In this connection see the "Message from the People of Tsingtao" after the Maoist "seizure of power." (Wen-hui Pao of Hong Kong, January 31, 1967.)

organizations of Red Guards and "revolutionary rebels" which it considers counterrevolutionary, in particular:

— "The Army of Red Guards" and the "Detachment of Worker Militias" in the province of Kweichow. (HNA dispatch published in China but not abroad, February 22, 1967; this dispatch states, moreover, that these organizations are "relatively powerful.")

— The "Headquarters of the Federation of Revolutionary Rebels among the Workers of Shantung Province" at Tsinan. (HNA dispatch of March 1, 1967, published in Tsinan.)

— The "August First Combat Corps" (also called the "August First Combat Corps for the Thought of Mao Tse-tung") in Canton. (Denounced in a circular of the provincial military command of Kwangtung, dated March 1, 1967.)

— The "United Action Committee of the Red Guards of Peking." (Denounced in the Peking daily *Shing kangshan* of January 23, 1967.)

— "The Army of the Red Banner" in Harbin (Northeast China), denounced in the province of Heilungkiang (in *Renmin Ribao* of Peking, March 26, 1967).

— Certain "royalist" organizations, unspecified as to name, in the bicycle plant at Harbin. (HNA dispatch from Harbin, April 11, 1967.)

— The "Preparatory Committee for the Cultural Revolution" in the power plant at Harbin. (*Renmin Ribao*, February 27, 1967.)

These organizations first appear at the level of the enterprise, department, or school, then are almost always established on a local basis and subsequently try to join together on a regional or interregional level. For example, the "August First Combat Corps" in Canton is accused in the military circular cited above of having "defended the 'Jung Fu Chun'—a counterrevolutionary organization of the province of Heilungkiang—and of having fabricated slanderous rumors regarding units of the People's Liberation Army, which they accused of *suppressing* the revolutionary left."

They even wind up occasionally as national organizations. This clearly emerges from a February 12, 1967, decision of the Council of State and of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party ordering the dissolution of all of these national organizations, "a small number of which were set up by landlords, rich peasants, counterrevolutionaries, bad elements and rightists."

A Maoist organ, the *Ti-yu Shan-hsien* ("The Combat Front for Physical Culture"), lists these national "counterrevolutionary" organizations: "The National Section of the Rebel Corps of the Army for the Elimination of Bourgeois Ideology"; "The National Corps of Red Rebels of the State Farms"; "The General National Rebel Corps of the Red Workers"; "The Chinese Section of the International Army of Red Guards"; etc.

These anti-Maoist groups among the "revolutionary rebels" did not confine themselves to issuing posters and papers considered to be "deviationist." They also conducted a direct struggle, especially against the repression. The sources mentioned above accuse them of having stormed the prisons at Tsinan, Canton, Peking and Harbin; of having sought to set up an organization of "victims of the repression" at

Canton; of having organized a mass demonstration in Peking right in the Square of Celestial Peace; of having taken the *Renmin Ribao* printing plant in Peking by assault.

The case of the "General National Rebel Corps of Red Workers" merits special mention because it is cited by name and dissolved by a decree of the Council of State and of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party on February 17, 1967. It apparently involved a national organization of part-time workers and workers without contracts, who had organized a large national mobilization and demonstration at Peking, in order to demand payment of wages due them since 1958, together with a change in their status. These temporary workers are among the least protected groups in the Chinese labor force and for several years the communes have had the habit of "lending" them to industrial enterprises lacking manpower, at famine wages. Their demand is for equalizing their status with the permanently employed. Foreign observers have spoken about a demonstration in silence which was extremely impressive. The Indian left weekly *Link* tells of several hundred thousand workers arriving in Peking (January 22, 1967).

This example shows that there are at least some specific cases where the Liu Shao-chi faction of the bureaucracy called on proletarian masses in the struggle. For it appears from the decree of February 17, 1967, that the "National Rebel Corps" in question organized this demonstration in close collaboration with the trade-union bureaucrats connected with Liu Shao-chi. The press also mentions a great number of cases where these "antiparty" bureaucrats incited workers to strike: in the state farms (HNA dispatch from Peking, February 21, 1967), particularly in the province of Kiangsu (*Renmin Ribao*, February 19, 1967); in Canton (Canton daily *Kwantung Shan-pao*, February 22, 1967); in a railroad strike at Harbin (HNA dispatch from Peking,

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March 23, 1967); in a strike of workers in transportation, power and water distribution at Canton (organ of the army at Canton, *Nan-fang Ribao*, March 24, 1967), etc. The accusations are addressed each time against local or regional leaders of the Chinese Communist Party who appear to belong to the Liu Shao-chi faction.

