

# Communist program

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ORGAN OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST PARTY

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### WHAT DISTINGUISHES OUR PARTY

*is the political continuity which goes from Marx to Lenin, to the foundation of the Communist International and the Communist Party of Italy (Livorno, 1921); the struggle of the Communist Left against the degeneration of the International, the struggle against the theory of «socialism in one country» and the stalinist counter-revolution; the rejection of the Popular Fronts and the Resistance blocs; the difficult task of restoring the revolutionary doctrine and organization in close interrelationship with the working class, against personal and electoral politics.*



## communist program

Organ of the International Communist Party

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## The Class Struggle Is More Alive Than Ever!

After the second imperialist war the bourgeoisie thought that it had rid itself of the class struggle once and for all. Events seemed to justify this conclusion.

The revolutionary wave that surged in 1917 had been broken by social-democracy, then turned back by the bourgeois counter-offensive and fascism. The proletarian state ushered in by the October revolution in Russia had degenerated into a counter-revolutionary state. The world revolutionary organization born of this wave in reaction to the social-democratic betrayal had also degenerated, liquidating its political class positions before liquidating itself formally. Here through fascist violence, there through the mystification of «popular fronts» and democratic coalitions, the proletariat of all countries had been conscripted for the holy war in defense of the bourgeois fatherland and its values. Before, but particularly during and after the war, in the partisan movement and in the sacrifices of reconstruction, the parties that crawled out of the decaying body of the Communist International had proven an even more effective device than the old social-democratic parties for channeling all working class discontent toward purely *bourgeois* objectives.

The enormous economic boom that followed the war could only reinforce the submission of the workers and their integration into the bourgeois system. It enabled the bourgeoisie to give the workers a minimum of immediate material benefits to grant them a certain improvement in their living conditions. These crumbs from the table of capitalist super-profits, paid for in advance with tens of millions of dead, and in daily installments through the intense exploitation of hundreds of millions of human beings, were depicted by the bourgeoisie and its agents as the proletariat's reward for renouncing its revolutionary struggle and for its allegiance to bourgeois society.

In the capitalist countries and in the imperialist states particularly, material corruption and the political submission obtained by the pseudo-workers' parties have reinforced each other for an entire period. The workers have in fact been «bourgeoisified». Social differences appear as mere quantitative degrees of wealth and not as irreducible qualitative oppositions. Even when they do fight, the workers only do battle within the framework of bourgeois society, as a part of it and not as a class opposed to it.

The counter-revolution, Stalinism, the war and capitalist expansion have thus created throughout the capitalist world a situation analogous to the one described by Engels around 1890 in England, which was characterised by the absence of a genuine workers' movement. If we have combatted all bourgeois or pseudo-revolutionary attempts to present this situation as eternal and irre-



vocable, if we have shown that it was only a temporary phenomenon, we nonetheless recognized that it was *real*. We also combatted anyone who expected the revolution at any moment, because in fact we had reached the bottom of the abyss, the worst counter-revolutionary situation.

Still, gigantic struggles shook the world. From Asia to Latin America, the independence struggles of the colonies and semi-colonies set nearly two-thirds of mankind in motion. But these struggles were also confined within the framework of bourgeois society.

For these countries, Lenin's International had restored the Marxist perspective of «the revolution in permanence»: the local proletariat, numerically weak but firmly linked to the world proletariat, would organize itself independently of the momentarily revolutionary bourgeoisie, and against it, to assume the leadership of the national-democratic revolutionary struggles, carry them to the end and go beyond them toward its own international class objectives. But when the Russian state retreated to purely national and bourgeois tasks after the Stalinist counter-revolution, the Communist International went over to the preservation of bourgeois conditions and finally, the proletarian movement in the capitalist countries was liquidated, the conditions for this international strategy were destroyed and the proletariat of the colonies was delivered to its own bourgeoisies. And these bourgeoisies, which for years had preferred any compromise with their imperialist masters to the unleashing of a potentially uncontrollable mass struggle were able to engage in fairly radical revolutionary struggles catalyzed by the shake-up of the old European powers.

These struggles also seemed to support those who claimed that «the proletariat is no more». Not only had the proletarian class struggle disappeared from the stage of history, but the bourgeois national-democratic struggles even found a second wind, and their goals and values seemed to be destined to prevail forever.

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Today the bourgeoisie sings a sadder song. As we predicted, the return of crisis brought back the class struggle, though not mechanically. Though it has only manifested itself sporadically in the imperialist centres, the class struggle is already erupting with extraordinary violence in the countries that have just completed their bourgeois revolutions or where capitalist expansion has just begun.

The bourgeoisie claimed that the national independence or bourgeois revolutionary struggles would lead to an idyllic unity of the entire populace in the nation. We Marxists anticipated the birth of capitalism, and thus of its gravedigger, the proletariat, we knew this would lead to the development of the modern class struggle. Tens of millions of human beings have in fact been torn away from their old mode of existence and transformed into proletarians and the class struggle has indeed broken out. This is where the first large-scale class upheavals have taken place, and it should be obvious why.

Like Russia of another era, these countries form the weakest link of world capitalism, and they are hardest hit by the crisis. Their development, already hindered by the domination of the imperialist monsters over the world market, is further impaired by the shrinking of that market. The big imperia-

list powers have generally succeeded in «exporting the crisis», that is, in shifting the crushing weight of the crisis onto the shoulders of the youngest and weakest capitalist countries. With no economic reserves to speak of, these states are suddenly faced with a catastrophic situation: the crisis creates galloping inflation, unemployment aggravated by the halting of emigration and a terrible pressure on the living conditions of the proletariat and uprooted masses.

These young proletariats are the «wretched of the earth» in the absolute sense. The bourgeoisie has not been able to grant them any of the material benefits which may make their lot more bearable, but which also make the proletariat more hesitant to fight. Most important of all, it has not been able to impose that clever hierarchy of benefits and «guarantees» which elsewhere enables it to divide the workers and make it harder for them to fight. The bourgeois offensive places these proletariats in a frightful situation, sparing none of them. They have nothing to lose and are forced to fight for their very survival.

Nor has the bourgeoisie of these young countries been able to install that system of political shock absorbers which, in the old democracies, neutralizes the proletariat and deadens its fighting impulses. From the very beginning, the states which emerge today from wars for national independence tend to assume the most totalitarian, if not fascist, form possible. Here the single party system is the rule and more often than not this party is merged with the army and the state. Here even the trade unions, which in the western democracies more and more tend to be integrated into the bourgeois state apparatus, are directly and immediately offshoots of the bourgeois state. Apart from some obvious advantages, this forced political unification of the bourgeoisie has a few drawbacks: the upheavals and explosions of working class rage find no outlets or sluices within the system, and therefore must confront it directly.

However, even if material conditions allowed, the bourgeoisie of these countries would have a hard time convincing the masses of the beauty of democratic confrontations and legal, peaceful struggles. Just yesterday it had summoned them to armed struggle, insurrection or war against imperialism and the old ruling classes. For these masses, with fresh memories of the experience of a war for national liberation or a bourgeois democratic revolution, the necessity of armed revolutionary violence does not have to be proved, as it does to the proletariat of Europe or North America, which has been slumbering in pacifism, parliamentarism and legalism. For them, this is self-evident. They stood in the front ranks during the battle against imperialism and its allies, and they won't flinch at using violent means in the struggle for their own class objectives. They cannot be content with waging strikes, fighting for «economic» demands or occupying factories. They must take to the streets and do battle with a bourgeois state whose police control penetrates every pore of society.

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The picture presented by the modern world reveals the old and still relatively calm imperialist citadels surrounded by a broad «red belt» of recently developed or developing capitalist countries, where an increasingly numerous young proletariat is fighting on a broadening front. From Turkey to Brazil,



from South Africa to the Middle East, from Tunisia to Korea, the explosions echo back and forth. In these countries where the national-democratic tasks have been completed or are almost complete, the mass struggles tend to move spontaneously and directly onto the proletarian class terrain. Anyone who can expand his conceptual horizon beyond the narrow limits of Europe and the United States will see a global class struggle much more extensive than Marx and Engels saw a century ago.

This struggle reveals all the freshness and purity of a young proletariat that has not been either materially corrupted by the mirage of «consumer society» or politically corrupted by reformism and opportunism. It is a struggle to defend the immediate interests of the proletarian and semi-proletarian masses against those of the national economy and bourgeois order. It pits the proletariat directly against the bourgeois state in all of its manifestations. In short, it is the spontaneous struggle of a nascent proletariat, to a certain extent analogous to the struggle of the European proletariat in the last century, with the enormous potential as well as the weaknesses inherent in this youthfulness and spontaneity.

Even though these struggles, fought with exemplary energy and heroism, quite naturally align themselves with the revolutionary class struggle, they nonetheless lack the political orientation and organization they so badly need.

This is inevitable, because how could these proletarians have any knowledge of the historical program of the communist revolution, which alone is capable of arming and guiding their fight? Not only do they know nothing of the positions of communism, not only have they never had the possibility of learning Marxism, but they have been taught to associate these names with the most shameful class collaboration. They have only seen the hideous mask of Stalinism, which is rarely revolutionary — even then, only in the bourgeois nationalist sense — and most often social-chauvinist and social-imperialist. They may have seen a number of «leftist» forms of opportunism, which are either *indifferent* to their emancipation struggles or simply *tailist* toward their bourgeoisies. The effective destruction of any international class solidarity for decades allows the bourgeoisie to condemn it in the name of national solidarity, and to portray communism as an instrument of white imperialism.

The resulting political confusion further complicates the immense organizational problems this young proletariat will have to solve. None of the official, legal or tolerated organizations can be used to lead a real struggle. Even immediate organizations have yet to be formed — and this under the worst conditions of illegality and oppression. Here also we find a situation that is analogous to that faced by the European proletariat in the last century, but more difficult.

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In spite of the difficulties that confront them, proletarian struggles are erupting on the periphery of the capitalist world, where they grow, become stronger and converge on the old capitalist metropolises. They are vitally important.

These struggles foreshadow the situation which will tomorrow affect the

proletariat of the whole world, and struggles which tomorrow will set the whole world ablaze. To the «bourgeoisified» proletariat — which has already begun to lose its bourgeois prejudices under the scourge of the capitalist offensive — they hold up a tableau of the inevitable struggles that await it, demonstrating how these proletarians too will be forced to fight.

But the young proletariat of the «developing» countries is not satisfied with just showing its older brothers the road they will again have to embark upon: it helps to drive them onto that road. Following in the wake of the anti-imperialist struggles, these struggles disrupt the world bourgeois order much more profoundly. Beyond this, they rouse the proletariat of the imperialist bastions from the torpor in which they have been vegetating for decades.

This young proletariat is now in the forefront of the working class world struggle, both as a result of battles it has fought in its native countries and by virtue of the combativeness, determination and lack of reformist illusions it has contributed through emigration. It is no coincidence that the immigrant workers are in the vanguard of the class struggle in all the capitalist countries.

This young proletariat is thus making an immense contribution to the revival of the international class struggle. But at the same time this contribution is a summons to the struggle which everywhere — from the Ruhr to Chicago, from Liverpool to Moscow, from Turin to Warsaw, from San Francisco to Paris — must echo their struggle. And it is also a call for political help which only the traditions and historical experience of the communist movement can provide, an appeal to the revolutionary program and principles of communism. It places on the order of the day the rebirth of the world party of the revolution as the nerve centre for the international movement, a beacon of orientation and organization for struggles which will sweep the face of the earth like a hurricane in the not too distant future.

It is incumbent on us to do what falls within the scope of our action to ensure that this appeal is answered.



## **Solidarity With the Imprisoned Militants of Blida!**

After confessions extracted under torture and a sham-trial, five militants and contacts of our organization have just been convicted by the military court at Blida to sentences of three to ten years in prison. They are Mohamed Benssada, Rabah Benkhallat, Abdelmalek Kendour, Ali Akkache and Mohamed Naaman. We salute these young revolutionaries who, in spite of two years of secret detention by the Algerian military police, did not hesitate to courageously maintain their beliefs before those who were about to condemn them.

This trial is a new episode in the repression which strikes the Algerian working class and impoverished masses daily, while the new ruling class, which resulted from independence, cynically fattens itself by accumulating more and more wealth. Their relentlessness against the Blida militants shows the extent to which the Algerian bourgeoisie fears the spread — particularly within the army, the principal instrument for the defense of its domination and its privileges against the anger of the masses — of revolutionary Marxism, which unmasks all its lies about so-called Algerian «socialism» and shows the oppressed the road of their emancipation. But neither repression, nor bourgeois lies will prevent the distance between classes from growing wider each day, in Algeria and elsewhere, nor will it prevent the working class from seizing the weapon of Marxism to organize the battle against capitalism at the head of the impoverished masses.

We call all revolutionaries, all militants in the cause of proletarian emancipation, to struggle with us for the freedom of the militants of Blida and for their release from the hands of the military police.

As for the Algerian bourgeoisie, their cops and their torturers, we ask from them neither «measures of liberalization» nor clemency. We have only one thing to say to them: the day when the working class begins the settling of accounts, the punishment that they will undergo at the hands of the masses will be equal to the suffering that they have inflicted upon them.

International Communist Party

January 1, 1981.

## **The Blida Trial**

The young soldiers and civilians charged with «plotting against the security of the state» and accused of having formed a cell of our organization were tried and sentenced in one day, December 27, 1980, by the Blida Military Court. Apart from the Algerian lawyers chosen by the accused and the soldiers lining the room, the only audience at the hearing were two French lawyers who succeeded in being admitted *in extremis*. But to ensure that they would be unable to follow the trial, the chief magistrate decreed, contrary to the usual procedure before this court, that the proceedings would take place in Arabic, and moreover, forbade them to intercede. Thus, it was in a veritable closed court that the «legal» organs of repression accomplished their task.

This closed court was very necessary in order to try to mask the total absence of proof of the alleged «plot against the security of the state» attributed to our comrades and contacts, whose only real «crime» is to have read and diffused our press.

### **The Courageous Declaration of Our Comrade Benkhallat**

This closed court also had to hide the fact that all the confessions of the accused had been extracted from them under torture after their arrest by the Algerian military police. In order to try to avoid this being mentioned, the chief magistrate declared at the beginning of the trial that only confessions made before the investigating magistrate (that is, *after* they had passed through the hands of the military police «specialists») would be taken into consideration. Uniformed executioners sometimes have these legal scruples!... This did not prevent our comrade Rabah Benkhallat from courageously denouncing the tortures that he had undergone, despite the presence of members of the military police who must have made him pay for his boldness after the hearing. Our comrade pronounced a genuine indictment against false Algerian «socialism» by denouncing the exploitation and misery which strikes the working masses of Algeria while the bourgeoisie cynically accumulates wealth.



## Sentences Dictated by the Fear of Communism

The sentences pronounced against the accused were heavy, in proportion to the dread that the spectre of communism inspires in capitalists and their hirelings.

Mohamed Benssada was sentenced in absentia to 10 years in prison,  
Rabah Benkhallat was sentenced to 6 years in prison,  
Abdelmalek Kendour was sentenced to 6 years in prison,  
Sid Ali Akkache was sentenced to 5 years in prison,  
Mohamed Naaman was sentenced to 3 years in prison.

The information that we have gathered above is practically all that has been able to filter through concerning the trial.

We know that after the verdict, the Blida militants remain in the hands of the military police and that they risk deportation to a prison in the south just like at the time of French colonialism.

We call all revolutionaries and all militants in the cause of proletarian emancipation to struggle with us to prevent this deportation to the south, to obtain the transfer of the condemned to a civilian prison with political status and to obtain their complete freedom.

## The Blida Verdict Will Not Stop the Spread of Revolutionary Marxism

Several weeks ago, following the freeing of Ben Bella, the Algerian bourgeoisie, through its highest representatives, claimed that there were no longer any political prisoners in Algeria. And the militants found guilty of an « attack against the security of the state » and « conspiracy », are they not political prisoners?

It is a good thing that the workers are too used to the deceitful declarations of bourgeois politicians to be fooled into believing this.

The bourgeois repression which is raging in Algeria is too obvious to the exploited masses who are daily bearing the costs of it, for the liberation of Ben Bella to make them forget it.

The burden of the social and political repression weighing on the masses is too heavy for the so-called « springtime » inaugurated by Chadli to deceive them as easily as the agents of bourgeois propaganda imagine.

The bourgeois lie, that there are no political prisoners in Algeria, is perfectly in line with a whole series of lies: Algerian society is not a class society and does not experience class struggle; the Algerian state is not a bourgeois state, but rather, a state of the whole « people »; the A.N.P. is not an army

like all bourgeois armies, but a « popular » army in the service of the masses, etc.

But the bourgeoisie is lying in vain. The brutal reality in which the working masses are living is there to witness the fact that, without mentioning all the defects of the economic and social backwardness, Algerian society, like all bourgeois societies, is being torn apart by a growing antagonism between exploiters and exploited. The exploiters, the bourgeoisie only get richer and consolidate their social base and their political power, while the exploited, the workers and poor peasants, who are buried in growing insecurity, suffer a continuing deterioration of their already tragic situation.

How can such a society be free from class struggle? When the bourgeoisie recognizes in the official documents of the Minister of Labour, that for the year 1977 alone there were 332 strikes in Algeria, 129 in the so-called « socialist » sector, is it not acknowledging implicitly that it must face up to a more and more open class struggle?

« *Strikes which are caused by the very nature of capitalist society* » wrote Lenin in 1899, « *mark the beginning of the struggle waged by the working class against this organization of society* ».

And how can a society torn apart by class struggle and characterized by the domination of the bourgeoisie over the proletariat and the poor masses be protected from social violence? Class struggle is inseparable from social violence. This can be, depending on the situation, open or hidden, potential or in force, strong or less strong, but it cannot disappear while classes, class antagonisms and class exploitation exist.

This is why bourgeois violence is inseparable from bourgeois domination. This violence is assumed by machinery specially conceived for this purpose: army, police, military police, courts, prisons, not to mention para-legal bands like the « Muslim Brotherhood ».

But the class struggle does not only manifest itself through workers' strikes and struggle of an economic character. The working class, born at the time of the Industrial Revolution, has its own history. It is a history which dates back more than a century and which is made up of struggles, of sacrifices, of rare and glorious victories, but especially of numerous defeats, whose evaluation and lessons are indispensable for tomorrow's combat and tomorrow's victory. It was in connection with the first historical struggles of the proletariat that Marxism, the ideological and political weapon of the workers' movement, took shape in order to give the programmatic, strategic and tactical conclusions which will have to serve the class and the militants who will have to decapitate the monster of capitalism.

Since Marxism emerged in its entirety in the conflict of the struggles and revolutions of 1848, and even in the periods of reflux of the workers' movement, one of the manifestations of the class struggle has consisted of brandishing the flag of communism, defending revolutionary Marxism against the attacks of the bourgeoisie and revisionist doubt, spreading the ideas of scientific socialism among the vanguard workers and combative youth, and organizing around the historical heritage of the working class and the positions of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, all those who are convinced of the correctness of revolutionary communism and the inevitability of its historical triumph over the entire planet.

The bourgeoisie knows perfectly well that the ideological and political struggle, even when its actors are still too weak to articulate it with a constant



participation in the economic struggle and organization of the working class, is a manifestation of the struggle which it seeks to hinder when it is incapable of making it disappear.

The bourgeoisie would like to lead the class struggle itself, i.e. without reactions on the part of the workers and the exploited masses.

Its economic struggle? Exploiting the working class in order to extort from it the greatest possible quantity of surplus value while repressing every workers' struggle aimed at diminishing labour time and increasing salaries.

Its political struggle? Reinforcing the bourgeois state and its repressive machinery as well as the party and the «mass» organizations which are entirely in its service, forbidding all rights of expression, of meeting, of organization and of demonstration to proletarians and the exploited.

Its ideological struggle? Spreading among the masses the spirit of submission, nationalism, chauvinism and religious obscurantism, in order to delay the awakening of their class consciousness and their revolutionary consciousness.

In order to control the class struggle as effectively as possible, the bourgeoisie utilizes its repressive machinery and a whole arsenal of laws. On the economic terrain, not satisfied with having at its disposal the bureaucratic apparatus of the UGTA whose function is to prevent the workers from fighting, and the institutions of class collaboration of the «socialist» management of enterprises (GSE), the Algerian bourgeoisie has flatly forbidden strikes in the public sector.

The penal code in force, purely and simply classes strikes as an offence, with penalties ranging from 2 months to 5 years, for leading or supporting a work stoppage.

On the political and ideological plane, the bourgeois state prohibits all freedom of movement and autonomous organization to the masses. The famous freedoms of expression, meeting and association which accompany «socialist democracy» can only be exercised within the framework of bourgeois law and the institutions set up to defend and protect the privileges of the capitalists.

The system of political domination of the Algerian bourgeoisie gives the FLN party alone the right to have a public activity. The neo-Stalinists of the PAGS, tolerated by the bourgeoisie for the services as lackeys that they render it, are content for the moment with a semi-public activity. Thus if we exclude the Stalinists, the «Muslim Brotherhood» and the «Baathists», who are all integrated in one fashion or another into the bourgeoisie's game, when not into the state apparatus itself, we can say that anyone who moves is quickly repressed by the bourgeois state.

Taken in this general context, the arrest and conviction of our comrades is thus only one instance in the class struggle, even if it is true that today, for objective reasons, it is the bourgeoisie which finds itself on the offensive. More precisely, the imprisonment, the tortures that the Military Police have made our comrades suffer, and their conviction by a Military Court sitting in great haste, is one episode of the systematic violence delivered by the bourgeoisie and its repressive machinery against all those who refuse to submit to the established order.

But the fact that bourgeois justice did not find material proof to support the charge of «plotting» against the security of the state, clearly shows that the bourgeoisie's objective is the systematic hunting down of the ideas of

revolutionary Marxism. The Blida verdict is an *a contrario* proof of the international validity of Marxism. More than a century ago, Marx and Engels stated in the *Communist Manifesto* that communism had become the spectre which was haunting all the ruling classes and their representatives.

In 1848, Marx and Engels were speaking especially about Europe. Today, it is only too easy to see that communism is the spectre which haunts the bourgeoisie and the possessing classes of the whole world. Yes, Marxism is a «plant for any climate», as our party has always maintained. The Blida verdict has just given an additional confirmation of this thesis.

If not, what is the Algerian bourgeoisie afraid of? Even a bourgeois daily, whose complaisance vis-à-vis the Algerian bourgeoisie is no secret to anyone, recognizes, while speaking of our comrades: «*It is difficult to think that the accused could seriously have threatened the security of the state*» (*Le Monde*, December 30, 1980).

If the Algerian masses are profoundly Muslim and hostile to communism, as the ideologues of the bourgeoisie take pleasure in saying, why does the bourgeoisie resort to the arrest and conviction of those who risk isolating themselves completely from the masses due to the simple fact that they approach communism?

If the Algerian workers really put «the national interest» above everything and reject the class struggle because they find it contrary to the sentiments of Muslim brotherhood, why does the bourgeoisie feel the need to try quickly and in the most complete silence, persons that it accuses of being in contact with a party which does not hide — rather, to the contrary — that its *raison d'être* is to sharpen the class struggle, to develop it and lead it to its culmination — *armed insurrection and the seizure of power in order to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat*?

Of course, the Blida verdict is a blow directed against our party. But it is a verdict which must also be put forward by all militants for the workers' cause, in order to help open the eyes of their class brothers, who are submitted to the daily ideological bludgeoning of the bourgeoisie. This bourgeoisie has made their own all the weapons of psychological warfare inherited from the services of the SAS in the colonial period.

The bourgeoisie has a surprise waiting for them. The comfort in which they exercise their domination today is not as eternal as they imagine. All the possessing classes and their states have tried in the past to resist new ideas which proclaimed their downfall and the necessity of fighting them with violence and repression. But, in the long run, violence which does not go in the direction of history is doomed to failure.

The Algerian bourgeoisie is hounding Marxists in vain; it will not prevent revolutionary communism from spreading and winning the hearts and the spirit of all sincere and honest militants who want to fight in order to put an end to this world of misery and lies.

Trade-union repression will not prevent strikes from spreading and developing, nor will it prevent the workers from coordinating their efforts of economic struggle and organization.

In the same way, ideological and political repression will not prevent the irresistible spread of revolutionary Marxism, the establishment and strengthening of the revolutionary class party which alone is able to give to the working class the unity of goal, will and action that it needs to destroy the bourgeois state, to install its class dictatorship and, in conjunction with the prole-



tariat of all countries, to transform society in the direction of communism.

## Defense Fund for the Imprisoned Militants of Blida

We call all militants, sympathisers, readers to show their active solidarity with our comrades and contacts who are victims of bourgeois repression in Algeria, by contributing to the fund set up to finance their defense and the campaign for their liberation. Send your contributions in cash or by international money order payable to SARO with the reference, «Solidarité Algérie». Address your contributions to Editions Programme, 20, rue Jean-Bouton, 75012 Paris, France.

## Poland Confirms: the Need for Organization the Need for the Party

At the time of the genuine insurrections that shook Poland in 1970, we emphasized the progress which had been made by the social movement since 1956. At that time, in Poland as well as in Hungary, «*the proletariat acted alongside all the other classes in the large popular rebellion against foreign oppression, i.e. that of the pseudo-socialist USSR, but had not yet broken away from them at all. (...) The movement of 1970 presents a completely different appearance (...) we no longer have a popular movement in which all layers of society are still naively and fraternally united against a common enemy which, moreover, is not even the national state, but a genuine insurrectional strike, waged exclusively by workers, independent of all anti-Russian nationalism, free from any collaboration with other social strata or classes, for the good reason that its demands are purely proletarian. This time, not only have the peasants not moved, the students have refused to follow*»<sup>1</sup>. In fact, alongside the purely economic demands whose acuity had started the strike, the workers were asking for «*the lowering of functionaries salaries to the level of the workers' average salary (...) the punishment of everyone who had taken part in the repression, the condemnation of the harmful and deceitful campaigns directed against them, the liberation of prisoners, etc. What is more, the strike committees demanded above all the freedom to strike, the creation of free trade-unions, i.e. independent of the pseudo-socialist state.*»<sup>2</sup>. It is clear that they had widely gone beyond the interclassist and popular demands of «freedom» and «democracy», for if *freedom to strike* and *freedom of association* seem to belong to «democratic rights», in reality these demands represent the requirements of the proletarian struggle *against* the bourgeois state, even if it is democratic.

The problem of organization was one of the weaknesses of the movement in 1970. Certainly, in the course of the struggle, the workers sought to organize themselves, since they could fight *only by being organized*. But, as a matter of fact, the struggle had broken out in an *unorganized* way and if, here or there, the workers spontaneously assaulted the party centres and even made attacks on barracks, these actions were too disorderly, isolated and uncoordinated. They were able to be easily crushed by a repression which left 300 dead officially, and without doubt, more than 1 000 in reality. Even as far as the strikes were concerned, no workers' organization existed on a national scale, which would have been able to join, extend and coordinate the strikes throughout all regions of the country. It was the struggle itself which made the *need for organization* so very apparent to the workers, and efforts to implement



one followed the most violent explosions. The strike committees which came into being then obviously represented an enormous gain, but they lacked a stable foundation, a connecting network between businesses, categories and regions; in short, it was impossible for them to acquire, in the height of struggle and repression, the capacity to unify and lead the movement on a large scale.

If the strikes in the summer of 1980 in their turn took on a very different appearance from those of 1970, this did not result from the content of the demands, which were in substance identical, but from the fact that in the intervening period, the vanguard elements accomplished an enormous clandestine work of *previous organization* as Marx said. It was this effort of *previous organization* which allowed the movement to very quickly endow itself with a centralized leadership effectively *linked* to the different factories and regions. This allowed it to smash the state's attempts to divide and isolate it factory by factory and city by city; this allowed it to extend the strike to the main centres; to coordinate actions and demands; to erect before the government a compact front and an interlocutor representing the movement. This allowed it, then, to go beyond the stage of immediate but desperate and dead-end insurrection, to become a struggle which, without directly threatening bourgeois political power, nevertheless opposed to it a *class front* capable of making it draw back.

The various currents of political opposition played an important role in this organizational effort, accomplished, it seems, primarily after 1974, by the advanced workers who had drawn the lessons of 1970. It could not have been otherwise. The combative and vanguard proletarian who tries to go beyond the immediate situation and struggles and tries to draw from the questions that they pose a larger and more general vision of the class struggle and its requirements, is inevitably «*politicized*». He cannot but look for answers to the problems that he must face in the programmes, platforms, methods of struggle and organization put forward by the political parties. It is normal for him to believe that he has found them in the instructions given by this or that current or party, and to follow them as long as the very experience of the struggle and its requirements has not shown him that they are *false answers*.

Moreover, this would be too easy if the non-communist parties and currents only gave *completely false answers*. In reality, they win an influence precisely because their responses correspond *at least in part* to the real *immediate* needs of the workers. Thus, in Poland, political movements like the Catholic church, KOR, and more generally, the «*democratic opposition*», have actually worked to found and build these «*trade-union*» organizations, independent of the official state trade-unions, which the workers needed in order to wage broad struggles. Obviously they did it according to *their own* perspective and *their own* political line, but they did do it. They not only demanded this organization, they tried hard to build it, they made the workers that they influenced act in this direction, and without doubt, they gave the support of their own organizational structures, especially that of the church, the pre-existing centralized and hierarchical apparatus, which is in appearance opposed to the bourgeois state. But, while providing *this correct response* to the immediate problems of the workers' struggle, they also provided *their false political response*.

Naturally, one or the other of these aspects came to the forefront, depen-

ding on the events of the struggle. This is seen very clearly by following the unfolding of these events, from the beginning of the strike until today, and their meaning, which has been recorded progressively by our press. From the beginning of the strikes, the leadership which had forged itself and imposed itself throughout the long work of preparation effectively appeared as the *leadership* of a formidable movement of working class struggle, of a movement which was upsetting not only the Polish state, but the whole equilibrium of classes and states in central Europe; of a movement which, *in fact*, if not in consciousness, placed itself resolutely on the class terrain against all bourgeois interests. After a confused period where this leadership started to slow down the movement, where the Walesas often risked being «*overwhelmed by their base*» to the great terror of all the bourgeois observers, where they often had difficulty in imposing their compromises on the most dynamic elements like those of the Gdansk committee and in stopping the «*wild-cat strikes*», they appear today, more and more openly, like real *social firemen, the only ones* capable of making the workers accept the sacrifices required for the «*salvation of the national economy*».

It is obvious that this action by the agents of collaboration with the bourgeois state *is all the more effective* the better they have accomplished the other task, that of organizing the workers outside of direct state control and of leading their struggle against it. Some draw from this the conclusion that *any* previous stable and broad organization of workers is *by nature* an instrument of class collaboration; thus, that it has to be combatted and, logically, that its constitution must be opposed. This is an infantile conclusion. In reality, this fact, inevitable to a certain extent, only demonstrates that if the proletariat *needs an organization in order to fight, the organization needs a party* in order to escape the influence and control of political forces which tend to make it collaborate with the bourgeoisie. Not any party, obviously: the genuine communist party.

The need to *organize itself* is one of the fundamental and permanent needs of the class, and it appears with clarity as soon as the class moves or wants to move. Reciprocally, *the growing organization* of the class on its own positions is in reality the most important and the most lasting gain of its immediate and partial struggles, and the struggle is itself a powerful organizational factor, although not always immediately. All the political forces present their organizational methods to the proletarians, all claim to contribute to satisfying this essential need, all effectively do, *in part* and *in their own way*, and all of them, in this manner, make their influence penetrate into the immediate organization. This is possible, because the *immediate* and *partial* struggle and the organization that it requires *are not enough* in general to decide definitively between the programmes and methods of the various parties. In other words, this shows that the organization born from or for the immediate struggle is not sufficient to lead the general struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat, that an organization based on a larger and more general historical experience and vision is needed for this. It shows once again the necessity of the party.

But it also points out that the party cannot abandon the immediate terrain, the immediate struggles and the immediate organization to the political forces of reaction, of conservatism, of reformism or of pseudo-revolution, which *all* provide *their own* answers to the needs of the workers. Answers which can correspond *in part* to the immediate needs and can draw from this



fact a terrible effectiveness. On one hand, it shows that the party cannot remain outside of one of these organizations or desert it for the simple reason that it was built by the efforts of other political currents which influence its orientation or control it, but that it is precisely the terrain where it must combat them. On the other hand, it points out that it cannot *wait* while the workers organize «themselves», which would amount to waiting while *other* forces organize them, but must *contribute* to the greatest possible extent to the organization of the proletariat at all levels.

The party represents the most general consciousness of the class and its highest organization, the only one capable of unifying and integrating all the struggles beyond the limits of space and time. It is the unifier and organizer of the proletariat as a *revolutionary class* on an *international* and *historical scale*. But its doctrine, its programme, its principles and its experience do not only map out the great path of the struggles of the proletariat's emancipation, they *integrate* into it the daily and partial struggles and also give the *most complete* answers to the problems that they pose. It is the party which can give the *entirely correct* answers to the problems of the workers' struggle, and it is *on this terrain*, tested by facts and experience, that it must make them prevail against the *partially correct but tendentially false* answers given by all the other political forces.

It is on the terrain of immediate struggles and immediate organization that the party can and must assert itself *in practise* as the leadership of the class, impose *its* solutions, *its* orientation, *its* poles of organization, and there by give to the proletariat's struggles and organization the greatest effectiveness and the greatest scope.

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\* \*

This perspective, which must not be understood on the scale of one country or one continent, but on the scale of the entire planet, might seem like idle fancy if one looks at the situation today after fifty years of counter-revolution, and the scarcity of forces which align themselves along the front of revolutionary communism. It would be, in fact, if it only counted on the sole will and sole force of the party. But forces much greater than ours are working in this direction.

The mounting crisis of capitalist society and the violent explosion of social antagonisms impel the working class on an international scale to struggle. Through these struggles and the corresponding organizational efforts, the workers *experience* the responses provided by all the forces which today occupy the political scene. It is the very requirements of the struggle which oblige and will increasingly oblige the vanguard elements to submit these responses to the tests of facts, to go beyond them and to search for the *true* answers. *And they must be able to find them!*

Thus the party cannot be content with waging its theoretical fight and its general political struggle. It must intervene on the terrain of immediate struggles, bring the answers of revolutionary communism to them, and appear

there as a *pole* of orientation and organization. Even if this intervention cannot today give spectacular results in the short term, it is *the* condition for future successes.

1. See «Le premier éveil du prolétariat polonais et ses causes» pp. 47-48, in *Programme Communiste* no. 51-52, April-September 1971.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 50.

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## The Volcano of the Middle East

### The Agonizing Transformation of the Palestinian Peasants into Proletarians

The creation and evolution of the Israeli state are depicted by the bourgeoisie as one of those idyllic epics for which it has a strong predilection. Haven't the insufficiently praised virtues of this tiny people, its toil, its courage and perseverance, made the deserts bloom? In reality this fairy tale, spread with an aura of self-righteousness, conceals the drama of the expropriation of the rural populace. To be sure, all the zones of this planet which have been opened one after another to the penetration of capital have witnessed this drama. But in Palestine it attained a degree of cynicism and barbarity heretofore unequalled. Everywhere the capitalists attempted to deny the fact of this expropriation outright in order to preserve the philanthropic (!) purity of their deeds. In Palestine they even went so far as to deny the existence of the expropriated population, « *a land without people for a people without a land* »! Isn't it easier this way? « *In actual history* », wrote Marx, « *it is notorious that conquest, enslavement, robbery, murder, briefly force, play the great part.* » For the bourgeoisie, « *Right and «labour» were from all time the sole means of enrichment, the present year of course always excepted. As a matter of fact, the methods of primitive accumulation are anything but idyllic.* »<sup>1</sup>

The «paradise» in the Negev desert, the flourishing cultivation of citrus fruits and avocados on the coastal plain as well as the industrial boom (even on the scale of a very small country) presuppose the complete despoliation of the Palestinian peasants. The history of their expropriation is similar to that of the English peasants, which Marx said, « *is written in the annals of mankind in letters of blood and fire.* »<sup>2</sup>

#### From the Ottoman Code to the Great Revolt of 1933 - 1936

The calvary of primitive accumulation or rather its Palestinian reenactment, which is only the most striking act of a drama which has affected the entire region, dates back to the middle of the last century. It began in the year



1858 when the Ottoman Empire, to which Palestine and the other countries of the Near East belonged, promulgated its law on landed property. The only way this archaic and antiquated empire could compete with the modern powers of Europe, albeit briefly, was by accentuating its pressure on the peasant masses. The object of this law was to replace traditional collective or tribal ownership with individual land ownership. Rather than being paid collectively, taxes were henceforth to be levied on individuals. In the case of defaulted payment the individual would be held responsible, thereby weakening any resistance to the increased tax burden imposed by the state.

The peasants who shared the fruits and the use of the land according to the rules of village or tribal organization, reacted in various ways to the new law. Some simply refused to conform to the law and never had their lands registered. At the time of the creation of the Israeli state in 1948, they were expelled from their lands on the pretext that they had no proof of ownership. Others included in their declaration to the state only that third which was cultivated annually, omitting the two-thirds that lay fallow. Still others registered an area less than the cultivated part, knowing well that the Ottoman state was not able to exercise effective control over everyone. Finally numerous villages registered their whole territory in the name of the village chiefs since they paid less tax or were exempt from taxation. The latter took advantage of the customs of the empire, whose immense size compelled the central power to buy off the village chiefs in order to dissuade them from assuming the leadership of peasant revolts.

Consequently the enforcement of the Ottoman Code led to a strengthening of the role of the village chiefs. Originally they became landowners «to render a service» to the peasants, but the day would surely come when their heirs would try to profit from this distinction that nobody had wanted. For its part, the state decided to apply that rule of the code by virtue of which lands without owners (in fact the fallow lands or any that had not been declared) should be considered property of the empire (called *miri*) and on the strength of this legal title began to sell land from vast estates to Lebanese, Syrian, Egyptian and Iranian merchants. These attempted to take over effective possession of the lands, with varied success depending on the degree of resistance by the peasants. Those who were not successful retained their titles to the land which they sold to Zionist organizations a few years later at quite handsome prices.

This process resulted in a growing concentration of landed property although the economic structures had not yet undergone any profound transformation, the peasants generally retaining actual possession of the land even if they had now no more than partial legal ownership. Such was the general situation on the eve of World War I. By the time it was over the Ottoman Empire had to give way to Great Britain. England's interest in Palestine was twofold: to control the strategic region around the Suez Canal and to prevent the emergence of a large anti-imperialist national movement by creating a puppet-state to divide the zone where sentiment for national unity was awakening. British imperialism's policy converged with the interests of Zionist capital to culminate in a common plan for the creation of that state, as both a local policeman and a colonial enterprise.

Zionist capital had already attempted to set up colonies in Palestine before the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Yet it was only able to implement its plan on a large scale under the British mandate, in particular with assis-

tance from the Rothschild Foundation<sup>3</sup>, this time thoroughly transforming the relations of production. The purchase of land by the Jewish Colonization Association, which was founded for that purpose, could naturally mean nothing other than the eviction of the Palestinian share-croppers and farmers. In reality even though the deeds to this land were held by the large absentee landlords who willingly sold most of it in the first few years after the war (see Table 1), the land which carried these deeds remained the indispensable source of the Palestinian peasants' livelihood.

**Table 1. Origin of Jewish Property Rights According to the Type of Seller (1920 - 1936)**

| Date of purchase | % of lands bought from absentee landlords | % of lands ceded by large resident landlords | % of lands ceded by fellahin |
|------------------|---|--|------------------------------|
| 1920 - 1922      | 75.4                                      | 20.8   | 3.8                          |
| 1923 - 1927      | 86.0                                      | 12.4   | 1.6                          |
| 1928 - 1932      | 45.5                                      | 36.2   | 18.3                         |
| 1933 - 1936      | 14.9                                      | 62.7   | 22.5                         |

Source: A. Granott, *The Land System in Palestine*, London, 1952.

The dispossessed *fellah* had to become an agricultural labourer on his own land. The fierce exploitation of local manpower by Zionist capital at the beginning of the century was further exacerbated by the principle of «Jewish Labour» designed to preserve the colonial settlement project. This principle entitled the immigrants to expel the *fellahin* from their jobs while the Zionist fund financed the difference in wages in order to facilitate the employment of European labour power. This situation could not continue long without violent confrontations because the expelled peasants were left only with the certainty of a slow death while they watched the colonists occupy their land. For this reason there have been nearly permanent social revolts from 1921, 1925, 1929, 1933, 1936 to the present.