Naturally we must take into account the fact that these accusations may be strictly factional. To incite intervention by the army it was necessary to demonstrate that it was the "authorities" who were creating disorder up to the point of "fomenting strikes." Some of the strikes may have been spontaneous. Those in Shanghai, which in December 1966 to January 1967 were climaxed by a general strike in transportation and very widespread strikes in industry (see particularly the admission contained in the famous "appeal of 11 Shanghai organizations" on January 4, 1967, as printed in *Renmin Ribao* of January 9) were almost assuredly of this character.²¹ It is highly improbable that they were caused by factional adversaries of Mao since the leaders of the municipal committee of the party in Shanghai were loyal Maoists. It was to them that Mao turned in order to initiate the "cultural revolution" from their city, rather than from Peking, which was controlled by the Peng Chen group. Nevertheless, we do believe that there were instances of appeals to the masses by groups of bureaucrats under attack by Mao. Apart from the previously cited case of the temporary workers, the Maoist press cites a great number of examples from which it emerges that leading cadres of the Chinese Communist Party tried to use economic concessions to the worker masses as a means of winning them away from the Mao faction. The virulent campaign "against economism," unleashed at the beginning of January, 1967, reflects the concern which these attempts inspired in the leaders of the Mao-Lin Piao group.²²

The meaning of "the triple alliance seizing power" emerges from the factors we have just enumerated. What is involved is repressing the youth and workers who have escaped from the control of the Maoist faction, allaying the fear of the bureaucracy that the "cultural revolution" might be aimed against it as a whole, changing regional leaderships in such a way as to strengthen the positions of the Maoist faction, returning the loyal Red Guard groups to the bosom of orthodoxy, and restoring calm in the factories. To accomplish this, the Maoists went so far as to have the army occupy plants, particularly in Peking.²³ The attacks by Red Guards against the "excesses of ultra-democratism," against "anarchism," against the "small group spirit," which mark the "rectification" campaign of the "cultural revolution," in full swing since the beginning of 1967, confirm the general meaning of the January turn.

²¹ The foreign press, particularly the Japanese, reported a general strike in Shanghai and Nanking, and big strikes at Wuhan, Fuchow, Chekiang and Shenyang. We are restricting ourselves deliberately to quoting Chinese sources exclusively.

²² Lenin used "economism" to designate the tendency which believes that the trade-union economic struggle of the workers is sufficient to achieve their emancipation. The idea of condemning the very demands themselves under this term would never have entered his mind!

²³ HNA dispatch from Peking, March 24, 1967.

All of this has been accompanied for several months by an intensified campaign first against Liu Shao-chi and Teng Hsiao-ping, then against Liu alone. The outrageous character of this campaign has beyond doubt shocked a large part of the membership of the Chinese Communist Party. It is moreover inevitably turning against Mao Tse-tung himself.²⁴ But no new acts of physical coercion against the most stubborn opposition leaders have been reported since the terrible scenes in Peking on January 4, 1967, when Peng Chen and others were mistreated and dragged like prisoners before crowds of Red Guards, who shouted insults at them. It is held generally that Chou En-lai forcefully intervened in order to put an end to these excesses and that the Mao-Lin Piao group, needing Chou's support, yielded on this point.

"Cultural Revolution" and bureaucratic degeneration

The meaning of the "cultural revolution" thus emerges from the sequence of events, although the process is far from having come to a conclusion and abrupt turns still are possible.

A conflict within the bureaucracy caused several contending factions to appeal to the masses over the head of the leading party bodies. The Maoist faction first turned to the youth but was later compelled to transfer the struggle to the plants when the opponent factions began to mobilize the workers. On both sides these mobilizations were limited undertakings, their goal being to exert pressure on the party leadership in order to effect a partial change in its composition and political orientation. What was involved was an attempt to reform the bureaucracy—undoubtedly a radical reform on Mao's part—but not to abolish it.