In 1921, three years after the British arrival, the situation had become so acute that a serious uprising spread throughout the country. The areas most affected were Safad in the north, and Hebron and Jerusalem in the centre. The peasants' wrath was directed essentially against the Zionists, whose settlements were hard hit. The English army assumed the task of restoring «law and order»; it has always shown enthusiasm for this kind of mission. With honourable intent to be sure, it suppressed the irresponsible «minority» by means of summary executions, hangings, etc. The uprisings reached their climax in the 1936 revolts, which lasted three years and were accompanied by a magnificent six month general strike in the towns. The motive force of this uprising was no longer the peasantry or the bourgeoisie, but for the first time an agricultural proletariat deprived of means of labour and subsistence, along with an embryo of a working class concentrated essentially in the ports and in the oil refinery at Haifa. It should be noted that this movement was initiated in the towns and subsequently spread to the countryside where a guerrilla force took shape, attacking Palestinian landowners as well as the English and Zionist colonists. In fact numerous landlords were attacked by the Palestinian revolutionaries because they had sold their land to the Zionists. For the dis-

possessed peasants it was clear that the land speculators were getting rich on their impoverishment.

Because of the Stalinist counter-revolution and the absence of a revolutionary proletarian movement in Europe capable of giving assistance, the Palestinian revolt was left to face the war machine of British imperialism alone. Nonetheless the British were compelled to supplement the terror of their weaponry with promises of independence and other similar manoeuvres in order to put an end to the revolt. Even the Arab feudal chiefs and the petty kings of the region in their pay had to be called on to help. These made a «fraternal» appeal to the Palestinians to silence their guns and to trust the good intentions of His Majesty's government. And in order to help them understand this appeal better, the borders of the Transjordan (where Prince Abdallah, the grandfather of the present-day butcher of Amman reigned; he was murdered by a Palestinian in 1952) were closed to any insurgents who tried to take refuge or procure arms and provisions there, as well as to any volunteers who tried to join the revolt from the Transjordan.

The laws on collective responsibility in the Arab villages and districts, those terrorist delicacies which semi-barbarian Oriental despotism bequeathed to the civilization of western capitalism, date from this period. Under these laws the village inhabitants are forced to provide accommodation for police detachments on punitive missions and the whole population is held responsible for operations carried out by anyone in the region. Thus the population is subject to martial law and enjoys the right to see houses where «rebels» have taken refuge destroyed and to undergo imprisonment as a deterrent. Thus, following an operation that cut telephone lines in Galilee, three villages were occupied by the British army. All the men were lined up. As they were counted, those who had the misfortune of being number 10, 20, 30, etc. were shot in front of the whole village.

With these methods, Christian and democratic England intended to put down the revolt of the landless, breadless and jobless peasants. A population which did not exceed 800,000 was placed under the control of 30,000 soldiers! All the strike leaders were imprisoned. The feudal and religious leaders who assumed the leadership of the movement gave the colonists decisive help: in liaison with Prince Abdallah of such sinister memory they continued to stab the struggle in the back, participating with the English in the quest for a «solution» to the situation. The British launched a major offensive during which the insurgent villages were bombarded (an example followed by the Israelis today) leaving a total of 5,000 Palestinians dead and 2,500 imprisoned<sup>4</sup>.

The heroic spirit of the Palestinian workers and peasants in those years was broken. The terrible isolation to which the international situation condemned their revolt prevented any broadening of its horizon that would have enabled it to converge with the struggle of all the exploited masses of the region against the colonial yoke and the old order. It was also paralyzed by the weight of the social backwardness in which the country vegetated and which translated into the half-feudal half-religious leadership of the movement.

The working class was unable to play a more important role because the party that claimed to represent it, the Palestinian Communist Party, was guided by a completely false orientation, which was further aggravated by an International that had nothing communist about it except the name. Far from being able to make its opposition to the reactionary religious leadership clear, the PCP, whose militants included a majority of anti-Zionist Jewish workers

as well as a minority of Arab workers, was compelled by the Stalinized International to support the mufti of Palestine, Hadj Amin Husseini, a sort of Khomeini before the fact, if not worse. This disoriented the proletariat completely and fostered the development of nationalist tendencies on both sides. The Arab workers, finding that their party supported the most reactionary wing of the movement, left it to join less moderate nationalist organizations. For their part, the Jewish workers could not support such a position without finding themselves totally disarmed in the face of the deceitful «anti-feudal» propaganda of Zionism. Here as elsewhere, the Stalinist counter-revolution completely destroyed the class party, with greater ease in Palestine insofar as the proletariat there was still embryonic and above all terribly divided as a consequence of the colonial situation.

The revolt of 1933-1936, courageous as it was, ended in a complete fiasco. In spite of the momentary retreat by Great Britain which was obliged to limit Jewish immigration for a few years, the Zionist movement became stronger and stronger. The Palestinian movement itself foundered in such bitterness and deception that it can be said without hesitation that the painful outcome of the war in 1948 had already been partly determined in 1936.

### **The Birth of Israel and the War of Expropriation**

At the end of the Second World War the old English empire began to give way to the American imperialist colossus. The Zionist movement was all the better for it since the English presence had become uncomfortable and even intolerable, inducing several Zionist groups in a hurry to establish their own state to initiate an anti-English terrorist movement, in which Begin earned his spurs. By this time Great Britain wished only to relinquish its responsibility for Palestine, and it tossed the hot potatoe to the U.N., that new «den of thieves» built on the ashes of the defunct League of Nations.

The preparations for the formation of a Jewish state led to the Israeli-Arab war of 1947. On May 14, 1948, while the delegates of the virtuous bourgeois nations lounged in the sumptuous rooms of the U.N. babbling on about whether an Arab and a Jew were capable of living together without going for each others' throats (with these Orientals, my dear, one never knows...) or whether it might be better to separate them with barbed wire, the state of Israel was created. This resulted in a race between Truman and Stalin to see which would recognize the new state first, and in particular, it opened the hunting season on Palestinians.

Up to this time history had only given a foretaste of capitalist barbarity. Now the avowed objective was to rid the country of as many ruined peasants as possible. This would be the re-enactment on a grand scale of the calvary of the Scottish peasants documented by Marx: «the clearance and dispersion of the people is pursued by the proprietors [in this case the Zionists] as a settled principle, as an agricultural necessity, just as trees and brushwood are cleared from the wastes of America or Australia; and the operation goes on in a quiet, business-like way, etc.»<sup>5</sup>

For international and local reasons Israel was not able to occupy all of Palestine just then. In fact, the process of expropriation was less advanced in some areas than others. The mountainous central region was less interesting to the Zionists, and furthermore the state of Israel was allowed to establish itself



only on part of Palestine within a framework of a partition advocated by the U.N. However the portion actually occupied was larger than the partition plan provided for, even though the West Bank and Gaza Strip escaped the Zionist conquest for the moment, the former falling to Prince Abdallah (who on this occasion was made king of Jordan by the English), the latter going to Egypt. Almost a million Palestinian workers and peasants were driven out of their homes. This time the bourgeoisie made a complete mockery of sacrosanct property rights, legality and other lies. Brute force, terror, massacre and extermination were raised to supreme law, in order to serve as a foundation for all subsequent legislation.

It is hardly necessary to describe the miserable conditions under which the Palestinian masses were herded together. Their situation was no less enviable than that of the hundreds of thousands of Jews who had just emerged from concentration camps to be shipped off to Palestine where imperialism dangled the vision of Eden rediscovered before their eyes. But it is certain that these million Palestinians, uprooted and condemned to unemployment, would disrupt the fragile regional equilibrium for all time and become the epicentre of social revolt in the Middle East.

In spite of the determined attempts of the Israeli authorities to expel the greatest possible number of Palestinians — and their efforts were successful for the most part — a minority managed to stay put. In 1948 there were about 170,000 and today there are more than 500,000 Palestinians living within the state of Israel. This population has suffered unspeakable oppression such as perhaps has only been equalled in the African colonial societies. The Palestinian population has had to suffer under the dictatorial yoke of an extraordinarily fierce military regime, whose only «legal» foundation is provided by the famous British decrees from the time of the mandate, among which should be noted the *Emergency Defence Regulations*, drawn up in 1945 to combat the movements of Jewish resistance to the English occupation.

Here are two witnesses for the prosecution. For the first:

«the question is as follows: will we be subject to official terror or will there be individual freedom? No citizen is protected from life imprisonment without trial (...) right to appeal has been abolished (...) the powers of the administration to exile anyone at any time are unlimited (...). It is not necessary to commit any offense; a decision made in some office is enough.»

For the second:

«the order established by this legislation is without precedent in civilized countries. Even in Nazi Germany such laws did not exist.»

These declarations were made at a meeting of lawyers held at Tel Aviv on February 7, 1946 in order to protest against repression... English colonial repression; the first by Bernard (Dov) Joseph, later Israeli Minister of Justice, and the second by J. Shapira who became Procurer-General of the Israeli republic.<sup>6</sup> A short two years later this «nazi» barbarity was employed by the Zionists against the Palestinians.

But this barbaric legislation was not enough to satisfy the voracious colonialist appetite of Israel, this monstrous offspring of the reactionary union between Zionism and western capitalism. The terrorist arsenal of the *Defence Regulations* still had to be perfected, and this was done through a series of laws which under cover of the state of war, legalized the plundering

of the Palestinians.

One of the masterpieces of this legislation was the «law on absentee property». An absentee was defined as «*anyone who in the period between November 19, 1947 and May 19, 1948 was owner of a plot of land situated in Israel and who during this period was either: 1) a citizen of Lebanon, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Iraq or Yemen; 2) in these countries or anywhere in Palestine outside Israel; 3) a Palestinian citizen who has left his place of residence in Palestine to take up residence in a region held by forces which fought against the establishment of the state of Israel.*»<sup>7</sup> This period coincides with the movement of large numbers of individuals who had fled the zones of the most heated confrontations. How many peasants considered absentees when they had only been «displaced» a few hundred meters, saw their lands confiscated? Another virtue of this law was that it seized the lands of the clergy (more than 6%). God himself was an absentee!

Another legal monument is the famous «emergency law». It allows certain regions to be declared «closed zones», and a written authorization from the military government is necessary to gain access to it. According to another clause, if a village is declared a «security zone» the inhabitants no longer have the right to live there. More than a dozen villages in Galilee have had to be abandoned for this reason. Such is the law! More laws of the same kind have been enacted. While one such law authorizes certain regions to be declared «temporary security zones», which means that the peasants are prevented from cultivating their land, yet another law authorizes the state to confiscate lands not cultivated «for a certain period of time». Nothing escapes the law!

The state completed this magnificent legal edifice with the «*Ordinances on the State of Emergency*» of 1949, intended to supplement the English «emergency laws» of 1945. They give full power to the military authority to meet «public security» need, to search homes and automobiles, to issue arrest warrants, to conduct *in camera* summary trials without right of appeal, to restrict individual freedom of movement, to impose house arrest and to deport anyone. For example, article 119 authorizes confiscation of land, while article 109 empowers the army to bar anyone from designated areas and to dictate restrictions regarding personal contacts and employment. Here we have the explanation of one of the secrets of democracy; it can afford the luxury of concealing the overt violence of class oppression — compounded by racial and national oppression — with the hypocritical veil of legality.<sup>8</sup>

These are the methods employed by Zionism to clear the land of its inhabitants on behalf of capital. The expropriation of the Palestinian peasants is almost complete in the territories seized in 1948.<sup>9</sup> The scarcity of land even extends to the towns and villages where the population is cramped and land set aside for construction is extremely limited.

What became of the population, still essentially peasant in 1948, that remained within Israel? This is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Distribution of Arab Manpower among the Principal Sectors of Activity**

| In %                          | 1954 | 1966 | 1972 |
|-------------------------------|------|------|------|
| Agriculture                   | 59.9 | 39.1 | 19.1 |
| Industry                      | 8.2  | 14.9 | 12.5 |
| Construction and public works | 8.4  | 19.6 | 26.6 |
| Other sectors                 | 23.5 | 26.4 | 41.8 |
|                               | 100  | 100  | 100  |

Source: *Annuaire statistique d'Israël*, 1955 to 1973.

It is important to note that almost all Arabs employed in the industrial sector are wage labourers. Of the active agricultural population 58 % are proletarians, which means that in 1972 less than 10 % of Arabs in Israel were bound to the land. The services employ a large majority of wage labourers, to the point that in 1970, workers and assimilated represented 72.6 % of the active Arab population.<sup>10</sup> The new generation of Palestinians living in Israel is thus essentially working class although it continues to live in a rural environment (74 % of the population in 1967). The villages where they live are nothing other than ghettos in which the state of Israel seeks to imprison them. These over-exploited and under-paid workers — in some cases they are paid half as much as a Jewish worker for the same amount of work — are forced to make hour-long trips to and from work in packed buses.

These proletarians have lived through a hell of poverty, wars, humiliation and massacres, the memory of which has been etched in their minds.<sup>11</sup> The state of emergency was lifted in 1966, but this could not mean the repeal of the laws that typified it. The prerogatives of the military authority were simply transferred to the civil administration, in particular to the police. In reality, «no matter what rights and liberties might be accorded by law or by custom to the inhabitants of Israel, considerations of security can always call them into question without any formal departure from legal procedure.»<sup>12</sup>

Recently the few remaining peasants have again been victims of the arbitrary application of terrorist legislation. Thus in 1976, under the banners of a «land consolidation operation», 24,700 acres of land were snatched from the Arab population. This attack on the meagre niche remaining to them led to mass demonstrations, strikes and confrontations with the police and the army. The latter decreed a curfew and invaded numerous villages. Six Arabs were killed and dozens injured. The episode was baptized «day of the land». In particular, this legislation is used today against any challenge to the state. And who has the most to «challenge» if not the working class?

The working class, since 1967 in contact with the new wave of Palestinian workers living under a regime of occupation on the Gaza Strip and on the West Bank, has awakened to the struggle with a boldness that compensates for the length of time it has been containing its anger.<sup>13</sup>

## The New Wave of Expropriation During the 1967 War

Palestine is altogether a very small territory. With 27,000 square kilometres it is about the size of Belgium. A third of it is desert, cultivation is very difficult and particularly costly. In 1948 Israel occupied nearly 21,000 square kilometres. Obviously such a diminutive framework could not satisfy the voracious appetite of Zionist capital. In such a context, expansion is a necessity, and expansionism the state religion.

Consequently in 1967, Israel occupied the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and the scenario of 1948 was repeated. In 1967 the Gaza Strip was inhabited by 450,000 Palestinians. Two-thirds of these (376,775 in January 1967) were refugees who had come from the fertile plains around Jaffa after their expulsion in 1948. More than 100,000 inhabitants of the Gaza Strip, many of whom were forced to emigrate for the second time, had to take refuge in neighbouring countries. The West Bank, which before the 1967 occupation was inhabited by about 850,000 people, contained only 650,00 persons three years later; this means that more than 200,000 Palestinians from the region had to abandon everything and to settle in the concentration camps euphemistically called «refugee camps». For one reason or another more than 300,000 human beings were forced to give up their homes and thus lost their right of return under Israeli legislation, designed solely to clear the land.

The infamous law on absentees has done its share—it has affected more than 80,000 acres. Of the lands belonging to the state or to collectives, 16 % passed into the hands of those occupying them. Israel also requisitioned more than 10,000 houses from the so-called «absentees» who had been transformed into refugees in the camps. This is the usual procedure. Other more refined plans have been imagined. In the town of Akraba on the West Bank for example, the Zionists destroyed the crops by spraying them with chemicals. It need not be added that the Israeli state deployed its whole well-known terrorist arsenal. According to the declaration made personally by the defence minister at the time, Shimon Pérès, to the Knesset, several thousand Palestinians were expelled. Between 1967 and 1973, 23,000 Palestinians were incarcerated and between 1967 and 1971, as a result of the highly Biblical principle of collective responsibility, 16,312 houses were destroyed. Several towns — Latrun, Amwas, Yilo and Beit Nuba and many others — were simply wiped off the map.

In October 1967, colonization was begun on the lands which had been confiscated through state-organized gangsterism. In 1971 there were already 52 settlements on the recently occupied territories.<sup>14</sup> Since then new settlements and new projects have continued uninterrupted, and they periodically crop up in the news.<sup>15</sup>

It goes without saying that the Arab population in this area, even more than in Israel, is denied any possibility of expression, of trade union or independent political association. For thousands of Palestinians, suspicion of membership in a subversive organization has already earned them a total of several centuries in Zionist jails. Of a total population on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, estimated in 1970 at almost a million inhabitants (and probably much more today in spite of the massive emigration to the petroleum-producing countries) apparently more than 100,000 Palestinians go to work in



Israel every day. In 1973 one in every three workers and one in every two wage-labourers living in these zones crossed the border daily. Considering the fact that the process of proletarianization has continued in these zones while the local labour market has stagnated — if not shrunk — the proportion is undoubtedly higher today.

These proletarians are subject to the most savage exploitation exacerbated by the impossibility of living in Israel, by the work and travel limitations they are liable to, by the lack of any rights in Israel and by the state of martial law in the occupied territories. Thus the Palestinian worker on the West Bank and Gaza Strip who is already employed in the worst paid sectors (in 1973, 52 % worked in construction and 19 % in agricultural) receives a wage equal to half that earned by the Israeli worker. This does not take into account the difference between the Jewish-Israeli and the Arab-Israeli, which is quite substantial. (See Table 3)

**Table 3. Average Daily Wage of Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza Strip (P) Compared to Israeli Wages (I) (In Israeli Pounds)**

|      | general average |      | agriculture |      | industry |      | construction |      |
|------|-----------------|------|-------------|------|----------|------|--------------|------|
|      | P               | I    | P           | I    | P        | I    | P            | I    |
| 1972 | 17.2            | 34.4 | 15.4        | 22.2 | 15.6     | 33.1 | 19.1         | 31.1 |
| 1973 | 22.9            | 42.8 | 20.6        | 25.7 | 21.6     | 40.7 | 25.1         | 38.1 |

Source: Jamil Hilal, «Les Palestiniens de Cisjordanie et de Gaza», *Khamsin* n° 2, 1975, p. 51. Israelis: Jews and Arabs combined.

This discrimination is compounded by the open theft practised by the Israeli state. The Palestinian worker has practically 40 % deducted from his wages in the form of various taxes, a rate much higher than the deductions made from the wages of the Israeli worker, who in addition is eligible for certain «benefits», such as social security, unemployment insurance, paid vacations, retirement pension, etc., whereas the Palestinian worker in the occupied territories is not. These taxes are a veritable tribute that the worker is obliged to pay to the state while he works in conditions of total insecurity.

The Arab nationalist newspapers may often fill their columns with disapproving remarks about Israel: «They are stealing our workers.» The Palestinians workers endure the double oppression and the double exploitation existing in Israel for the simple reason that the wages paid by the Arab bosses are even more miserable than those paid by their Zionist masters. It is all but impossible for a Palestinian bourgeoisie, lacking any backbone and mettle, to compete with Zionist capital. In the best of times it acts as the latter's lieutenant, grumbling all the while. Consequently the Israeli bourgeoisie, attracted by the cheap labour power on the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, often concludes agreements for sub-contracted labour. Both bourgeoisies rake off the fat. The Israeli bourgeoisie profits from the low wages that the Arab employers succeed in imposing on the workers, and it can defuse the lame fits of opposition by the Palestinian bourgeoisie, which «flourishes» on the steady business.

At the time of the war in 1948 the Palestinian struggle had not yet recove-

red from the shock suffered in the defeat of the revolts of 1933 to 1936, and therefore the resistance was rather weak. The unleashing of the six days war by Israel as well as the anger provoked by the cowardice of the Arab governments led to massive revolts and the arming of the Palestinian population. And it was precisely the *al Fatah* which assumed the task of fettering this movement in a programme that preserved the existing Arab states. The wave was sufficiently strong to permit a certain radicalization, which led to the formation of organizations that employed a more «proletarian» vocabulary and to a fusion of the interests of the Palestinian-Jordanian masses on the one hand and the Palestinian-Lebanese masses on the other hand.

The intent of this article is not to sketch a history of this revolutionary wave, unfortunately deprived once again of the support of the proletariat in the large imperialist centres, openly combatted by all the Arab states, delivered to its executioners by the very orientation and principles of the various parties in its leadership, which along with the Arab states finally prostrated themselves before the international and local established order. The important thing to understand is that the next revolutionary explosions will come forth in social — and political, too, we hope — conditions vastly different from those of 1948, and even those of 1967.