But this interbureaucratic struggle liberated enormous revolutionary forces in the youth and proletariat, forces which had been bottled up for a long time. This resulted in spontaneous forms of action and organization among part of the masses. Consequently, at the present stage of development, the relationship of forces between the bureaucracy and the masses has shifted to the advantage of the masses by virtue of a considerable weakening of the bureaucracy. The absence of any

²⁴ The editorial cited above from Renmin Riabao, reproduced in Peking Review of April 14, 1967, coldly declares that Liu Shao-chi "represented . . . the interests of the Chinese bourgeoisie," that he "represented . . . the bourgeois reactionary line . . . in the past 17 years," that "This man's ambition is to develop capitalism and bring about a capitalist restoration in China." One has to ask how, under these conditions, Mao Tse-tung allowed him to become president of the People's Republic of China, a position to which he was reelected on January 3, 1965. The Peking Review of January 8, 1965, which displays a large photograph of Mao Tse-tung and Liu Shao-chi standing side by side, and which declares that "over 100,000 workers, peasants, governmental cadres, students, army men" assembled to celebrate the happy occasion, is consequently particularly discrediting . . . for Mao. Is it possible that the secret ambition of the latter was to put this representative of the bourgeoisie in the number two position in China and in the post of his official successor? It is also necessary to condemn the demagogic and dishonest character of the campaign launched against Liu Shao-chi's book: *In Order To Be a Good Communist*. The Maoist press, which is violently attacking the book "because it does not base its position on the dictatorship of the proletariat," pretends to be unaware of the fact that it was written in 1939, and that Mao's pamphlet: *The New Democracy*, written a year later and today extolled to the high heavens, not only "does not base its position on the dictatorship of the proletariat" but explicitly condemns its application in China "at the present stage."

large-scale repression after the explosion of January 1967 confirms this evaluation. The faction that wins the struggle will undoubtedly strive to consolidate the power of the bureaucracy. But such stabilization can hardly occur without a rather long period of vicissitudes, both on the domestic and international levels.

Here we find the most striking difference between the evolution of the Soviet Union after Stalin's death and the evolution in China during the past ten years. Formal analogies between the methods of struggle of Stalin's apparatus and that of Mao are not lacking. The parallel between Stalin's "cult of the personality" and Mao's is particularly striking. But the moment one examines the two processes on the basis of their substance and not their formal aspects, that is, on the basis of the relations between the different contending social forces, the differences become striking.

The progressive establishment of Stalin's dictatorship over the Communist Party of the USSR was a process in which the power of the bureaucracy was progressively consolidated, the proletariat was progressively deprived of the exercise of political power. Stalin arose as an incarnation of the bureaucracy. This rise was possible because of the complete political passivity of the masses. That is how the authentic Bolshevik forces, still considerable in 1923, although weakened, were cut to pieces and scattered, little by little, before they were physically liquidated.

In China, at the beginning of the process we had a deformed revolution, in which the proletariat played only a contributory role, and a peasant army took the place of independent action by the masses. Nor was there at the start an authentic Bolshevik party, imbued with the revolutionary and democratic tradition of the international working class movement. It was a party bearing a heavy Stalinist imprint, even if this was limited to the way it viewed and practiced democratic centralism. The state and party power were therefore far more bureaucratized in China from the start than was the case in the USSR of 1927; its proletariat was far weaker and its bureaucracy far stronger than at the moment when Stalin established his dictatorship.

The systematic organization of the "Mao cult" corresponded in no way with the need for a progressive abolition of soviet democracy or internal party democracy, since these never came into existence in China with the 1949 victory. It corresponded more with the needs of the interbureaucratic struggles, certain aspects of which remain obscure to this day. There was no deterioration in China in the relationship of forces between the bureaucracy and the masses at the expense of the masses comparable to that which took place in the USSR under Stalin. On the contrary, there was a weakening of the bureaucracy, hidden at first, then manifest, as a consequence of the shattering of its monolithic unity. Far from being completely passive and progressively demoralized, the masses had a reawakening, which was imperceptible at first but suddenly became apparent to the whole world during the month of January 1967. This is a significant difference from the Stalinist precedent. And its origin, in the last analysis, is to be found in the completely changed international context: Instead of

a succession of defeats of the international revolution from 1923 to 1933, there has been a rise in the world revolution since 1949.²⁵

These considerations do not in any way justify identifying the progressive rise of the mass movement in China with the role played by Mao Tse-tung, as certain "leftists" imprudently assert in their eagerness to find support of the state powers. Mao's turn in January; the way in which the demand for a return to a state founded on bodies of the Paris Commune type²⁶ was first reduced, then abandoned in fact; all of this confirms the absurdity of such identification, save to people who have no wish to look reality in the face. The "triple alliance" brought hardened bureaucrats to power everywhere.²⁷ There is not a single case of workers councils or organs of the soviet type arising in the plants, with the exception of the glassworks in Shanghai, in January, 1967, and there it was quickly abandoned.

Besides this contradiction is an inherent characteristic of Mao's thought. Insofar as he may be accorded an element of sincerity, his thought has a clearly tragic character. Mao calls for rebellion and the seizure of power. This must mean that the primary power no longer is an incarnation of the dictatorship of the proletariat in its pure state. But he does not look for the origins of its degeneration or danger of degeneration in the material infrastructure of society, in the inadequate development of productive forces, or the contradictions between this degree of development and the relationships of production. No, the origins of the danger of degeneration, according to him, are ideological. If revisionism is not extirpated at the roots on the theoretical, scientific, artistic and literary levels, the dictatorship of the proletariat must inevitably be overturned and the Chinese Communist Party will become . . . a fascist party.²⁸ It is hard to believe that an experienced Marxist could utter such enormities; nevertheless, they are spread in millions of copies throughout China.

This point of view is absolutely foreign to Marxism. The survival of semifeudal ideology, semifeudal art and literature—for example the ideology which inspired ultramontane Catholicism in the century following the French revolution—never led to the overthrow of the power of the bourgeoisie. Of course the conquest of political power by *rising* social classes is prepared by intensive ideological struggles. But to imagine that *reactionary* classes have the same possibilities solely because of the survival of their ideology after the overthrow of their political power, is to deny all logic in social revolutions.

25 It must be added that Stalin's rise corresponds with the theory of socialism in a single country and with more and more peaceful coexistence with imperialism, whereas the Maoists have been constantly referring to the world revolution during the course of the "cultural revolution."

26 The idea of electing organs of power by the universal suffrage of working people—the basic idea of the Paris Commune—has not been applied in a single case where the triple alliance "seized power."

27 Examples: The "revolutionary committee" of Shantung is headed by Mu Lin, member of the secretariat of the former provincial committee which had been stripped of its functions. The new chairman of the "revolutionary committee" of Shansi is the head of the Communist Party central core in this province. In Tsingtao, the vice mayor of the city directed the "seizure of power." In Shanghai, the former head of the security police is chairman of the "revolutionary committee," etc.

28 Kuangming Ribao of Peking, April 8, 1967, paraphrasing a quotation from Mao. And see, for instance, what Mao's wife, Chiang Ching wrote: "If our literature and art do not correspond to the socialist economic base, they will inevitably [sic] destroy it." (Hungsi Chanpao of Peking, February 15, 1967.)

In reality, the whole weight of bourgeois or semifeudal religion, art, literature and ideology is less of a threat to the Chinese workers state (let alone the Soviet workers state) than a single year of the survival of small-scale commodity production. Lenin had no illusions on this score. What prevents the definitive consolidation of the revolution is not the ideological weight of the past but the socio-economic reality of the present. The inadequate development of the productive forces means that economic automatism is acting against socialism and will continue to do so for a long time in that part of the world in which capitalism now stands abolished.

It follows as a matter of course that the subjective factor, the role of leadership, takes on an infinitely greater importance than it would under more favorable conditions. But it also follows that an *effective* struggle against the dangers of degeneration in the revolution cannot be unfolded in a decisive way on the ideological terrain but on the political and social terrain, through organization of the exercise of economic and political power by the laboring masses, and through an increase in the specific weight, power and conscious cohesiveness of the proletariat. Failing to understand the problem of bureaucracy, of which Marx had a presentiment, Lenin an awareness, and which was analyzed in depth by Trotsky, Mao struggles with the phantom of a "restoration of capitalism" achieved "imperceptibly" by "revisionists" . . . through reactionary plays and films! This conception, which is a total revision of the Marxist-Leninist theory of the state, also winds up in the most grotesque conclusions: Is it possible that the state created by Mao himself, where it is now necessary to fight to "seize power," was also controlled by a "bourgeois state apparatus" after all—as some of the Maoist extremists at least seem to imply?²⁹