## Capitalism Creates Its Own Gravediggers

The net social result of the bloody primitive accumulation of capital in Palestine is approximately as follows. The Palestinian refugee population which is not subject to Israeli rule amounts to over 2.3 million persons (60 % of all Palestinians). It is naturally without any ties to the land. Of this mass of refugees only 40 % of those of working age have jobs, and the large majority of those employed are wage labourers (in 1970, 73.2 % of Palestinians working in Lebanon, 79.3 % in Syria, 89.6 % in Kuwait), a significant portion of them blue-collar workers. Thus the population is largely proletarianized.<sup>16</sup>

Among the million and a half Palestinians (that is, 40 % of all Palestinians) living under the Zionist heel, only a minority still possesses land. The number of employers and self-employed workers in the agricultural sector fell from 37,000 in 1969 to 26,100 in 1973 on the West Bank and from 6,200 in 1970 to 4,600 in 1973 on the Gaza Strip. The figures have fallen even further in recent years.<sup>17</sup> The expropriation process continues and consequently may still provoke agrarian unrest and revolts, *particularly in a period of economic crisis*, given that in the whole region the Arab working class population is not significantly urbanized and still lives in villages transformed into dormitories.<sup>18</sup>

On the West Bank the workers formed 47.5 % of the active Palestinian population in 1973; 55.6 % on the Gaza Strip. In Israel the proportion is probably about the same since 72.6 % of the Arabs are wage labourers. But all these Palestinian proletarians are more often agricultural and construction workers than industrial workers.

In spite of the hypocritical excuses and fallacious justifications of the Israeli and European and American imperialist bourgeoisies, it is not difficult to imagine the degree of oppression suffered by the half million Palestinians

dwelling in a state where there is already social discrimination between Jews of occidental and oriental origin, where nationality is based on « Jewish nationality », itself based on religion, a state which is moreover permanently at war with the neighbouring Arab states. But these Palestinians whom the state differentiates further according to religion into Christians, Druses, or Muslims, are at least *theoretically* entitled to the same « economic and social rights » as the Jews of Israel. As for the Palestinians on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, their plight is even more frightful since they are openly in a state of siege.<sup>19</sup>

The broad Palestinian masses, thanks to whose labour the orchards of Israel blossom today and to a growing extent the factories of Tel Aviv and Nablus hum, cannot continue to live and defend themselves without fighting capitalism, *on the terrain shaped by capitalism itself*. Their struggle immediately comes up against the political and racial discrimination connected with *Jewish privilege*, in short against the *colonial nature* of the state of Israel, which more and more uses against the workers' struggles the very laws it utilized yesterday and continues to utilize today in the occupied territories to transform the peasants into proletarians. For the modern proletarians, these discriminations and this servitude based on race and religion are even more intolerable than in any other society, and they amplify the immense potential of social revolt fed by capitalist exploitation and the political oppression that flows from it.

In the ground below the slave democracy of Israel there are already accumulating the white-hot substances of an eruption much more violent than those caused up to now by the powerful shocks of expropriation of the Palestinian peasants. These are the substances of proletarian class struggle which the emigrated Palestinian workers will help extend through the whole region and which, in conjunction with the working class of the large imperialist centres, will succeed in breaking the social front of Jewish solidarity in Israel, drawing the Jewish proletarians into its impetuous course and taking the lead of the poor peasant masses in revolt. And this struggle is a fight to the death against the local and international established order, which can only be broken definitively by the victory of the world communist revolution.

1. Marx, *Capital* Vol. 1, ch. XXVI, « The Secret of Primitive Accumulation », Moscow, 1954, p. 668.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 669.
3. See particularly Lorand Gaspard, *Histoire de la Palestine*, Paris, 1978, p. 140.
4. See Nathan Weinstock, *Le Sionisme contre Israël*, Paris, 1969, pp. 179-80.
5. Robert Somers, *Letters from the Highlands or The Famine of 1847*, London, 1848, quoted in Marx, *op. cit.*, p. 684.
6. Nathan Weinstock, *op. cit.*, p. 392.
7. *Sefer Ha-Khukkim* (Principal Laws) 37, 1950, p. 86.
8. For a complete picture of this legislation we refer the reader to the following works: Nathan Weinstock, *op. cit.*, 374-399; Lorand Gaspard, *op. cit.*, pp. 187-189; and Sabri Jiryis, *The Arabs in Israel*, N.Y., 1976, pp. 89-102. See also *Problèmes économiques et sociaux*, no. 199, Paris, Nov. 2, 1973.

9. Of the 475 Arab villages that existed in Israeli-occupied Palestine in 1948, today only 90 remain. The other 385 have been wiped off the map by dynamite and bulldozers.
10. See the articles by Lazare Rozensztroch and Jacqueline Farhoud Iraissaty in the review *Khamsin*, no. 2, 1975.
11. On October 29, 1956, Israeli soldiers entered the village of Kfar Kassem to decree a curfew. They announced to the villagers that anyone still found outside his house in a half-hour would be executed. Several villagers still working in the fields and on Israeli jobs outside the village at that hour could not be warned. When they returned the Israeli soldiers stopped them, lined them up and shot them: forty-seven villagers were assassinated. The state of Israel opened an inquiry and passed sentence on those responsible. In 1960 the second ranking officer found responsible for the massacre was placed « in charge of Arab affairs » in the region of Ramleh, not far from Kfar Kassem.
12. This is how *Problèmes économiques et sociaux*, no. 199, summarizes the meaning of commentaries by Sabri Jiryis in his book on the subject.
13. « Orders of forced residence, of house arrest, of expulsion or detention by decree are given by the dozen, but these measures affect only Arabs (...) The same discrimination is to be found in the attitude of the authorities with respect to the freedom of the press and freedom of association. Until now no Hebrew newspaper has been suspended and no Jewish political association has been prohibited, no matter how extremist they may be and no matter how distant they may be from the attitude of the regime. On the other hand, no Arab journal can be published in Israel unless the authorities can count on the support or at least the complicity of those responsible for it. No Arab organization has been authorized to participate in any activity without the consent and total approval of the authorities. » Sabri Jiryis, « Democratic Freedoms in Israel », *Problèmes politiques et sociaux*, no. 199, Paris, Nov. 1973. This passage illustrates the oppression suffered by the Palestinians, but it is certain that the same laws will be applied with the same severity to any Jews who go so far as to break the social front of Jewish solidarity on which the hypocrisy of Israeli democracy rests.
14. Lorand Gaspard, *op. cit.*, p. 145.
15. The last colony was established in June 1979, not without resistance. According to *Le Monde* of June 8, 1979, the settlement called Eilon Moreh was officially founded on June 7. This new colony is situated on top of a hill « south of the town of Nablus, and covers 198 acres of land, property of the Arab residents of the sector who were expropriated by the Israeli government following a decision of the supreme court justifying the act for « defence » reasons. The bulldozers began to open up access roads. The few dozen future inhabitants, of the village arrived on board army vehicles ». On Sunday June 17, a major demonstration against the establishment of this colony took place at Nablus, provoking the intervention of the Israeli army which was greeted by a shower of stones.
16. See Jacqueline Farhoud Iraissaty, *op. cit.*, p. 44.
17. See Jamil Halil, « Les Palestiniens de Cisjordanie et de Gaza », in *Khamsin*, no. 2, 1975, pp. 46-68.
18. In its number of May 29, 1979, the daily *Asharq Al-Awsat* appearing in London, reported that the inhabitants of a Jewish colony in the Sinai called Ofer, after having been dislodged from the Sinai by virtue of the Israeli-Egyptian treaty, tried to occupy the Arab village called Maalia in Galilee. The colonists appeared at the village with their furniture, their tools and their tractors and their banners read « Galilee in exchange for the Sinai » and « Ofer promises not to let a single Arab live in Israel ». The Palestinian population tried to hold discussions but the colonists replied by showing that they had been officially mandated by the Jewish Agency to take over the village. A lively argument ensued; one colonist shot several times over the heads of the Arab delegates in order to intimidate the villagers. Immediately dozens of inhabitants of the village ran up. The ensuing brawl lasted more than 2 hours and afterwards the colonists were forced to pick up their belongings and take flight, leaving their huts in flames. When the police arrived they asked; « Did al Fatah give you the order to shoot at the Jews? » The villagers answered the police interrogation with a general strike. The government, surprised at encountering spontaneous resistance, retreated and declared over the airwaves that the state had not been implicated in the operation, responsibility resting with the colonists alone, and that it had not even been informed of their intentions! Once again, force must be opposed by force alone.



19. If an illustration of this fact is necessary, *Le Monde* of June 6, 1979 reports that on Monday June 4, in the middle of the night the houses in which four Palestinian lived who were suspected of belonging to the resistance were encircled by the army; « the families received the order to leave the premises immediately. The furniture was taken to the garden of El Jenieh, the house of the parents of Mell Ataf Yussef was razed by a bulldozer. At Ramallah and El Birch, three apartments were walled in after their occupants had been evacuated. The doors and windows were blocked by a partition of bricks and cement. » The entire arsenal of terrorist laws is thus quite alive and in particular the laws on collective responsibility.

## The Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty and the New Imperialist Order in the Middle East

*The following article was published, as was the preceding article, in our theoretical review Programme Communiste, no. 80, in July 1979. More than one and a half years have passed since then, and though some facts to which we refer are quite outdated, the events that have shaken the Middle East in this period, such as the Russian invasion of Afghanistan, the military coup d'état in Turkey, and the Iran-Iraq war, have reinforced and not diminished the general trend of US policy in this area. Moreover, the picture we gave of the social situation has not changed. Thus, we deem it possible to reproduce this article without any modification.*

In the course of the last few years and in particular with the recent signing of the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel, the predominant role of the U.S.A. in the Middle East has become obvious. Yet in its quest to dislodge England and emerge as the world bastion of capitalism, the U.S.A. became interested in this region of the globe quite late and only after it had become apparent that the exponential growth of its energy needs would make it dependent upon Arab oil.

In the classical era of colonialism the industrial use of petroleum was unknown and Great Britain did not have too much difficulty eliminating Portugal and Holland, then France and Germany from the Persian Gulf area. Through a policy of balkanization of the region and a veiled colonial attitude towards Egypt and Sudan, it was able to stabilize its political and economic presence without having to deploy a large military apparatus.

It was not until the beginning of the present century that the U.S.A. penetrated this zone, at first by means of limited economic agreements with England. And it was only after the Second World War that these two powers entered into competition, began to mark off and then dispute their respective zones of interest.

### From the British Lion to the American Eagle

In the 1950's two events showed clearly that American imperialism was henceforth master in this area: the 1953 *coup d'état* in Iran and the halting of the Anglo-French intervention during the Suez crisis in 1956. Whereas the

Shah could only be placed back on the throne thanks to the passivity of the U.S.S.R. and the Tudeh party, the U.S.A. was actively supported by Russia in the Suez crisis. Nonetheless, by occupying two *key positions* in the region — notwithstanding the temporary concessions to a Russia all too delighted to see the last of Britain — U.S. imperialism *inherited* the tendencies of its predecessor, tendencies which it would develop in subsequent years.

In American strategy, Iran has continued to play the triple role that England had already assigned to it. In the first place it has shielded the Near East and Africa from the repercussions of the social movement which shook Asia from its epicentre in China. In the second place it has served as a bastion against the attempts by competing Russian imperialism to penetrate Asia and break through to the warm water oceans. And finally, it has protected the oil-fields of the Persian Gulf, a role which increased with the massive import of petroleum by the United States.

Israel's double role has remained unchanged. On the one hand it has protected the oil routes to the West, the Suez Canal, and the pipelines of Iraq and Saudi Arabia. On the other hand it has maintained imperialist order thanks to its central position in the Mashreq. Its strategic position has enabled it to effectively block the unification tendencies of the *wave of anti-imperialist emancipation* in the Arab world. The natural vanguard of this movement is the Palestinian revolt which collides head on with capitalist expropriation and the barbaric terrorism of the colonist state of Israel.

Yet it is quite obvious that Egypt has played a *decisive strategic role* in the world policies of all the imperialisms. Formerly it controlled the route to the East Indies on behalf of Britain, which earned Napoleon Bonaparte's intervention. Today, through the Red Sea and Bab-el-Mandeb it commands the access to the Indian Ocean, which interests Russia for more than one reason: it would enable Russia to protect itself from the missiles which the Americans have been pointing at it for more than fifteen years from submarines cruising there; it would assure Russia the most rapid sea-link between European Russia and Vladivostok, which is necessary in the event of a war with China; it would give Russia control over Japan's naval supply routes for oil and raw materials as well as control over the sources of oil that now supply not only Europe but the United States as well. On an even broader scale this region occupies the place in Russian strategy held by the Constantinople area until the first imperialist war.

It is therefore obvious that the U.S.A. with its global objectives cannot be content with having expelled England from Egypt and thereby terminating its predominance in Asia. It must also necessarily strive to prevent any Russian control in that region. This is an objective that the U.S.A. has pursued secretly and indirectly, even when the game of diplomatic see-saw caused Cairo to lean toward Moscow while the U.S.A. allowed Israel to wage its wars against Egypt. The Israeli puppet-state which lacks any indigenous productive base and has to sell itself to the highest bidder, could well imagine that it had crushed its hereditary enemy. It has never had any power over Egypt except to the extent that the United States allowed it and the U.S. has only delegated Israel the task of preventing the Egyptian bourgeoisie (for the Egyptian bourgeoisie is at least theoretically most capable of attempting the unification of the Mashreq, if not of the «Arab fatherland») from becoming a real power in a position to challenge the American will. The United States has needed an Egypt ruined to the point that, with Russian financial imperialism still lacking

any significant weight, it would be obliged to yield itself bound hand and foot to Wall Street, just as Israel has done.

Until now Israel has been crucial to the *American vice* which has held the Arabic world in its grip at three points. In fact after the Suez crisis, American strategy called for close links between Israel and the non-Arab states of the region. Thus discreet but real relations with Turkey (a secret treaty between Ben Gurion and Menderes at the end of the 1950's), Ethiopia and Iran were established. The treaty with Turkey died a natural death when the American missile bases were dismantled in connection with the Cuban crisis, although Kennedy had already decided on this course following the development of intercontinental ballistic missiles. Relations with Ethiopia collapsed with the fall of the Negus. After a tenuous survival until 1977, they were cut off definitively by the Ethiopian DERG. The break with Iran, Israel's source of oil, was much more painful. In January 1979, articles in the Israeli press urged the Shah's army to open fire on the masses and exhorted the police to shoot strike organizers, holding Carter's weakness responsible for the social instability.

Meanwhile the state of Israel gradually lost the privileged place and the considerable importance it enjoyed in the Fertile Crescent-Egypt-Red Sea zone from the moment it fell under American protection. This is due to the notable decrease in the oil flow through the pipelines of the Levant, and above all to the *growing capacity* of the Arab states themselves to play the role of social policemen in this region — Jordan to a lesser extent than revolutionary intervention of Syrian troops in Lebanon in the spring of 1976. Under the pretext of safeguarding the «unity» and the «sovereignty» of the Lebanese puppet-state, the various sections of the PLO took it upon themselves to restrain the movement of the masses and to compromise with the established order, to the point where they ended up by capitulating to the Syrian demands to repudiate all the «uncontrollable» Palestinian forces.

No sooner had Egypt fallen under American influence than U.S. imperialism unveiled the essence of its policy: «the peace», the Israel-Egypt peace — whether the Zionist colonists and the Egyptian bourgeoisie liked it or not — meant the *division* of strategic and counter-revolutionary military tasks between these two states.

### The Camp David Accords and the New Alignment of Forces

It follows that the Camp David accords do not mark a sudden turn in the policy of American imperialism, but rather the culmination of a long pursued policy and, in a certain sense, the opening of a new period in which the U.S. has freed itself completely of the constraints of the British heritage, and the revolutionary impulses stirred in the local bourgeoisies by the anti-colonial revolution in its eruptive phase have been stilled forever. The Camp David accords accomplish exactly the opposite of a free union based on mutual attraction. It is a disgusting marriage of convenience to which, moreover, each of the partners consents only because the common patron promises them that they will march in opposite though complementary directions. This is proved by the fact that neither of the two parties has done what it wanted to, but rather what it had to.

The conditions of Israel's birth and its natural tendency compel that country to reach not only to the East but to the South to colonize the Sinai and

control the Suez. Now it is required to give up the territories it conquered from Egypt. In return, to be sure, the gates of Egypt are open to Israel. In order to satisfy its colossal appetite for expansion it must be content with discharging its products on the Egyptian market and with importing labour power from the banks of the Nile until such time when the profits thus realized can be re-invested in the Egyptian economy.

For its part, Egypt imagined it was capable of unifying the Arab world even if the historical cowardice of the Egyptian bourgeoisie only enabled it to envision this union in the form of an impossible *entente* between states, so as to avoid the revolutionary explosion of the popular masses and a direct confrontation with imperialism. To date Egypt has only succeeded in forging a front of its Arab neighbours which is directed not so much against the United States as against Egypt itself. In any case the promise of economic assistance has spared it, *for the moment*, from the horror of a popular revolt.

Everyone in the realm of business is anxious for the creation of a «normal» situation, which is obvious from the smaller articles pushed off the front pages of the newspapers by the extravagant publicity surrounding the great puppet show. The day after the treaty was signed in Washington, all the Israeli financial papers gave the official exchange rate for the Egyptian pound (= 24 Israeli pounds). Even before the signing there were negotiations for tourist travel and studies were devoted to the application of Israeli agricultural technology in desert regions. As for real estate, there were promises of lucrative deals in the development of Egyptian «tourist facilities». With good reason article 3 of the treaty provides for the normalization of «diplomatic, economic and cultural» relations and guarantees «the free movement of persons and goods». Thus Israel has access to the Arab market through the front door. Dayan, with his fondness for historical parallels, will certainly be reminded of the idyllic relations between the Egyptians and Canaanites in Palestine after the battle of Megiddo in 1480 B.C. when Thutmose III defeated the Syrian invaders, ancestors of the same Syrians who now stand opposed to Israel without the Egyptian umbrella of protection.

So much for the trivial wedding gifts. We repeat, however, that the important point is the sharing of military, strategic and counter-revolutionary tasks dictated by American imperialism. Even if a war between Egypt and Israel cannot be absolutely excluded until such time as the two governments have adapted their policies to the new material conditions (and until the populations have adapted their mentalities) such a war seems highly unlikely, since it would benefit neither party.

Israel's military aggressiveness will be directed toward the North-East and East now that the southern flank has become a sanctuary of peace. In other words, this means that the «Palestinian question» will be exclusively in Israel's hands. Behind the smokescreen of Palestinian «administrative autonomy» Egypt has even renounced ever using the Palestinians as a bargaining chip against Israel and the United States. The surest proof of this is that during the peace talks the Knesset was debating a project that called for the creation of 84 new settlements on the West Bank in the next five years, at a cost of 54 billion Israeli pounds (approximately 2.5 billion US dollars).

In practice the «administrative autonomy» means that the Palestinians will have the right to elect their own mayors, and may enjoy a few other «advantages». Even though he denies it, Sadat signed this clause, and this should come as no surprise.

Moreover, Hussein's own conduct must conceal some purpose. Why would this petty monarch, graduate of an American college and until recently still a ward of the Yankees, turn on the United States and consort with his former enemies? Perhaps he has an imminent role to play in regard to the Palestinians, and today with the understanding of Egypt, Israel and the United States, he is trying to make himself «presentable»? It is not out of the question that the «solution of the Palestinian issue» being concocted by this unsavory cabal will rely on a military pressure upon Jordan and Lebanon in order to force them to accept an Israeli-Egyptian condominium over an eventual «homeland» straddling the Jordan River, where Israel may impose and develop its concept of «administrative autonomy». A military action in the East, or even the mere threat of one, on the one hand would increase Israel's weight as regional policeman, particularly in opposition to Iraq and Syria, the only powers now in a position to confront Israel, even just on the level of their national interests. But this could never be considered a revolutionary confrontation. Syria and Iraq share the job of maintaining order (e.g. in Lebanon). And Iraq is even making advances toward Washington presenting itself as policeman in the Persian Gulf. As for Syria, it has 30,000 soldiers in Lebanon, and in keeping with its historical tendency, this «peace-keeping force» could turn into an occupation force under favourable circumstances.

Turkey has regained all its former importance, especially in light of the uncertainty surrounding Iran. After Pakistan and then Iran, Turkey withdrew from CENTO (which consisted of Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Great Britain and the USA) last March, dealing that pact a mortal blow. But it is certainly no coincidence that the USA, in the context of the re-alignment of forces, has terminated the embargo on military equipment imposed after the Cyprus conflict and has resumed arms deliveries to Turkey. Nor is it any coincidence that the European and American bourgeoisies feel the need to express their solidarity with that country and to make that expression «concrete» with a loan from the IMF for 1.75 billion dollars.

But the largest zone falls to Egypt. Even before the overthrow of the Shah, Egypt had begun to assume the function of policeman by sending first an expeditionary corps to Sudan in order to «aid» Neimeiri against «Libyan conspiracies», then a logistical detachment to Zaire and a commando unit to Cyprus in an Entebbe-style anti-terrorist operation, and support to Somalia at the time of the Ogaden war. This is the meaning of Carter's words of relief at the conclusion of the peace: «The peace treaty between Egypt and Israel will allow Egypt to free five divisions. These will be able to become a stabilizing force». Now is this really a peace, or a new alignment in preparation for new conflicts?

In addition to the reasons just indicated, the growing role of Egypt in American military policy is undoubtedly due to two causes: first, the increasing importance of the Arabian peninsula in the oil supplies of the USA itself; second, the fact that East-West antagonisms are undergoing a considerable sharpening in the entire Middle East-Africa-Indian Ocean region, while as early as the end of the 1960's, at the time of the definitive decline of British imperialism, the United States switched from its *land based strategy* to air-sea control of the oceans of the whole world, a strategy in which Egypt resumes its role as a nerve-centre.



## The Expanded Role of the Israel-Egypt Alliance After the Fall of the Shah

Iran had played an enormous role in this strategy. In December 1973, 3,000 Iranian marines disembarked on the shores of Dhofar during the joint air-sea manoeuvres of CENTO and the Seventh Fleet. This was not just an operation in support of Sultan Qabus of Oman against the Popular Liberation Front of Oman and the Arabian Gulf, but a step up the ladder toward larger engagements in the framework of the general military and counter-revolutionary plan of the USA. Only the perspective of such engagements can account for the quantity and especially the quality of the arms furnished to Iran, in particular in the fields of naval-aviation and electronic surveillance. Only within such a general scheme is it possible to explain the installation of coastal facilities such as the naval base at Bandar Abbas, and above all the gigantic air-sea complex at Shahbar, specially equipped for long-distance reconnaissance as a complement to the base at Diego Garcia in the middle of the Indian Ocean. To this should be added the transfer of the CIA general headquarters for the Middle East from Nicosia to Teheran in 1973, the appointment of the former director of that infamous agency, Richard Helms, as ambassador to Iran, and the invasion of American experts, estimated to total 65,000. However important Iran's place in American strategy may have been, Egypt, as we have seen, began to acquire a new significance. The fall of the Pahlavi regime, an important key in this strategy, accelerated this tendency and caused the US to rely more on the Israeli-Egypt pillar.

Israel has been able to slow its decline and strengthen its bargaining position vis-à-vis the United States. As an immediate consequence of the Iranian developments Syria was compelled to conclude an alliance with its traditional enemy, Iraq. The latter, disturbed by the creation of the Shiite regime, liquidated the anti-Syrian opposition it had supported within the Palestinian resistance, to the chagrin of the left Fatah and the organizations of the Refusal which had flirted with it. Moreover, the internal difficulties of Syria paralysed its policeman activity in Lebanon and encouraged Israel's aggressiveness. Israel literally cleaned out southern Lebanon, emptying it of its population, and has propped up Haddad's buffer-state, using it to control all the zone south of the Litani River without encountering any opposition, even enabling Israel to carry out raids in northern Lebanon.

But Egypt has become much more important relative to Israel. Even before it assumed its new role, Egypt had already begun to itch with impatience, pressed by its own enormous problems. During the meetings with the American Secretary of Defence Brown, Egypt declared its readiness to intervene for the preservation of the various countries of the region, in the first place to defend Sudan and Somalia, but also Saudi Arabia if necessary (given its tensions with Iran), Kuwait and the Emirates, or the Sultanate of Oman, where Egyptian troops have already replaced the Iranians. In Washington, Hassan Ali proclaimed: «It is up to Egypt to guarantee the defence of this critical area». On March 29, 1979, Egypt placed its troops along the Libyan border on alert, above all in order to prove that it was capable of intervening here, too. But the friction with Libya shows that Egypt is in a hurry. In fact, Egypt could not bear a clash with a well-armed country and for several years

to come it will have difficulty confronting Libya, because it is terribly lacking in weaponry, particularly planes and modern armour.

Thus the United States has no time to lose, and Carter insists that all interested parties become «rapidly aware» of this. He has held meetings with them; he has established a direct line between himself, Begin and Sadat; he has sent his couriers, Brown and the Middle East expert Atherton; he has hurried off to Cairo and Jerusalem himself, and has turned loose Brzezinski, Vance and even his own son. He has created yet another American fleet on the spur of the moment; he has started work on an enlargement of the port and landing strips on the island of Diego Garcia, from which the aircraft carrier Constellation, brought in from the Philippines, will keep the zone under surveillance.

If the Americans have pulled out their «big guns» in the diplomatic game, what of armaments? They have promised planes and arms to Saudi Arabia in addition to a squadron of ultra-modern F-15 fighters with American pilots in order to enable it to intervene in Yemen. They are studying carefully the gigantic «list of wedding gifts» demanded by Egypt; 300 F-16 fighters, 600 armoured personnel carriers, 4,500 TT tanks, 500 artillery pieces, 80 warships including torpedo boat destroyers and submarines, not to mention an undisclosed number of missiles. And when Israel protested and the Minister of Defense Weismann reminded Brown that it was his country, and not Egypt, that destroyed 400 Russian tanks and 1,000 Russian planes, the United States immediately came up with an arms promise to Israel as well.

In spite of this, the fall of the Shah increases the likelihood of a direct US military intervention in the region, which undoubtedly would not fail to provoke extremely dangerous reactions. This is why the Iraqis, drawing the lessons of the Iranian intervention in Dhofar, proclaimed loudly that «the security of the Gulf and the region as a whole can only be assured by the Arabs themselves». But the Americans believe that they can best take care of their own interests, since upon returning from his first mission to the Middle East, the Defence Secretary declared: «the protection of the oil flow from the Middle East is clearly part of our vital interests, and for the protection of such interests we will take any action that proves necessary, including the use of military force». For his part, the Energy Secretary Schlesinger announced that «the problem of a United States military presence through the use of armed forces personnel is under study».

These were not empty words. The newspapers report that alongside the official negotiations, the creation of a large American base in the Sinai was discussed, at Etzion, which Brown visited in February 1979, and that a secret agreement will permit the installation of two other bases, one in Egypt on the Red Sea, the other in Israel on the Mediterranean. Moreover, during the war between the two Yemens, the United States studied the creation of a «Joint Military Consultative Command» with Saudi Arabia, which would form part of a defense system for the whole Middle East. This had already been discussed with Sadat in connection with a sort of Marshall plan. The total plan was to cost no less than 15 billion dollars, 5 billion of which would be spent on arms. And, pointing to the presence in Aden of 3,000 Cubans staffed by 100 Russian officers and 700 Russian military «advisors» assisted by 100 technicians from East Germany, the US supplemented its original 70 «advisors» in North Yemen with another 300. It goes without saying that in the space of a few weeks the American administration was quite active. And yet there are

people who reproach it for an excessive timidity bordering on resignation!

In this general framework the «peace» between Egypt and Israel is obviously not a real peace, which moreover in the imperialist era could not be guaranteed by any accord or treaty. Furthermore, it is not even, according to Lenin's expression, a «truce that paves the way for further wars», but fits right into the *American war strategy of the last few years*; from the arguments on principle of Camp David to the spectacular visit by Carter to Cairo and Jerusalem, all parties have only worked toward the *logical development* of this strategy.

### Politico-Military Commotion on a Social Powder-Keg

This whole politico-military commotion nonetheless takes place against the background of a social powder-keg such has seldom been seen in history.

The developments in Iran have shown that the accumulation of capital accomplished under these local conditions can only result in a violent explosion of the social contradictions it produces. This conflagration took place in spite of the power of the clergy, which serves as a vehicle for the protests of the exploited masses and the traditional classes ruined by the chaotic disintegration of the old society, only in order to channel them into Islamic fundamentalism, and the absence of an autonomous proletariat, which general historical conditions have prevented from outgrowing the leadership of the commercial petty-bourgeoisie and the religious tradition of Shiite Islam. Now these same contradictions are present throughout the Middle East, with peculiarities which, by comparison to Iran, sometimes attenuate them, and sometimes exacerbate them. Three factors draw the region into a dizzying capitalist maelstrom and make the archaic social and political conditions as well as the direct political pressure of imperialism increasingly intolerable.

The first is the imperialist puppet Israel, which has imported lock, stock and barrel, a capitalist agriculture and industry and the classes associated with these, a European bourgeoisie, petty-bourgeoisie and labour aristocracy — the *ashkenazim* Jews. These categories enjoy exorbitant privileges in comparison to the Arab population, now totally expropriated and hunted off the land in the territories conquered before 1967 and subject to a rapid expropriation in Gaza and the West Bank. But at the same time they enjoy a social and political superiority over the oriental Jewish petty-bourgeoisie and working masses, the *sephardim* Jews, not to mention the immigrant workers now coming in considerable numbers from the Transjordan and soon from Egypt.

Until now the contradictions which undermine Israel have been contained thanks to the terror exercised against the Arab population and the permanent war, buttressed by interclassist «Jewish solidarity». The expansionism of the state of Israel gives it the hope of creating its own productive basis resting on a broad market, but at the same time it swells considerably the masses of proletarians deprived of all rights, who are the object of a double exploitation based on Jewish privilege and the permanent state of siege. In this way Israel increases not only the subjugated people's potential for revolt, but above all the *strength of the exploited* transformed into proletarians. And the continuation of the state of permanent war, the galloping inflation and the sacrifices

demanding of the Jewish working class indicate that the *front of Jewish solidarity* may be broken one day, that the *sephardim* working masses and even significant sectors of the *ashkenazim* workers may take a position of struggle against *Jewish privilege* — and thus for the destruction of the *Jewish state* — a struggle which is indispensable for the *unification of the Middle East working class* in its struggle against capitalism.

The second factor is the lightning-like development of oil wealth, and the third derives mainly from this, i.e., the proliferation of arms, linked to the efforts of imperialism to control the oilfields. These two factors have led to the creation of modern productive sectors which were stimulated and enlarged by the wars, and give rise to transactions as enormous as they are lucrative, which require considerable quantities of finance capital. This results in an abnormal (but under these conditions, natural) swelling of credit and the banking sector, which in turn engenders a large movement of general speculation, and in particular speculation in rent and especially urban real estate.

One can observe the landslide development of immense cities where the worst characteristics of western «civilization» are to be found, where the blackest misery combined with the most ostentatious luxury form a flammable mixture. Capitalism is implanted here with all its defects, but it has no time to fulfill its revolutionary tasks, namely the extension to the whole of society of associated labour and the discipline of social production, which instead are confined to a small number of large industrial complexes, while atomized individual production and to an even greater degree the small distribution entrenched in the heart of the bazaars and suks remain untouched. And if the countries of the West produce phenomena such as the exploitation of children or illegal labour, these are carried to their extreme in the societies newly conquered by capitalism where to old social forms driven to their destruction are not replaced by anything at all. In the immense bazaar of Teheran or in the endless labyrinth of alleys in Cairo, who controls the traffic in children, the double labour of workers who have to pay 60 % - 70 % of their wages for a room, or the labour of tanners and dyers who work with the deadly wastes of the chemical industry?

In Egypt these contradictions are particularly acute. In that country alone there are almost as many inhabitants as in the entire Fertile Crescent and the Arabian peninsula. Moreover it possesses an old industrial tradition and a productive network built on the exploitation of a strong and concentrated, but also combative working class. The fighting tradition of the Egyptian proletariat surpasses by far that of the other countries of the Middle East, and its organizational capacity manifested itself during the unrest of January 1977. After very heavy street fighting which left hundreds dead and at least 4 000 wounded, the worker's revolt, supported by the oppressed strata of the population and the students, forced the government to retract the price increases on essential consumer goods required by the IMF and to promise wage increases instead.

Imperialism absolutely has to «save» Egypt from economic catastrophe, under penalty of seeing its effects spread well beyond the Egyptian borders. The catch is that this rescue will itself prepare even more violent explosions in the future. And besides, it isn't easy. For example, nobody knows how many inhabitants there are in Cairo today. The 1966 census set the figure at 4.5 million, which, according to the national coefficient of population growth (2.2 %), should have risen to approximately 6 million. But with the peasant

expropriations and massive urbanization, the rate of growth of the capital is at least four times greater than the national average, which would result in a figure of more than 10 million. This phenomenon of massive and chaotic urbanization, which afflicts not only Cairo and Egypt but also the other cities and countries of the Middle East evolving toward full capitalism, is a direct result of the fact that capital destroys the old structures *too rapidly* to allow anyone living in their shadow to be absorbed by the islands of advanced production. In these countries, modern capital acts immediately in a concentrated manner, without passing through the historical phases of capital accumulation as in Europe, and thus «frees» from the framework of archaic production millions of persons who are useless to a productive apparatus which comes into being all at once with a colossal productivity and an extremely high organic composition of capital (ratio of physical plant, raw materials, energy, etc. to labour power).

This has been followed by a large emigration in particular toward the Arabian peninsula. Officially 1.4 million Egyptians have left their country, but their real numbers must be at least double that, because the statistics only record those who leave for countries of the Arab League with an official work contract. In the summer of 1978 Saudi Arabia expelled thousands of Egyptians who had entered illegally, and Egyptair was obliged to organize an airlift of 20 flights weekly in order to repatriate them. The proportion of specialized personnel among the emigrants is negligible (1.8 % in 1976), which reveals the backwardness of the Egyptian productive network. But the great majority is composed of *fellahin* who abandon the overpopulated countryside for the mirage of foreign wages, and in the event of an enforced return these may become an explosive substance. Now if the immigration to countries such as Saudi Arabia or the Emirates obviously has objective foundations, the expulsion of several hundred thousand proletarians is not impossible in view of economic difficulties or measures of political retaliation. One can imagine the social consequences of such a mass reflux into Egypt. In Egypt alone deposits in foreign currency by emigrants officially amounted to 189 million dollars in 1974, 367 million in 1975, 358 million in 1976, and 700 million dollars in 1977. This influx of foreign currency was *greater* than that produced by the Suez canal, cotton, oil and tourism combined, and these are the principal sources of such revenue. With more than 40 million inhabitants on 35,000 square kilometers of habitable territory (1,143 inhabitants per square kilometer, including cultivated lands) Egypt has a vital need for expansion. There is not enough land and it is constantly being diminished because of urbanization and the extension of infrastructures. The balance of payments suffers from a chronic deficit; the foreign debt has reached staggering figures and the only solution is to go further into debt in order to avoid a collapse. Wages scarcely reach 20 to 30 Egyptian pounds, the monthly rent for two rooms in the suburbs of Cairo, and inflation erodes them constantly. There is a superabundance of labour power, which means cheap cannon fodder. Is it any surprise that Egypt has impatiently awaited the new alignment of forces in the hope of employing its impoverished masses in the conquest of new territory? But it is by no means certain that Egypt will last as long as Iran did in the role of policeman. Undoubtedly Sadat had every reason for holding long talks with the fleeing Shah. Like Hassan, he wanted to understand the errors committed by the Pahlavic regime in order to try to avoid them. However Egypt does not have Iran's means for corruption.

But emigration doesn't affect Egypt alone. Throughout the Middle East, Zionist expropriation in Palestine, the militarization imposed by the pressure of imperialism and by the United States — Russian antagonism, the concentration of oil rent in a few countries and the impossibility of distributing the wealth over the whole region by generalizing capitalist production, the impossibility of resolving the agrarian question and taking advantage of the fertile lands which exist in abundance but remain arid, and the uprooting of populations with millennial traditions — all these factors have produced the migration of millions of persons torn away from the land or the bazaar, and condemned them to a veritable wage nomadism.

This is especially the plight of the Palestinians, now almost entirely driven from their lands. This people, despoiled as a result of the requirements of imperialism and massacred, on its orders, not only by its declared enemies but also by its supposed friends, dispersed at first by the calculation of the imperialist powers and the infamous logic of the assistance of the UNRWA, responsible for distributing American «aid», and then by successive waves of massacres and by hunger, this people presents new and original class conditions. Prevented by war from owning land and exercising trades or commercial professions, the Palestinians have become guerrillas, sometimes organized in support detachments of the Arab armies, sometimes smugglers, but most often pure proletarians. And how many of them are there? Nobody knows. If we accept 3.5 million as the total number of Palestinians, of which about 2 million are forced into the *diaspora*, to emigration, there could be as many as 1.5 million proletarians. Naturally their dispersion is a source of suffering, but in the long run this weakness may be transformed into a strength. These proletarians are the product of the final rupture of their links with peasant life and their attachment to the land. They have fought; they have organized themselves; they have gone on strike; they have faced death; they have received an international education which can be transmitted to their comrades at work, particularly when these are migrants, too.

Egypt, North and South Yemen and Palestine are the biggest suppliers of labour power to the oil magnates. Before it adopted severe measures to restrict illegal immigration, Saudi Arabia employed Egyptian, Palestinian, Tunisian, Moroccan, Sudanese, Yemeni, Syrian, Somali, Erythrian, South Korean, Taiwanese, Indian, and Pakistani workers in addition, naturally, to technicians and specialists from western countries. Combined with the Palestinians, Egyptians and Yemenis scattered throughout the Middle East, this adds up to more than 5 million proletarians. If we consider the fact that in general only technicians are allowed to bring their families with them, this figure represents a formidable mass of proletarians. Although divided, dispersed to the four winds and for the moment diverted from the class struggle by the few crumbs it receives, it is the real product of the revolution engendered by the oil wells in societies that had been mired in the past until yesterday.

These are the millions of proletarians, who, added to the proletariat of each country, constitute a potentially explosive mass much more pregnant with historical consequences than a treaty which sanctions new alignments of states.

This proletarian version of the Arab migrations of over 13 centuries ago is not as epic and certainly doesn't contemplate conquests as glorious as its predecessor. It develops in silence without making pretentious claims. In the sickening stench of the oilfields, in the searing shantytowns of the deserts, on



the construction sites where they die like slaves, capitalism extends its grip on a new part of the world, and it is highly significant that it assembles a cosmopolitan cross-section of the international working class, its gravedigger — there, in that region of unstable governments, containing installations vital for imperialism, bristling with arms depots, teeming with proletarians and oppressed masses brought up in the school of war and violence.

This is how, from Cairo to Bassorah, and from there to Abadan and Teheran, from Alexandria to Tripoli and to the Maghreb, from Qatar to Beirut via Damascus, from Aden to Haifa via Amman and Jerusalem, from Mosul to Alep, and thence to Adana and Ankara, throughout this immense region are growing and maturing the conditions for the war of the working class masses drawing in their wake the impoverished masses of the cities and countryside. This is a war which can no longer be a war of races and nations except very marginally, because it is becoming a class war. This is the only war which, in union with the proletarians of the large imperialist centres finally compelled to find the road of open struggle again, under the leadership of the reconstructed world communist party, will be able to put an end to imperialist barbarism and give birth to a human, fraternal society, a communist society.

May the faucets of the oilfields be closed!

May the weapons be turned against the common enemy!

## The Democratic Principle

### Introduction

This short text, a critique of the alleged principled value of democracy, appeared for the first time in February 1922, in *Rassegna Comunista*, the theoretical review of the Communist Party of Italy. The Communist International had been founded three years earlier, and with a determination that varied from one country to another, was conducting a struggle against reformist and democratic socialism, that is, a struggle against the policy of betrayal of the proletarian revolution and its ideological foundations.

From the very beginning, the Italian Marxists had been among the most vigorous protagonists in this struggle. «The Democratic Principle» contains the same basic positions as the «Theses on Bourgeois Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat» presented by Lenin at the founding congress of the Comintern, which were directed essentially against the conceptions held by the old corrupted socialist International. The text published by the Italian Marxists therefore fulfills an urgent political requirement, which is rendered explicit by a short phrase in the text itself: «to deepen the abyss between socialism and bourgeois democracy».