Mao Tse-tung abandons Marxist sociology based on objective criteria to submerge himself in a subjective "sociology" devoid of all scientific foundation. The capitalist is no longer a private owner of means of production who appropriates surplus value from workers compelled to sell him their labor power; anyone becomes a "capitalist" who is in disagreement with the "thought of Mao Tse-tung." Substituting for the *bureaucratic* degeneration of the revolution a danger of *capitalist* restoration—largely imaginary except in case of defeat in an international war—he winds up with preaching remedies which reinforce the danger of degeneration instead of reducing it. For it is necessary to suppress the right of speech of all his opponents within the party once they have all become "partisans of the capitalist road." A movement which began under the banner of "wider democracy" and of the right of the minority "to argue their case and reserve their views" because "sometimes the truth is with the minority," winds up by stifling every discordant opinion and suppressing every minority (which, as soon as it opposes Mao, is by virtue of that automatically "counter-revolutionary").

²⁹ "The Marxist principle of destroying the old bourgeois state machinery must be applied in organizations which have decayed, because a handful of party people in positions of authority and taking the capitalist road have been entrenched there for a long time. The organs of the bourgeoisie [sic] must be completely destroyed there and organs of the dictatorship of the proletariat must be reestablished there." (Kuangming Ribao of Peking, March 3, 1967.)

For Trotskyism, the experience of the "cultural revolution" confirms that the theory of the possible degeneration of a victorious socialist revolution, a theory which was considered heretical 20 years ago by the entire official Communist movement, has now been partly admitted by practically all of the victorious revolutions since the second world war. Tito, Castro, Mao Tse-tung have all picked it up, each in his own way. The need for a political revolution, for a "revolution within a revolution," as the Cubans say today, begins to make its appearance in a not negligible part of the international Communist movement. But the experience of the "cultural revolution" also demonstrates that there is no other road for *effective* struggle against the bureaucratic degeneration of the revolution than the one outlined by Lenin and Trotsky: the consolidation and institutionalization of workers power on the basis of democratically elected councils (soviets); the widest proletarian democracy; the right of several soviet tendencies and parties to exist legally within that framework; the limitation and progressive abolition of inequality in remuneration; the management of the economy by the workers themselves; the planned development of the productive forces; the international extension of the revolution.

May 20, 1967.

Postscript

The information received from China during the six months which have evolved since this article was written have substantially confirmed the general line of analysis contained in it. Notwithstanding sharper and sharper public attacks against the "Chinese Khrushchev"—who is in certain articles presented as the "main enemy of the Chinese people," i.e. as a greater enemy than Chiang Kai-shek or American imperialism!—the Mao faction is far from having won the struggle. It has only succeeded in rebuilding a new apparatus under its own control in a minority of cities or provinces. Often, as in Wu Han and Canton, it has been met with such resolute resistance by the opposing faction that armed clashes, street fights and other violent incidents broke out.³⁰ Sometimes—as at the An-Shan steel works—it was even forced to make a partial retreat under the pressure of economic difficulties. Nowhere can it be said to have attained its main goal: to eliminate definitively the influence of the Liu-Teng faction from the state apparatus, the party, the mass organizations and especially among the masses themselves.

One should of course not confuse the successive and inevitable dif-

³⁰ The Wu Han incident is well-known (see World Outlook, Vol. 5, No. 29, August 25, 1967 issue). Less is known about the bloody incidents which occurred in Canton between July 12 and September 2, 1967, which led to negotiations between the representatives of contending Red Guard factions before Premier Chou En-lai in Peking. It is interesting to note that, according to the Canton San-szu Chan-pao (a Red Guard tabloid) of August 24, 1967, the differences which led to these clashes involved problems of revolutionary strategy in Hong Kong, questions of how to support the struggle of the Hong Kong workers, and problems of international revolutionary strategy. It is also interesting to see that in these clashes the Canton army leadership seems to have intervened against the most faithful Maoists.

ferentiations among the Red Guards (which have recently led the Maoists to forbid the circulation in Peking of Red Guard organs published in other cities), or the autonomous actions of the masses for their own economic and democratic goals (like the storming of jails in order to liberate prisoners), with the activities of the anti-Mao factions. But these factions continue to enjoy a certain amount of popular support in many places, which enables them to entrench themselves not only inside the apparatus but among part of the masses as well.

Mao had to admit this in his own way when he wrote that there exist no "objective reasons" which justify a division of the working class; this implies that such a division, however "unjustified" it may appear to Mao (who has forgotten all he wrote before on the rights of minorities and the inevitability of differences of opinion "inside the people"), is indeed a fact. And this fact weighs heavily on the development of the "cultural revolution," driving it towards a general slow-down and more and more devious and tortuous *detours*, which begin to look suspiciously like a precipitous retreat.

The great weakness of the "opposition" (which in the beginning undoubtedly enjoyed the support of the majority of the bureaucracy, and even today has very powerful positions inside the apparatus, notwithstanding the desperate attempts of the Maoists to "recuperate" a large part of it) is its inability to take the offensive. For two reasons: because it is afraid of a generalized mass action which would outflank it even more easily than it outflanked the Mao faction, and because it does not dare attack the Mao myth as such, which it has itself created and which it considers indispensable for the bureaucracy as a whole.

But its great strength resides in the power of inertia of the local and regional apparatus, in which it is deeply entrenched, and the inability of the Maoists to rebuild a central apparatus after they provoked its initial disintegration. Under these circumstances, it is true, the army has become the only structure in China which retains a high degree of national centralization. However, it would be exaggerated to draw from this the conclusion that China is reverting towards a military dictatorship. The contending party factions have reproduced their own sub-factions inside the army, and both Mao and Liu have been extremely cautious to avoid direct clashes between these contending army groups, which could lead not only to a danger of civil war but also to a decisive weakening of the country in face of the threat of military aggression by U. S. imperialism.³¹ The army itself, while intervening in several places in favor of the Mao faction, has been up until now unwilling to massively crush Mao's opponents, obviously for the same reasons.

This also explains why, notwithstanding many verbal threats, there has not been any wholesale repression of Mao's opponents, not to speak of bloody purges of the Stalinist type. In fact, everything seems

³¹ See Mao's instructions, according to Canton Wen-ko Tung-hsin ("Cultural Revolution Bulletin," a tabloid published October 9, 1967, by the 820 Agency of Red Headquarters of State Organs of Canton City, in collaboration with a Shanghai group): "There must be no chaos in our army. If there are problems within the Liberation Army, negotiations can be conducted within the scope of each individual province."

to have been forcing the Maoists to accept a certain de facto sharing of power (territorially and sometimes in the same province and city) with their opponents, be it only in the form of an uneasy truce and for a temporary period. The fear of autonomous mass actions operates to the same end, i.e. it recalls a certain common interest the contending factions of the bureaucracy have in defending their positions vis-a-vis the masses.

During the last months, the stepping up of the campaign of public denunciation of "China's Khrushchev" has also provided new material on the real differences between the Mao and the Liu-Teng factions. We must continue to be cautious before accepting literally all of the Maoists "denunciations" of Liu's past and present "crimes." The attempt to make Liu Shao-chi a scapegoat for the right-wing opportunist concessions which the whole CCP leadership (including Mao) was ready to make towards the "national bourgeoisie," both in the 1945-46 and in the 1949-51 period, is obvious. An attempt to make him a scapegoat of the right-wing opportunist mistakes made by the Mao leadership towards the Sukarno and Ne Win regimes in Indonesia and Burma in 1964-65 might be expected soon. Nevertheless, part of these denunciations and diatribes obviously concern the root of the differences, e.g. over the question of agricultural policies.

It now seems that at a plenum of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee in January 1962, Liu Shao-chi had got a clear majority, both for condemning the excesses of the "great leap forward," and for imposing a minimum of inner-bureaucratic democracy, by having that body accept the rule which the Maoists now call "sinister": "So long as they are not guilty of treason, it is not an offense for party members to speak their minds at party meetings." Already in September 1961, Liu Shao-chi had "imposed" the "Decision of the Central Committee on Training by Rotation the Cadres of the Whole Party," to promote—we quote from a Maoist organ—"so-called freedom of thought and freedom of discussion, and to give bourgeois [!] ideology the greenlight so that those who were dissatisfied with the Party might openly and outrageously attack the Party and socialism." The slanderous distortion consisting in adding the words "and socialism" to this sentence is obvious. Both quotations come from a Maoist publication, *Wen-hua Ko-ming Tung-hsun* (Cultural Revolution Bulletin), No. 11, May 1967, published by the "Revolutionary Rebels" of the Department of Philosophy of Peking University.