This abyss had emerged together with scientific socialism and the revolutionary workers' movement itself, and only decades of reformist class collaboration had been able to «bridge» it. The workers would never march to socialism over this bridge; instead they were to be led into the slaughter of the first imperialist butchery. Democratism, collaboration with one's «own» bourgeoisie, meant the ruin of the proletariat as an international class. When the First World War broke out, Lenin had already been working for decades to impress the perils of collaboration on the minds of the vanguard elements of the proletariat. But the Italian Marxists were a whole generation younger than the Bolsheviks. They stepped into the arena of international politics at the same time as the efforts of the Bolsheviks were being crowned by the establishment of the communist dictatorship in Russia. They did not live in revolutionary Russia, however, but in the reformist, decrepit West which was corrupted by a long tradition of parliamentary routine, and therefore, they were better able to perceive the danger of the social-democratic degeneration of the recently organised communist movement. Their fight for a further deepening of the abyss between democracy and socialism was necessitated by their concern with preventing, or at least minimizing this danger, which was liable to grow with every additional delay of the revolutionary victory in the West. In

this respect, the Italian communists unfortunately stood alone, and their concern was not shared by the other parties. With the notable exception of the Bolsheviks, who nonetheless were becoming more and more isolated as a result of repeated international defeats of the communist movement and were increasingly subjected to the influence of the unfavourable relationship of forces, in no other section of the Comintern was a similar attitude to be found. History has unfortunately vindicated the Italian communists. The abyss between socialism and bourgeois democracy was filled in once again. It was filled to the brim literally with the corpses of the revolutionary proletariat. And once again proletarians were dragged into a second imperialist war, to play the role of cannon fodder in the name of nation and democracy.

The objective of the article is nonetheless not limited to a political critique of bourgeois democracy. It also provides a brief but cogent theoretical underpinning for that critique. The democratic ideology of the bourgeoisie views society or the nation as a unified whole. It is blind to the fact that society and the nation are rent by irreconcilable class antagonisms. For it, the bourgeois state represents the interests of all citizens. The theoretical premise of this conception consists in considering the *individual* as the basic unit of society. But this theoretical assumption is false to the core, and a mere political critique is not sufficient to disprove it. It is necessary to expose the idealist and metaphysical postulates of bourgeois thinking by means of Marxist materialism. Therefore, the reader should not be surprised to find references to primitive society, to the rise of ancient caste relations or the religious doctrine of divine right in the text reproduced below. The object of this is not to expound mere academic knowledge, but rather to present necessary elements for an argument from which it should follow clearly that, in reality, the individual never constitutes the indivisible unit of historical development; *this unit is invariably a society, a collectivity*. Certainly the individual can serve as a representative specimen in physiology or anatomy, for example, but never in the historical or social sciences. This was naturally no new discovery by *Rassegna Comunista*. It was simply a matter of referring back to an old Marxist discovery in order to provide theoretical proof of a political thesis. For, in fact, if the principle of democracy itself is theoretically untenable, then it cannot have the force of a principle in any body, not even in associations, such as proletarian organizations, which are not divided by internal class antagonisms.

Stated briefly, the object of the article from *Rassegna Comunista* was to show that not only democracy in general, but also «proletarian democracy» could not be considered principles without making dangerous concessions to idealism.

We hardly need to mention here that even at the time, even in a still revolutionary phase, such an investigation was likely to elicit condemnation and horror within the proletarian camp itself. The commonplace reaction was to insinuate that the Italian communists were trying to provide a theoretical rationale for a secret contempt for the masses or to introduce an abstract principle of authority. Based on this insinuation, certain confused minds later accused us of being «fundamentally Stalinists». But there is a profoundly tragic irony in this, since on the contrary, true Marxists must see in these pages from 1922 a prophetic warning of the drama which Stalinism began to stage a few years later and which is still unfolding. The best revolutionaries, the true defenders of communism were condemned by a democratic show of hands at workers' assemblies and popular meetings, and communism was banished

from the workers' movement by a democratic majority of the workers themselves. The vulgar anti-communists, capable of thinking only in abstract formal categories, perceive in Stalinism a negation of sacred democracy. By contrast, against the whole background of the anticommunist terror, Marxists perceive in this the most striking historical confirmation of the thoroughly mendacious character of the democratic principle, even in its application to workers' organizations.

From this critique and the evidence it is based on, we do not draw any «constitutional» conclusions. The article from *Rassegna Comunista* shows that to do so would mean being trapped by another form of the same idealist abstraction that we were trying to combat. Therefore, the article explains that majority procedure may be used in trade unions, in the organizations of the proletarian dictatorship, and even in the communist party itself, as long as it is useful and no other mechanism is available. Those individuals who have not been able to escape the abstract antithesis between «authority» and «democracy» and who harbour a liberal dread of the former will breathe a sigh of relief at this point. But this only proves that they have not understood the text at all, for this is a question of content and not a formal quest for abstract criteria.

This point can be elucidated precisely in the case of the revolutionary party. Here there can be no talk of democracy as a principle; the application of formal democratic mechanisms is possible only on the basis of general communist principles, a firm programme, and a unified strategy. The greater the homogeneity and maturity of the party, the greater the collectively assimilated experience, the clearer and more methodical are the party's tactics — the more the democratic mechanisms will tend to disappear, since compromises between the different wings will no longer be necessary, and the party's experience, its ability to weigh developments correctly, and its consistent, systematic tactics based on the lessons of the past will have a greater persuasive power than the number of hands raised at any given time. In this way, centralism acquires an increasingly *organic* character. The opposite is the case when the organization disintegrates and loses its bearings. Democratic procedures will be used more commonly, but they cannot place the organization back on its course, and this is also true if the organization had never been on the correct course in the first place. Therefore, organizations which claim to be communist but whose content and political tradition are not communist, make more and more frequent use not just of pure democratic procedures, but of all possible forms of agreement and compromise typical of bourgeois democracy — negotiations, under-the-table deals, defamation, personality cults, every kind of deception, as well as the twin brother of democracy, disciplinary terror. Eventually, the organization may disintegrate completely or run its course in the rarified atmosphere of formal procedures and punitive measures, which inevitably accompanies the inability to fulfill its original promises; in other words, the organization becomes hardened in its role as a non-communist tendency.

To answer the question whether or not the small International Communist Party of today, whose political continuity extends back to the Italian Marxists of *Rassegna Comunista*, employs a democratic mechanism, it is necessary to review the history of the communist movement and follow its evolution.

The practice of voting on people and theses, as well as its corollaries,

purely formal discipline and bureaucratic interference in the party organization, have shown themselves to be very suited to the task of destroying the Communist International. As methods of organization for the selection and strengthening of the Comintern, they proved to be completely useless. For the disciplining and assimilation of the various groups and tendencies which flocked to the Comintern after the First World War without an understanding of its programme, principles and strategy, these methods were a hindrance rather than a help. Furthermore, in the course of the counter-revolution that destroyed the international workers' movement and banished communism from the mainstream of events, of all the tendencies in the anti-Stalinist opposition, only the «Italian Left» did not cross the abyss between communism and democracy, and therefore did not end up in the swamp of the several variants of democracy which infect contemporary political thought (popular democracy, progressive democracy, workers' democracy, soviet democracy, etc., all of which may be reduced in the final analysis to their democratic component).

From this empirical survey the following important questions arise: after the destruction of communism by Stalinism, could and can the new international revolutionary organization emerge from the amalgamation of different tendencies and groups on the basis of a «common denominator»? Within the communist party may the slightest concession be made to democratic, pacifist, autonomist, and anarchist orientations? Did other groups in the Comintern remain faithful to the principles and programme of Marxism, and, in consequence of their political evolution, are they in a position to contribute to the restoration of Marxism and of the world communist party? Past and present historical developments answer all these questions with a resounding «no». The significance of the text reprinted below is crystallized for us in this historical lesson.

As for the concrete question of party «internal democracy», history itself has resolved it, both by its lessons and by the material situation in which the tragic course has culminated. Indeed this «instrument», which is of no use in the communist party, today more than ever before serves to legitimize confusion and lack of principles; in the cabaret-world of the so-called «left», the «democratic principle» continues to beguile the workers' movement with the siren song of «faded, widowed [idealism] which paints and adorns its body, shrivelled into the most repulsive abstraction...»! (*The Holy Family*).

### The Democratic Principle

The use of certain terms in the exposition of the problems of communism very often engenders ambiguities because of the different meanings these terms may be given. Such is the case with the words *democracy* and *democratic*. In its statements of principle, Marxist communism presents itself as a critique and a negation of democracy; yet communists often defend the democratic character of proletarian organizations (the state system of workers' councils, trade unions and the party) and the application of democracy within them. There is certainly no contradiction in this, and no objection can be made to the use of the dilemma, «either bourgeois democracy or proletarian democracy» as a perfect equivalent to the formula «bourgeois democracy or proletarian dictatorship».

The Marxist critique of the postulates of bourgeois democracy is in fact based on the definition of the class character of modern society. It demonstrates the theoretical inconsistency and the practical deception of a system which pretends to reconcile political equality with the division of society into social classes determined by the nature of the mode of production.

Political freedom and equality, which, according to the theory of liberalism, are expressed in the right to vote, have no meaning except on a basis that excludes inequality of fundamental economic conditions. For this reason we communists accept their application within the class organizations of the proletariat and contend that they should function democratically.

In order to avoid creating ambiguities, and dignifying the concept of democracy, so entrenched in the prevailing ideology which we strive relentlessly to demolish, it would be desirable to use a different term in each of the two cases. Even if we do not do this, it is nonetheless useful to look a little further into the very content of the democratic principle, both in general and in its application to homogeneous class organs. This is necessary to eliminate the danger of again raising the democratic principle to an absolute principle of truth and justice. Such a relapse into apriorism would introduce an element foreign to our entire theoretical framework at the very moment when we are trying, by means of our critique, to sweep away the deceptive and arbitrary content of «liberal» theories.

### I

A theoretical error is always at the root of an error of political tactics. In other words, it is the translation of the tactical error into the language of our collective critical consciousness. Thus the pernicious politics and tactics of social-democracy are reflected in the error of principle that presents socialism as the inheritor of a substantial part of the doctrine that liberalism opposed to the old spiritualist doctrines. In reality, far from ever accepting and completing the critique that democratic liberalism had raised against the aristocratic and absolute monarchies of the *ancien régime*, Marxist socialism in its earliest formulations demolished it utterly. It did so not to defend the spiritualist or idealist doctrine against the Voltairean materialism of the bourgeois revolutionaries, but to demonstrate how the theoreticians of bourgeois materialism had in reality only deluded themselves when they imagined that the political philosophy of the Encyclopedists had led them out of the mists of metaphysics and idealist nonsense. In fact, like all their predecessors, they had to surrender to the genuinely objective critique of social and historical phenomena provided by Marx's historical materialism.

It is also important from a theoretical point of view to demonstrate that no idealist or neo-idealist revision of our principles is needed to deepen the abyss between socialism and bourgeois democracy, to restore to the theory of proletarian revolution its powerfully revolutionary content which had been adulterated by the falsifications of those who fornicate with bourgeois democracy. It is enough merely to refer to the positions taken by the founders of Marxism in the face of the lies of liberal doctrines and of bourgeois materialism.

To return to our argument, we will show that the socialist critique of democracy was in essence a critique of the democratic critique of the old poli-

tical philosophies. Marxism denies their alleged universal opposition and demonstrates that in reality they are theoretically similar, just as in practise the proletariat did not have much reason to celebrate when the direction of society passed from the hands of the feudal, monarchical and religious nobility into the hands of the young commercial and industrial bourgeoisie. And the theoretical demonstration that the new bourgeois philosophy had not overcome the old errors of the despotic regimes, but was itself only an edifice of new sophisms, corresponded concretely to the appearance of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat which contained the negation of the bourgeois claim of having forever established the administration of society on a peaceful and infinitely perfectible basis, thanks to the introduction of suffrage and of parliamentary democracy.

The old political doctrines based on spiritualist concepts or even on religious revelation claimed that the supernatural forces which govern the consciousness and the will of men had assigned to certain individuals, families or castes, the task of ruling and managing the collective existence, making them the repositories of «authority» by divine right. To this, the democratic philosophy which asserted itself at the time of the bourgeois revolution counterposed the proclamation of the moral, political and juridical equality of all citizens, whether they were nobles, clerics or plebeians. It sought to transfer «sovereignty» from the narrow sphere of caste or dynasty to the universal sphere of popular consultation based on suffrage which allowed a majority of the citizens to designate the leaders of the state, according to its will.

The thunderbolts hurled against this conception by the priests of all religions and by spiritualist philosophers do not suffice to give it recognition as the definitive victory of truth over obscurantist error, even if the «rationalism» of this political philosophy seemed for a long time to be the last word in social science and the art of politics, and even if many would-be socialists proclaimed their solidarity with it. This claim that the time of «privilege» was over, once a system with its social hierarchy based on the consent of the majority of electors had been set up, does not withstand the Marxist critique, which throws a completely different light on the nature of social phenomena. This claim may look like an attractive logical construction only if it is admitted from the outset that the *vote*, that is, the judgement, the opinion, the consciousness of each elector has the same weight in delegating power for the administration of the collective business. It is already evident that this conception is unrealistic and unmaterialist because it considers each individual to be a perfect «unit» within a system made up of many potentially equivalent units, and instead of appraising the value of the individual's opinion in the light of his manifold conditions of existence, that is, his relations with others, it postulates this value *a priori* with the hypothesis of the «sovereignty» of the individual. Again this amounts to denying that the consciousness of men is a concrete reflection of the facts and material conditions of their existence, to viewing it as a spark ignited with the same providential fairness in each organism, healthy or impaired, tormented or harmoniously satisfied in all its needs, by some undefinable supreme bestower of life. In the democratic theory, this supreme being no longer designates a monarch, but confers on everyone the equal capacity to do so! In spite of its rationalist front, the democratic theory rests on a no less childish metaphysical premise than does «free will», which, according to the catholic doctrine of the afterlife, wins men either damnation

or salvation. Because it places itself outside of time and historical contingencies, the democratic theory is no less tainted with spiritualism than are the equally erroneous philosophies of revelation and monarchy by divine right.

To further extend this comparison, it is sufficient to remember that many centuries before the French Revolution and the declaration of the rights of man and citizen, the democratic political doctrine had been advanced by thinkers who took their stand resolutely on the terrain of idealism and metaphysical philosophy. Moreover, if the French Revolution toppled the altars of the Christian god in the name of Reason, it was, wittingly or not, only to make Reason into a new divinity.

This metaphysical presupposition, incompatible with the Marxist critique, is characteristic not only of the doctrine constructed by bourgeois liberalism, but also of all the constitutional doctrines and plans for a new society based on the «intrinsic value» of certain schemes of social and state relations. In building its own doctrine of history, Marxism in fact demolished medieval idealism, bourgeois liberalism and utopian socialism with a single blow.

## II

To these arbitrary constructions of social constitutions, whether aristocratic or democratic, authoritarian or liberal, as well as to the anarchist conception of a society without hierarchy or delegation of power, which is rooted in analogous errors, the communist critique opposed a much more thorough study of the nature and causes of social relations in their complex evolution throughout human history and a careful analysis of their characteristics in the present capitalist epoch from which it drew a series of reasoned hypotheses about their further evolution. To this can now be added the enormous theoretical and practical contribution of the proletarian revolution in Russia.

It would be superfluous here to develop the well-known concepts of economic determinism and the arguments which justify its use in interpreting historical events and the social dynamic. The apriorism common to conservatives and utopians is eliminated by the analysis of factors rooted in production, the economy, and the class relations they determine. This makes possible a scientific explanation of the juridical, political, military, religious and cultural facts which make up the diverse manifestations of social life.

We will merely retrace the historical evolution of the mode of social organization and grouping of men, not only in the state, an abstract representation of a collectivity fusing together all individuals, but also in other organizations which arise from the relations between men.

The basis of the interpretation of every social hierarchy, whether extended or limited, is the relations between different individuals, and the basis of these relations is the division of tasks and functions among these individuals.

We can imagine without serious error that at the beginning the human species existed in a completely unorganized form. Still few in number, these individuals could live from the products of nature without the application of technology or labour, and in such conditions could do without their fellow beings. The only existing relations, common to all species, were those of reproduction. But for the human species — and not only for it — these were already sufficient to form a system of relations with its own hierarchy — the family. This could be based on polygamy, polyandry or monogamy. We will not enter into a detailed analysis here; let us say only that the family repre-



sents an embryo of organized collective life, based on a division of functions directly determined by physiological factors, since the mother nourished and raised the children, and the father devoted himself to the hunt, to the acquisition of plunder and to the protection of the family from external enemies, etc.

In this initial phase, where production and economy are almost totally absent, as well as in later stages when they are developing, it is useless to dwell on the abstract question of whether we are dealing with the individual-unit or the society-unit. Without any doubt, the individual is a unit from a biological point of view, but one cannot make this individual the basis of social organization without falling into metaphysical nonsense. From a social perspective, all the individual units do not have the same value. The collectivity is born from relations and groupings in which the status and activity of each individual do not derive from an individual function but from a collective one determined by the multiple influences of the social milieu. Even in the elementary case of an unorganized society or non-society, the simple physiological basis which produces family organization is already sufficient to refute the arbitrary doctrine of the individual as an indivisible unit free to combine with other fellow units, without ceasing to be distinct from, yet somehow, equivalent to them. In this case, obviously the society-unit does not exist either, since relations between men, even reduced to the simple notion that others exist, are extremely limited and restricted to the sphere of the family or the clan. The self-evident conclusion can be drawn in advance: the society-unit has never existed and probably never will except as a «limit» which can be brought progressively nearer by the disappearance of the boundaries of classes and states.

Setting out from the individual-unit in order to draw social conclusions and to construct social blueprints or even in order to deny society, is setting out from an unreal supposition which, even in its most modern formulations, only amounts to refurbishing the concepts of religious revelation and creation and of a spiritual life which is not dependent upon natural and organic life. The divine creator — or a single power governing the destiny of the universe — has given each individual this elementary property of being an autonomous well-defined molecule endowed with consciousness, will and responsibility within the social aggregate, independent of contingent factors deriving from the physical influence of the environment. Only the appearance of this religious and idealist conception is modified in the doctrine of democratic liberalism or libertarian individualism. The soul as a spark from the supreme Being, the subjective sovereignty of each elector, or the unlimited autonomy of the citizen of a society without laws — these are so many sophisms which, in the eyes of the Marxist critique, are tainted with the same infantile idealism, no matter how resolutely «materialist» the first bourgeois liberals and anarchists may have been.

This conception finds its match in the equally idealist hypothesis of the perfect social unit — of social monism — based on the divine will which is supposed to govern and administer the life of our species. Returning to the primitive stage of social life which we were considering and to the family organization discovered there, we conclude that we do not need such metaphysical hypotheses of the individual-unit and the society-unit in order to interpret the life of the species and the process of its evolution. On the other hand, we can positively state that we are dealing with a type of *collectivity organized on a unitary basis*, i.e. the family. We take care not to make this a fixed or permanent type or to idealize it as the model form of the social collectivity, as anar-

chism or absolute monarchy do with the individual. Rather we simply record the existence of the family as the primary unit of human organization, which will be succeeded by others, which itself will be modified in many aspects, and which will become a constituent element of other collective organizations, or, one may suppose, will disappear in very advanced social forms. We do not feel at all obliged to be for or against the family in principle, any more than, for example, for or against the state. What does concern us is to grasp the evolutionary direction of these types of human organization. When we ask ourselves whether they will disappear one day, we do so objectively, because it could not occur to us to think of them as sacred and eternal, or as pernicious and to be destroyed. Conservatism and its opposite (i.e. the negation of every form of organization and social hierarchy) are equally weak from a critical view-point, and equally sterile.

Thus leaving aside the traditional opposition between the categories individual and society, we follow the formation and the evolution of other *units* in our study of human history: organized human collectivities, broad or restricted groupings of men with a hierarchy based on a division of functions, which appear as the real factors and agents of social life. Such units can in a certain sense be compared to organic units, to living organisms whose cells, with their different functions and values, can be represented by men or by rudimentary groups of men. However the analogy is not complete, since while a living organism has well-defined limits and obeys the inflexible biological laws of its growth and death, organized social units do not have fixed boundaries and are continually being renewed, mingling with one another, simultaneously splitting and recombining. If we dwelt on the first conspicuous example of the family unit, it was to demonstrate the following: if these units which we are considering are clearly composed of individuals and if their very composition is variable, they nonetheless behave like organic and integral «wholes», such that to split them into individual units has no real meaning and is tantamount to a myth. The family element constitutes a whole whose life does not depend on the number of individuals that comprise it, but on the network of their relationships. To take a crude example, a family composed of the head, the wives and a few feeble old men is not equal to another made up of its head and many strong young men.

Setting out from the family, the first organized social form, where one finds the first example of division of functions, the first hierarchies, the first forms of authority and the direction of individuals' activities and the administration of things, human evolution passes through an infinite series of other organizational forms, increasingly broad and complex. The reason for this increasing complexity lies in the growing complexity of social relations and hierarchies born from the ever-increasing differentiation between functions. The latter is directly determined by the systems of production that technology and science place at the disposal of human activity in order to provide an increasing number of products suited to satisfying the needs of larger societies evolving towards higher forms of life. An analysis which seeks to understand the process of formation and change of different human organizations, as well as the interplay of relations within the whole of society, must be based on the notion of the development of productive technology and the economic relations which arise from the distribution of individuals among the different tasks required by the productive mechanism. The formation and evolution of dynasties, castes, armies, states, empires, corporations and parties can and

must be studied on the basis of these elements. One can imagine that at the highest point of this complex development a kind of organized unit will appear which will encompass all of mankind and which will establish a rational division of functions between all men. What significance and limits the hierarchical system of collective administration will have in this higher form of human social life is a matter for further study.