New material has been published by the Maoist press confirming the process of rapid differentiation among the peasantry referred to in our article. An HNA article published on August 29, 1967 quotes a report about Chengpei commune, in the Shanghai area, where land is said to have been de facto redistributed, with twelve "former [?] poor and lower middle peasant households" receiving a per capita surface less than half of that reverting per capita to six "well-to-do middle peasant households." A *Renmin Ribao* article of August 22, 1967 speaks about a district of Shansi province where out of 210 households of one village, 23 "of the former[!] poor and lower-middle peasant families were driven by poverty to sell the land and houses

they had received during the land reform" (the year this happened is not indicated). In both cases, the poor peasants are said to have been compelled to sell their labor power to the former [!] rich peasants.

In any case these facts prove the growing differentiation and social tensions in the countryside. They do not necessarily prove that Liu proposed a "right-wing" policy nor even that proposing such a policy would have been incorrect in itself. Let us not forget that Rakovsky and Trotsky vigorously pleaded in favor of a retreat from forced collectivization in 1932. We do not know whether Liu really proposed reestablishment of private farming after the disasters of the "great leap forward" 1959-61; we only know that he wanted to give greater initiatives and greater material incentives to households and work teams (by establishing production quotas per household). In itself, there is nothing wrong with this, provided the objective situation is such as to make such temporary concessions necessary.

What must make us doubly careful lest we be taken in by some of the Maoists' slanders is the fact that Liu and other leaders of anti-Mao forces inside the bureaucracy (like Tao Chu) are being accused of having proposed policies which were "leftist in appearance."³² When *Renmin Ribao* wants to "prove" that Liu's line is "revisionist" through and through, strike-breaking and tending to "restore capitalism," by stating that "he [Liu] dreamed of establishing workers' soviets that would place the trade-unions [?] above the party and the government" (HNA, London Bulletin of October 8, 1967, page 9), one can hardly follow the dizzy turn of this sort of reasoning.

Chinese society is in the throes of a deep upheaval. Mao's attempt at reforming the bureaucracy without having the masses question the whole of the bureaucratic regime has failed.³³ In the same way Liu's attempt to keep the interbureaucratic dispute under rigid control of inner-party rules devised by the bureaucracy has not in the least succeeded. Independent mass action and independent critical thought have surged among the rebellious youth as well as among the rebellious workers. The task of the revolutionary Marxists is to clearly show to the Chinese proletariat a way out of the political *impasse* and crisis, appearing as an alternative leadership to both contending factions by uniting revolutionary *Red Guards* with rebellious working masses on the platform of the political revolution, the platform of the establishment of proletarian democracy, of power wielded by soviets of workers, poor peasants, soldiers and students.

December 1, 1967.

³² See the Canton *Yenan Huo-chu*, of October 5, 1967.

³³ The Maoist leadership has started to openly accuse the Red Guards, especially those of Peking, of attacking differences of income, and explaining the "bourgeois" deviations of the "right-wingers" by high incomes (Kan Chin Chao, October 15, 1967, reporting a discussion between Chou En-lai and Peking Red Guard factions, which are denounced as "anarchists" and "ultra-lefts"). Obviously for the Maoists, "bourgeois restoration" and "rightism" have nothing to do either with income or with capital: Everything is a question of pure ideas, i.e. not admitting 100 per cent submission to "Mao's thought"! It must be noted that the consistent campaign led against material incentives is another important ideological difference between Maoism and "classic" Stalinism, even if the theory of material incentives is attributed to Liu and not to Stalin. Han Suiyin, in a book just published, *China in the Year 2000*, which is a thoroughgoing apology of Mao and the "cultural revolution," underlines this difference, and opposes Mao's struggle against his opponents by "mass mobilizations" to Stalin's struggle by mass purges, physical reprisals and complete bureaucratization of state and party apparatuses.

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