### III

To examine those unitary bodies whose internal relations are regulated by what is generally called the «democratic principle», for reasons of simplicity we will distinguish between organized collectivities whose hierarchies are imposed from outside and those that choose their own hierarchy from within. According to the religious conception and the pure doctrine of authority, in every epoch human society is a collective unit which receives its hierarchy from supernatural powers. We will not repeat the critique of such a metaphysical over-simplification which is contradicted by our whole experience. It is the necessity of the division of functions which gives rise naturally to hierarchies; and this is what has happened in the case of the family. As it develops into a tribe or horde, it must organize itself in order to struggle against rival tribes. Leadership must be entrusted to those most able to use the communal energies, and military hierarchies emerge in response to this need. This criterion of choice in the common interest appeared thousands of years before modern democratic electoralism; in the beginning kings, military chiefs and priests were elected. In the course of time, other criteria for the formation of hierarchies prevailed, giving rise to caste privileges transmitted by inheritance or even by initiation into closed schools, sects and cults. Nevertheless, in normal practice, accession to a given rank and inheritance of that rank were motivated by the possession of special aptitudes. We do not intend to follow here the whole process of the formation of castes and then of classes within society. We will only say that their appearance no longer corresponds to the logical necessity of a division of functions alone, but also to the fact that certain strata occupying a privileged position in the economic mechanism end up monopolizing power and social influence. In one way or another, every ruling caste provides itself with its own organization, its own hierarchy, and likewise, economically privileged classes. To limit ourselves to one example — the landed aristocracy of the Middle Ages, by uniting itself for the defense of its common privileges against the assaults of the other classes, constructed an organizational form culminating in the monarchy, which concentrated public powers in its own hands to the complete exclusion of the other layers of the population. The state of the feudal epoch was the organization of the feudal nobility supported by the clergy. The principal element of coercion of the military monarchy was the army. Here we have a type of organized collectivity whose hierarchy was instituted from without since it was the king who bestowed the ranks, and in the army, passive obedience was the rule. Every form of state concentrates under one authority the organizing and officering of a whole series of executive hierarchies: the army, police, magistracy, bureaucracy. Thus the state makes material use of the activity of individuals from all classes, but it is organized on the basis of a single or a few privileged classes which appropriate the power to constitute its different hierarchies. The other classes, and in general all groups of individuals for whom it was only too evi-

dent that the state, in spite of its claims, by no means guaranteed the interests of everyone, seek to provide themselves with their own organizations in order to make their own interests prevail. Their point of departure is that their members occupy an identical position in production and economic life.

As for organizations which provide themselves with their own hierarchy, if we ask what is the best way to ensure the defense of the collective interests and to avoid the formation of privileged strata, some will propose the democratic method whose principle lies in using the majority opinion to select those to fill the various offices.

Our critique of such a method must be much more severe when it is applied to the whole of society as it is today, or to given nations, than when it is introduced into much more restricted organizations, such as trade unions and parties.

In the first case it must be rejected without hesitation as without foundation, since it takes no account of the situation of individuals in the economy and since it presupposes the intrinsic perfection of the system without taking into consideration the historical evolution of the collectivity to which it is applied.

The division of society into classes distinguished by economic privilege clearly removes all value from majority decision-making. Our critique refutes the deceitful theory that the democratic and parliamentary state machine which arose from modern liberal constitutions is an organization of all citizens in the interests of all citizens. From the moment that opposing interests and class conflicts exist, there can be no unity of organization, and in spite of the outward appearance of popular sovereignty, the state remains the organ of the economically dominant class and the instrument of defense of its interests. In spite of the application of the democratic system to political representation, bourgeois society appears as a complex network of unitary bodies. Many of these, which spring from the privileged layers and tend to preserve the present social apparatus, gather around the powerful centralized organism of the political state. Others may be neutral or may have a changing attitude towards the state. Finally, others arise within the economically oppressed and exploited layers and are directed against the class state. Communism demonstrates that the formal juridical and political application of the democratic and majority principle to all citizens while society is divided into opposed classes in relation to the economy, is incapable of making the state an organizational unit of the whole society or the whole nation. Officially that is what political democracy claims to be, whereas in reality it is the form suited to the power of the capitalist class, to the dictatorship of this particular class, for the purpose of preserving its privileges.

Therefore it is not necessary to devote much time to refuting the error of attributing the same degree of independence and maturity to the vote of each elector, whether he is a worker exhausted by excessive physical labour or a rich dissolute, a shrewd captain of industry or an unfortunate proletarian ignorant of the causes of his misery and the means of remedying them. From time to time, after long intervals, the opinion of these and others is solicited, and it is claimed that the accomplishment of this «sovereign» duty is sufficient to ensure calm and the obedience of whoever feels victimized and ill-treated by the state policies and administration.

## IV

It is clear that the principle of democracy has no intrinsic virtue. It is not a «*principle*», but rather a simple *mechanism* of organization, responding to the simple and crude arithmetical presumption that the majority is right and the minority is wrong. Now we shall see if and to what extent this mechanism is useful and sufficient for the functioning of organizations comprising more restricted collectivities which are not divided by economic antagonisms. To do this, these organizations must be considered in their process of historical development.

Is this democratic mechanism applicable in the dictatorship of the proletariat, i.e. in the state form born from the revolutionary victory of rebel classes against the power of the bourgeois states? Can this form of state, on account of its internal mechanism of the delegation of powers and of the formation of hierarchies, thus be defined as a «proletarian democracy»? The question should be broached without prejudice, because if although we might reach the conclusion that the democratic mechanism is useful under certain conditions, as long as history has not produced a better mechanism, we must be convinced that there is not the slightest reason to establish *a priori* the concept of the sovereignty of the «majority» of the proletariat. In fact the day after the revolution, the proletariat will not yet be a totally homogeneous collectivity nor will it be the only class. In Russia for example, power is in the hands of the working class and the peasantry, but if we consider the entire development of the revolutionary movement, it is easy to demonstrate that the industrial proletariat class, although much less numerous than the peasantry, nevertheless plays a far more important role. Then it is logical that the Soviet mechanism accords much more value to the vote of a worker than that of a peasant.

We do not intend to examine thoroughly here the characteristics of the proletarian state constitution. We will not consider it metaphysically as something absolute, as reactionaries do the divine right of the monarchy, liberals, parliamentarism based on universal suffrage, and anarchists, the non-state. As it is an organization of one class destined to strip the opposing classes of their economic privileges, the proletarian state is a real historical force which adapts itself to the goal it pursues, that is, to the necessities which gave birth to it. At certain moments its impulse may come from either broad mass consultations or from the action of very restricted executive organs endowed with full powers. What is essential is to give this organization of proletarian power the means and weapons to destroy bourgeois economic privilege and the political and military resistance of the bourgeoisie, in a way that prepares for the subsequent disappearance of classes themselves, and for the more and more profound modifications of the tasks and structure of the proletarian state.

One thing is sure — while bourgeois democracy's real goal is to deprive the large proletarian and petty-bourgeois masses of all influence in the control of the state, reserved for the big industrial, banking and agricultural oligarchies, the proletarian dictatorship must be able to involve the broadest layers of the proletarian and even semi-proletarian masses in the struggle that it embodies. But only those who are the victims of democratic prejudice could imagine that attaining this end merely requires the setting up of a vast mechanism of electoral consultation. This may be excessive or — more often — insufficient, because this form of participation by many proletarians may

result in their not taking part in other more active manifestations of the class struggle. On the other hand, the intensity of the struggle in particular phases demands speed of decision and movement and a centralized organization of efforts in a common direction, which, as the Russian experience is demonstrating with a whole series of examples, imposes on the proletarian state constitutional characteristics which are in open contradiction to the canons of bourgeois democracy. Supporters of bourgeois democracy howl about the violation of liberties, whereas it is only a matter of unmasking the philistine prejudices which have always allowed demagogues to ensure power to the privileged. In the dictatorship of the proletariat, the constitutional mechanism of the state organization is not only consultative, but at the same time executive. Participation in the functions of political life, if not of the whole mass of electors, then at least of a wide layer of their delegates, is not intermittent but continuous. It is interesting to note that this is accomplished without at all harming the unitary character of the action of the whole state apparatus — rather to the contrary. And this is thanks precisely to the criteria opposed to those of bourgeois hyperliberalism, that is, virtual suppression of *direct* elections and *proportional* representation, once, as we have seen, the other sacred dogma of the *equal vote*, has been overthrown.

We do not claim that these new criteria introduced into the representative mechanism, or codified in a constitution, stem from reasons of principle. Under new circumstances, the criteria could be different. In any case we are attempting to make it clear that we do not attribute any intrinsic value to these forms of organization and representation. This is translated into a fundamental Marxist thesis: the revolution is not a problem of forms of organization. *On the contrary, the revolution is a problem of content, a problem of the movement and action of revolutionary forces in an unending process, which cannot be theorized and crystallized in any scheme for an immutable «constitutional doctrine».*

In any case, in the mechanisms of the workers' councils we find no trace of the rule of bourgeois democracy, which states that each citizen directly chooses his delegate to the supreme representative body, the parliament. On the contrary, there are different levels of workers' and peasants' councils, each one with a broader territorial base culminating in the congress of Soviets. Each local or district council elects its delegates to a higher council, and in the same way elects its own administration, i.e. its executive organ. At the base, in the city or rural council, the entire mass is consulted. In the election of delegates to higher councils and local administrative offices, each group of electors votes not according to a proportional system, but according to a majority system, choosing its delegates from lists put forward by the parties. Furthermore, since a single delegate is sufficient to establish a link between a lower and higher council, it is clear that the two dogmas of formal liberalism — voting for several members from a list and proportional representation — fall by the wayside. At each level, the councils must give rise to organs that are both consultative and administrative and directly linked to the central administration. Thus it is natural that as one progresses towards higher representative organs, one does not encounter parliamentary assemblies of chatterboxes who discuss interminably without ever acting; rather, one sees compact and homogeneous bodies capable of directing the action and political struggle, and of giving revolutionary guidance to the whole mass thus organized in a unitary fashion.

These capacities, which are definitely not automatically inherent in any constitutional schema, are reached in this mechanism because of the presence of an extremely important factor, the political party, whose content goes far beyond pure organizational form, and whose collective and active consciousness and will allow the work to be oriented according to the requirements of a long and always advancing process. Of all the organs of the proletarian dictatorship, the political party is the one whose characteristics most nearly approach those of a homogeneous unitary collectivity, unified in action. In reality, it only encompasses a minority of the mass, but the properties which distinguish it from all other broad-based forms of representative organization demonstrate precisely that the party represents the collective interests and movement better than any other organ. All party members participate directly in accomplishing the common task and prepare themselves to resolve the problems of the revolutionary struggle and the reconstruction of society, which the majority of the mass only become aware of when they are actually faced with them. For all these reasons, in a system of representation and delegation based not on the democratic lie but on a layer of the population whose common fundamental interests propel them on the course of revolution, it is natural that the choices fall spontaneously on elements put forward by the revolutionary party, which is equipped to respond to the demands of the struggle and to resolve the problems for which it has been able to prepare itself. We do not attribute these capacities of the party to its particular constitution, any more than we do in the case of any other organization. The party may or may not be suited to its task of leading the revolutionary action of a class; it is not any political party but a precise one, namely the communist party, that can assume this task, and not even the communist party is immune to the numerous dangers of degeneration and dissolution. What makes the party equal to its task is not its statutes or mere internal organizational measures. It is the positive characteristics which develop within the party because it participates in the struggle as an organization possessing a single orientation which derives from its conception of the historical process, form a fundamental programme which has been translated into a collective consciousness and at the same time from a secure organizational discipline<sup>1</sup>.

To return to the nature of the constitutional mechanism of the proletarian dictatorship — of which we have already said that it was executive as well as legislative at all levels — we must add something to specify what tasks of the collective life this mechanism's executive functions and initiatives respond to. These functions and initiatives are the very reason for its formation, and they determine the relationships existing within its continually evolving elastic mechanism. We refer here to the initial period of proletarian power whose image we have in the four and a half years that the proletarian dictatorship has existed in Russia, because we do not wish to speculate as to what the definitive basis of the representative organs will be in a classless communist society. We cannot predict how exactly society will evolve as it approaches this stage; we can only envisage that it will move in the direction of a fusion of various political, administrative and economic organs, and at the same time, a progressive elimination of every element of coercion and of the state itself as an instrument of power of one class and a weapon of struggle against the surviving enemy classes.

In its initial period, the proletarian dictatorship has an extremely difficult

and complex task that can be subdivided into three spheres of action: political, military and economic. Military defense against counter-revolutionary attacks from within and without and the reconstruction of society on a collective basis depend upon a systematic and rational plan of activity which, while utilizing the diverse energies of the whole mass with the maximum efficiency and results, must also achieve a powerful unity. As a consequence, the body which leads the struggle against the domestic and foreign enemy, that is, the revolutionary army and police, must be based on discipline, and its hierarchy must be centralized in the hands of the proletarian power. The Red Army itself is thus an organized unit whose hierarchy is imposed from without by the government of the proletarian state, and the same is true for the revolutionary police and tribunals.

The problems of the economic apparatus which the victorious proletariat erects in order to lay the foundations of the new system of production and distribution is more complex. The characteristic that distinguishes this rational administration from the «chaos» of bourgeois private economy is centralization. Every enterprise must be managed in the interest of the entire collectivity and in harmony with the requirements of the whole plan of production and distribution. On the other hand, the economic apparatus (and the groups of individuals that comprise it) is continually being modified, not only through its own gradual development but also by the inevitable crises in a period of such vast transformations, which cannot be without political and military struggles. These considerations lead to the following conclusions: in the initial period of the proletarian dictatorship, although the councils at different levels must appoint their delegates to the local executive organs as well as to the legislative organs at higher levels, the absolute responsibility for military defense, and in a less rigid way, for the economic campaign, must remain with the centre. For their part, the local organs serve to organize the masses politically so that they will participate in fulfilling the plans and accept military and economic organization. They thereby create the conditions for the broadest and most continuous mass activity possible, and can channel this activity towards the formation of a highly centralized proletarian state.

These considerations certainly are not intended to deny all possibility of movement and initiative to the intermediary organs of the state hierarchy. But we wanted to show that one cannot theorize that they must be formed by the application of groups of electors organized on the basis of factories or army divisions to the revolution's executive tasks of maintaining military or economic order. The structure of such groups is simply not able to confer any special abilities on them. The units in which the electors are grouped at the base can therefore be formed according to empirical criteria. In fact they *will* constitute themselves according to empirical criteria, among which, for instance, the convergence in the workplace, the neighbourhood, the garrison, the battlefield or any other situation in daily life, without any of them being excluded *a priori* or held up as a model. This does not prevent the representative organs of the proletarian state from being based on a territorial division into electoral districts. None of these considerations is absolute, and this takes us back to our thesis that no constitutional schema has the value of a principle, and that majority democracy in the formal and arithmetic sense is only one possible method for coordinating the relations that arise within collective organizations. No matter what point of view one takes, it is impossible to



attribute to it an intrinsic character of necessity or justice. For Marxists these terms have no meaning. Therefore we do not propose to substitute for the democratic schema which we have been criticizing any other schema of a state apparatus which in itself will be exempt from defects and errors.

## V

It seems to us that enough has been said about the democratic principle in its application to the bourgeois state, which claims to embrace all classes, and also in its application to the proletarian class exclusively as the basis of the state after the revolutionary victory. Something should be said about the application of the democratic mechanism to organizations existing within the proletariat before (and also after) the conquest of power, i.e. in trade unions and the political party.

We established above that a true organizational unity is only possible on the basis of an identity of interests among the members. Since one joins unions or parties by virtue of a spontaneous decision to participate in a specific kind of action, a critique which absolutely denies any value to the democratic mechanism in the case of the bourgeois state (i.e. a fallacious constitutional union of all classes) is not applicable here. Nevertheless, even in the case of the party and the trade union it is necessary not to be led astray by the arbitrary concept of the «sanctity» of majority decisions.

In contrast to the party, the trade union is characterized by the virtual identity of its members' immediate material interests. Within the limits of the category, it attains a broad homogeneity of composition and it is an organization with voluntary membership. It tends to become an organization which all the workers of a given category or industry join automatically or are even, as in a certain phase of the dictatorship of the proletariat, obliged to join. It is certain that in this domain number remains the decisive factor and the majority decision has a great value, but we cannot confine ourselves to a schematic consideration of its results. It is also necessary to take into account other factors which come into play in the life of the union organization: a bureaucratized hierarchy of functionaries which paralyzes the union under its tutelage, and the vanguard groups that the revolutionary party has established within it in order to lead it onto the terrain of revolutionary action. In this struggle, communists often point out that the functionaries of the union bureaucracy violate the democratic idea and are contemptuous of the will of the majority. It is correct to denounce this because the right-wing union bosses parade a democratic mentality, and it is necessary to point out their contradictions. We do the same with bourgeois liberals each time they coerce and falsify the popular consultation, without proposing that even a free consultation would resolve the problems which weigh on the proletariat. It is right and opportune to do this because in the moments when the broad masses are forced into action by the pressure of the economic situation, it is possible to turn aside the union bureaucrats' influence, which is in substance an extra-proletarian influence of classes and organizations alien to the trade union, thereby augmenting the influence of the revolutionary groups. But in all this there are no «constitutional» prejudices, and communists, provided that they are understood by the masses and can demonstrate to them that they are acting in the direction of their most immediate felt interests, can and must behave in a

flexible way vis-à-vis the canons of formal democracy. For example, there is no contradiction between these two tactical attitudes: on one hand, taking the responsibility of representing the minority in the leadership organs of the unions insofar as the statutes allow; and on the other hand, stating that this statutory representation should be suppressed once we have conquered these organizations in order to speed up their actions. What should guide us in this question is a careful analysis of the developmental process in the unions in the present phase. We must accelerate their transformation from organs of counter-revolutionary influence on the proletariat into organs of revolutionary struggle. The criteria of internal organization have no value in themselves but only insofar as they contribute to this objective.

We now analyze the party organization which we have already touched on in regard to the mechanism of the worker's state. The party does not start from as complete an identity of economic interests as does the union. On the contrary it bases the unity of its organization not on category, like the union, but on the much broader basis of the entire class. This is true not only in space, since the party strives to become international, but also in time, since it is the specific organ whose consciousness and action reflect the requirements of victory throughout the process of the proletariat's revolutionary emancipation. When we study the problems of party structure and internal organization, these well-known considerations force us to keep in mind the whole process of its formation and life in relation to the complex tasks which it continually has to carry out. At the end of this already long exposition, we cannot enter into details of the mechanism which should regulate consultation of the party's mass membership, their recruitment and the designation of responsible officers. There is no doubt that for the moment there is nothing better to do than hold to the majority principle. But as we have emphasized, there is no reason to raise use of the democratic mechanism to a principle. Besides its consultative functions, analogous to the legislative tasks of the state apparatus, the party has executive tasks which at the crucial moment of the struggle, correspond to those of an army and which demand maximum discipline toward the hierarchy. In fact, in the complex process which has led to the formation of communist parties, the emergence of a hierarchy is a real and dialectical phenomenon which has remote origins and which corresponds to the entire past experience of the functioning of the party's mechanism. We cannot state that the decisions of the party majority are *per se* as correct as those of the infallible supernatural judges who are supposed to have given human societies their leaders, like the gods believed in by all those who think that the Holy Spirit participates in papal conclaves. Even in an organization like the party where the broad composition is a result of selection through spontaneous voluntary membership and control of recruitment, the decision of the majority is not intrinsically the best. If it contributes to a better working of the party's executive bodies, this is only because of the coincidence of individual efforts in a unitary and well-oriented work. We will not propose at this time replacing this mechanism by another and we will not examine in detail what such a new system might be. But we can envisage a mode of organization which will be increasingly liberated from the conventions of the democratic principle, and it will not be necessary to reject it out of unjustified fears if one day it can be shown that other methods of decision, of choice, of resolution of problems are more consistent with the real demands of the party's development and its activity in the framework of history.

The democratic criterion has been for us so far a material and incidental factor in the construction of our internal organization and the formulation of our party statutes; it is not an indispensable platform for them. Therefore we will not raise the organizational formula known as «democratic centralism» to the level of a principle. Democracy cannot be a principle for us. Centralism is indisputably one, since the essential characteristics of party organization must be unity of structure and action. The term *centralism* is sufficient to express the continuity of party structure in space; in order to introduce the essential idea of continuity in time, the historical continuity of the struggle which, surmounting successive obstacles, always advances towards the same goal, and in order to combine these two essential ideas of unity in the same formula, we would propose that the communist party base its organization on «organic centralism». While preserving as much of the incidental democratic mechanism that can be used, we will eliminate the use of the term «democracy», which is dear to the worst demagogues but tainted with irony for the exploited, oppressed and cheated, abandoning it to the exclusive usage of the bourgeoisie and the champions of liberalism in their diverse guises and sometimes extremist poses.

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- Cours de l'impérialisme mondial.
- Les bases du militantisme communiste.
- Le processus de formation des sections nationales de l'I.C.
- Les «trotskystes» contre Trotsky.

1. The development of these ideas is contained in the theses on the party's tactics presented at the Congress of the Communist Party of Italy at Rome in 1922.

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**The Social Imperialism  
of the Spartacists or  
An Obituary on a Living Tendency**

A spectre is haunting Afghanistan! But it is not, as some contemporary modernizers of Marxism hold, the spectre of communism. It is the hideous spectre of Russian imperialism, which celebrates its counter-revolutionary bacchanal on the bodies of peasants mass-murdered in their mountain villages and protesting school children cut down on the streets of Kabul by Red Army bullets. Though perhaps not on the same scale as the US colonization of Vietnam in the 1960's, Russian «pacification» of Afghanistan is every bit as violent and thorough.

But our purpose here is not to describe the motives and mechanisms of «Soviet» imperialism in Afghanistan. Rather, we intend to expose the theoretical barrenness of the Spartacist apologia for Russian colonialism. This capitulation is justified by the peculiar contention that capitalism has been abolished in Russia to be replaced by a regime which is not yet socialist, but which merits the proletariat's «unconditional defense», since it rests upon «proletarian property forms». We will show that the Spartacists lay claim to the legacy of «Trotskyism» only to defame the architect of the October insurrection. However dwarfed the Spartacists may be by the towering stature of Leon Trotsky, their treasonous position on the Soviet Union nevertheless flows from Trotsky's own mistakes in his later years. Exiled and isolated in the 1930's, Trotsky developed an analysis that was ambiguous, contradictory and untenable in the long run. In a sense, the whole of Spartacism was contained in Trotsky's positions, and it represents one of the inevitable outcomes of his vacillations. To demonstrate this, it will be necessary to review some of Trotsky's more categorical statements on the nature of the Russian state and its involvement in World War II.

In his article «The USSR in War» (1939), Trotsky demonstrates that, unlike the Spartacists, he was still aware that

«The primary political criterion for us is not the transformation of property relations in this or another area, however important these may be in themselves, but rather the change in the consciousness and organization of the world proletariat, the raising of their capacity for defending former conquests and accomplishing new ones.»

We will not comment here on the fact that he designates «defending former conquests» as a concrete objective of the proletariat at the time. Further on, we will deal with this position, which the Spartacists take to the absurd. However, we are in absolute agreement with this *primary political criterion*.

This is precisely the real criterion by which a party or state should be judged. Unfortunately, Trotsky was unable to hold to his criterion and instead introduced others. Why? Fundamentally because he considered that the nationalization of industry, or as he said «statification of property» constituted a measure «revolutionary in character», a «progressive measure» no matter what the class nature of the state that undertakes it. But for us, and for Marx and Engels (who explains this clearly enough in Anti-Duhring) and Lenin, such a measure in itself does not go beyond capitalism, and is not progressive, does not constitute a step TOWARD socialism, unless it is undertaken by the dictatorship of the proletariat, unless it is the proletariat organized as the ruling class, which thus concentrates control of social production in its own hands. But Trotsky had begun to reverse the relationship between politics and economics: it is no longer the class character of the state (defined by the «primary political criterion»!) which gives nationalization its significance and content; rather it is nationalization which determines the class character of the state. Hence, Trotsky's difficulty in defining the USSR, a dilemma which he left hanging in the hope that history would resolve it.

Here then is the source of Trotsky's contradictions. On the one hand he states that

«Inasmuch as Stalin's Bonapartist dictatorship bases itself not on private but on state property, the invasion of Poland by the Red Army should, in the nature of the case, result in the abolition of private capitalist property, so as thus to bring the regime of the occupied territories into accord with the regime of the USSR.»

And he argues that this measure is «revolutionary in character». On the other hand, he recoils from the consequences of this statement and declares that

«Thus, we must first and foremost establish that the extension of the territory dominated by bureaucratic autocracy and parasitism, cloaked by «socialist» measures, can augment the prestige of the Kremlin, engender illusions concerning the possibility of replacing the proletarian revolution by bureaucratic manoeuvres, and so on. This evil by far outweighs the progressive content of Stalinist reforms in Poland.»

But Trotsky is himself partly responsible for this «evil», since he asserts that «the statification of the means of production is [in itself] a progressive measure», and since, consciously or not, he gave credence to the Stalinist pretension of building socialism.

In various party texts, we asserted that Stalinism was in fact still revolutionary in the USSR, but *in the bourgeois sense*, and that if it had limited itself to claiming (as Molotov did until his death) that it was laying *the foundations* of socialism, it would have been entirely right: the foundations of socialism are nothing other than capitalism. But Trotsky had in mind the revolutionary or counter-revolutionary role of Stalinism *in the proletarian sense*. In reality, he had surreptitiously added to the perfectly correct «primary political criterion» another criterion which is not even economic but juridical, since it only refers to *property forms*. He forgot that as long as social wealth functions as capital, it is *capitalist* property. Trotsky tried to justify his position with historical analogies drawn from bourgeois revolutions. But these analogies are fallacious because, as we have often shown, bourgeois and proletarian revolutions by no means have the same character. If the likes of Czar Alexander II can abolish serfdom, if the likes of Bismarck can make a bourgeois revolution «from above», if the feudal counter-revolution can be forced to become the executor of the bourgeois revolution, the proletarian revolution has no such surrogates. The task of destroying not only «property forms» but also *capita-*

*list relations of production*, wage labour and all forms of commodity productions can only be accomplished by the *dictatorship of the proletariat!*

Trotsky's inability to grasp the character of the Russian state is clearly present in his deeply flawed attempt at a detailed analysis of the Stalinized Soviet Union in *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936), a text which his epigones praise as a «classic» of Marxism. Setting out to refute the Stalinist claim that «we have already achieved socialism — that is, the lowest stage of communism» in the USSR, Trotsky first makes a fatal concession to the Stalinist version of the formula «from each according to his abilities, to each according to his work». He states that in the lower phase of communism

«In order to increase the productive forces, it is necessary to resort to the customary norms of wage payment — that is, to the distribution of life's goods in proportion to the quantity and quality of individual labour».

In other words, according to Trotsky, under socialism

«the distribution of life's goods is carried out with a capitalistic measure of value and all the consequences ensuing therefrom».

including the circulation of «money as a measure of value, means of exchange and medium of payment». Now these two ingredients, wage labour and the circulation of commodities by means of a universal equivalent, money, are precisely the defining characteristics of capitalism. On the other hand, under socialism, these characteristics have disappeared, as Marx states in the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*:

«Within the co-operative society based on common ownership of the means of production, the producers do not exchange their products; just as little does the labour employed on the products appear here as the *value* of these products, as an objective quality possessed by them...».

Of course, it is obvious that the dictatorship of the proletariat will not be able to abolish the market, wage labour and then money overnight. It was even less able to do this in Russia, where an enormous *precapitalist* sector still existed, and which it had to bring up to level of associated labour. But, on one hand, this is not a justification for confusing socialism with the transition period of the dictatorship of the proletariat. On the other hand, the fact that in an isolated Russia, the proletariat had to strive to raise the productivity of labour by socializing small production, does not at all mean that this task was specifically *proletarian*; the counter-revolution — bourgeois and not feudal! — clearly had to undertake it as well, and in a much more ferocious way. Trotsky writes:

«It is exactly for the Marxist that [the question of state ownership] is not exhausted by a consideration of forms of property regardless of the achieved productivity of labour».

With the introduction of this new factor, he proposes that «the universal historical conception of Marx» cannot be «mechanically» applied «to the particular case of the Soviet Union», and modifies his formula to read: nationalization plus a high level of productivity equals socialism. And where does this leave Russia? Abandoning the Marxist principle of the «*revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*» as the «political transition period» between capitalism and communism, Trotsky concludes:

«It would be truer, therefore, to name the present Soviet regime in all its contradictoriness, not a socialist regime, but a *preparatory regime transitional* from capitalism to socialism».



Thus, despite his magnificent battle against the theory of «socialism in one country», Trotsky here makes a catastrophic concession to Stalin. Under the pretext that large industry was nationalized and that the productive forces were developing, he admits that the USSR is in a stage of *transition* between capitalism and socialism. Too bad for the «primary political criterion»! It is only logical while preaching the «defense of the USSR». In reality, this conclusion is his premise: it is because he cannot admit that the counter-revolution had triumphed in Russia and that the proletariat no longer had anything to defend, that he indulges in these theoretical contorsions.

In his article «The USSR in War», Trotsky continued to founder in contradictions, because he used not one criterion, but two, which, far from coinciding, can be opposed to each other. In a way, he was conscious of this. He had scarcely asserted that Stalinism performs «revolutionary» actions, when he became alarmed and drew back — this creates the illusion that «bureaucratic manoeuvres» can replace the proletarian revolution. Never! But he was not able to extricate himself:

«We must not lose sight for a single moment of the fact that the question of overthrowing the Soviet bureaucracy is for us subordinate to the question of preserving state property in the means of production in the USSR; that the question of preserving state property in the means of production in the USSR is subordinate for us to the question of the world proletarian revolution.»

Now he finds that

«From this one, and the only decisive standpoint, the politics of Moscow, taken as a whole, completely retains its reactionary character and remains the chief obstacle on the road to the world revolution.»

Trotsky is caught in a vicious circle.

He is so aware of the contradictory character of this position, that he proposes it as *provisional*. Unfortunately it is not only his analysis that he puts to the test of fire, to the test of war, but *all of Marxism*.

«If, however, it is conceded that the present war will provoke not a revolution but a decline of the proletariat, then there remains another alternative: the further decay of monopoly capitalism, its further fusion with the state and the replacement of democracy wherever it still remained by a totalitarian regime. The inability of the proletariat to take into its hands the leadership of society could actually lead under these conditions to the growth of a new exploiting class from the Bonapartist fascist bureaucracy. This would be, according to all indications, a regime of decline, signalling the eclipse of civilization.»

And

«The second imperialist war poses the unsolved task on a higher historical stage. It tests anew not only the stability of the existing regimes but also the ability of the proletariat to replace them. The results of this test will undoubtedly have a decisive significance for our appraisal of the modern epoch as the epoch of proletarian revolution. If contrary to all probabilities the October Revolution fails during the course of the present war, or immediately thereafter, to find its continuation in any of the advanced countries; and if, on the contrary, the proletariat is thrown back everywhere and on all fronts — then we should doubtlessly have to pose the question of revising our conception of the present epoch and its driving forces. In that case it would be a question not of slapping a copybook label on the USSR or the Stalinist gang but of re-evaluating the world historical perspective for the next decades if not centuries: Have we entered the epoch of social revolution and socialist society, or on the contrary the epoch of the declining society of totalitarian bureaucracy?»

If one accepts the existence of a «new exploiting class», one necessarily accepts a new mode of production unforeseen by Marxism. Or one admits that exploitation and oppression do not flow from relations of production but

from some kind of master-slave relation. Postulates of this type are a complete revision of the historical doctrine of Marxism. For Trotsky they remained conditional, but they have been developed systematically and in an affirmative way by a whole slough of Trotskyists since the war.

Equipped with an arsenal of theoretical distortions, the heirs of Trotsky — foremost the Spartacists — are so brazen as to insist that wage slavery has been abolished in the Soviet Union. Of Trotsky's two criteria, the Spartacists have rejected the essential political criterion, retaining only the juridical criterion, which they confuse with the economic or social criterion. Whereas Trotsky only spoke of the «abolition of capitalist private property» in the part of Poland occupied by the USSR in 1939, the Spartacists speak of the abolition of *capitalism* in countries like China, Yugoslavia, Cuba and... Albania, not to mention the rest of Eastern Europe. But Trotsky still knew that the abolition of capitalism is much more than statified property forms. While Trotsky was caught in the void between the «progressive content» of Stalinist reforms and the «political evil» they produced, the Spartacists break out of the dilemma by ignoring the «political evil» to exalt the «progressive content». They take the reversal Trotsky had only suggested to the absurd: because the economy has been nationalized in East Germany, (for example), the German Democratic Republic is a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat! «Communism means state-controlled economy», pontificate the bourgeois ideologues, East and West; «Yes, yes, by Trotsky's beard!», echo the Spartacists, joining the chorus to condemn Marxism to oblivion and disarm the working class.

The Spartacists glorify the «progressive» exploits of the Russian invasion force in Afghanistan — which «everyone recognizes... is one of the few stabilizing features in a dangerously unstable situation» (!) — even though they state clearly that it does not carry out socialist measures, which are not on the order of the day, but merely eradicates certain pre-capitalist economic, social and political relations. While in fact admitting — though not in so many words — that the Russians are acting in accordance with sordid imperialist motives, they exalt the actions as «progressive in spite of themselves». Hail Red Army that liberates Afgani women... no doubt the same way it «liberated» German women in 1945! To be sure, this is far from Trotsky's position, stated thus: «We do not entrust the Kremlin with any historic mission». But his position was contradictory, since, though not «entrusting» Stalin with any historic mission, he thought that the latter *could* and even *had* to carry out measures «revolutionary in character», measures which the proletariat would then have to defend. In fact, if Trotsky did not entrust Stalin with a historic mission, he nonetheless admitted that objectively Stalinism had a mission. The Spartacists take the consequences of this capitulation to the extreme, which leads to the complete liquidation of the Marxist conception of history.

By eliminating the essential political criterion, the Spartacists have eliminated the class struggle as the motor of history. Instead of working toward the «growing union of the workers» (Marx), the consciousness and organization of the proletariat, as Trotsky said, they have given priority to «progressive measures» implemented by just about anyone for just about any reason. This position is certainly not new. We can overlook Lasalle for the moment (although it would be instructive to compare Lasalle's attitude to Bismarck and the Spartacists's servility toward the Kremlin) and recall the social-democratic right wing's capitulation to colonialism. Claiming that colonialism merely exported «democratic civilization», i.e. capitalism, it vacillated bet-

were a benevolent neutrality and open support. Reading the justification the Spartacists give today for the Red Army occupation of Afghanistan is like hearing ossified democrats and reformists extol the virtues of the civilizing mission of the British conquerors in India (where they undermined the horrible caste system!) or reading the English newspapers from 1841-42 when the British army was defeated at Kabul. And don't forget the glories of the gunboats that brought monstrous Asiatic despotism to its knees in China, or the beneficence of the French army when it «pacified» Algeria. Oh, let us sing praises to colonialism, which «liberated» the poor barbarians and savages from their traditional masters to initiate them into the pleasures of bourgeois society! What craven idiocy!

Why don't the Spartacists bother to read the pages from Marx where he exalts the Taipeng revolt against the English invasion, or Rosa Luxemburg's writing on the colonization of Algeria? They would see what an abyss separates them from Marxism. But it is not enough just to see their betrayals and denounce them. We must expose the arguments they adduce to justify their pseudo-proletarian colonialism.

At the root of Spartacist betrayals is an anti-dialectical vision of history, and in particular of the «progressive» role of the bourgeoisie and capitalism. It cannot be denied that by destroying pre-capitalist relations of production and social relations in whole continents, imperialism moves history forward. But the proletariat cannot solidarize with the colonialism of its own bourgeoisie without destroying itself as a class. On the contrary, it must combat colonialism to the death, solidarize with the struggle of the peoples oppressed and exploited by «its own» state, and integrate their struggle (even the Taipeng and Mau-Mau struggles) into the general fight for the overthrow of bourgeois rule.

In a general sense, it can be said that the march of capitalism toward more «modern», more concentrated — in short, fascist — economic and political forms moves history in the direction of the proletarian revolution. But the proletariat cannot give its support to this bourgeois «progress». Its purpose is not to create the objective conditions of its class struggle for state power, but to create the subjective conditions, in other words, its *organization as a revolutionary class*. This subjective condition is so important that, even in a situation where the bourgeois, national-democratic revolution has not been completed, the proletariat must not tail the bourgeoisie. Not only must it maintain its class independence, but it must try to conquer the leadership of the radical struggle for still bourgeois objectives, striving to become the ruling class both locally and internationally. This has been clear to us since the *Manifesto* of 1848, but the Spartacists have forgotten or denied it. After entrusting Stalin with erecting the dictatorship of the proletariat in Germany, Poland, etc., they entrust Brezhnev with liberating Afghani women!

They greet Russian imperialism with cries of «Hail Red Army», revealing that they have erased the boundaries and differences between the bourgeois revolution and the proletarian revolution, between the historical tasks of the bourgeoisie and the historical tasks of the proletariat. Everything that moves, that advances, that constitutes «progress» is labelled socialist, and this leads to the most astonishing paradoxes. Diligently repeating Trotsky's (somewhat excessive) condemnation of the bourgeoisie's «historical inabi-

lity» to accomplish its national-democratic revolutionary tasks, the Spartacists then claim that capitalism has been abolished by petty-bourgeois nationalists in countries like China, Yugoslavia, and (dare we mention) Albania. The bourgeoisie is dismissed as incapable of accomplishing its own historical tasks, and the next moment it is able to carry out the proletariat's tasks. And this leaves the proletariat with no further mission except, perhaps, to introduce democracy! If just about anybody can «abolish capitalism», i.e. introduce communism, then there is no longer any need for a revolution, for the dictatorship of the proletariat, for the party, or the class struggle!

Forgetten is the monumental formula of the Statutes and Rules of the First International:

«In its struggle against the collective power of the propertied classes the working class cannot act as a class except by constituting itself into a political party, distinct from, and opposed to, all old parties formed by the propertied classes... This constitution of the working class into a political party is indispensable in order to ensure the triumph of the social revolution and its ultimate end — the abolition of classes».

«The emancipation of the working class must be conquered by the working classes themselves».

Trotsky would have recoiled in horror at the Spartacists's deformation of Marxism, at this monstrous parody in which nothing of Marxism remains. He would not have cried «Hail Red Army» or «Annex Afghanistan». He would not have pronounced capitalism abolished in Cuba or Vietnam. He would not have entrusted enemy social forces with accomplishing the historical mission of the proletariat!

But as the preceding demonstration has proven, he did take the first steps in that direction. He did so with hesitations, retreats, little steps forward and great leaps backward, but he had waded into the Rubicon. And unfortunately, he gave full rein to fools who were compelled by history to go beyond the point of no return on the road that Trotsky had tested with the utmost caution. The Spartacists have become mere appendages of the Russian state, a modern version of the «Friends of the Soviet Union» so despised by Trotsky, incapable of grasping the independent class position of the proletariat, which they vilify as propaganda of the other imperialist camp.

It is impossible to criticize the Spartacists without criticizing Trotsky, without tracing the roots of their positions. In reality the Spartacists are beyond mere criticism. They deserve only to be denounced for what they are: rabid counter-revolutionaries. If, in severing all ties with his former collaborator, Parvus, Trotsky could devote a passage in his «Obituary on a Living Friend» to recalling the revolutionary past of the one who had helped Trotsky to discipline his enthusiasm, no such eulogy can be pronounced on the Spartacists. All that can be done is to show how this creature emerged from Trotsky's experiments in spite of his intentions. We can only restore the primary political criterion which Trotsky always defended, and clear away all the false criteria forced upon him by defeat. In the course of our work, through decades of exile and the darkest period of counter-revolution, we have rejected the dead-ends in which Trotsky strove desperately to find an immediate escape from the counter-revolution.

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## Reinforcement of the Bourgeois Dictatorship in Turkey

On September 12, 1980, the Turkish army took power directly in hand by suppressing all political parties, dissolving the Chamber of deputies and suspending the constitution. This coup d'état fits into a long period of serious economic, social and political tensions during which the Turkish bourgeoisie, behind a democratic veneer, has regularly strengthened its policy of oppression against the proletariat, the impoverished peasants and the Kurds *in order to preserve the infamous social order of capitalism.*

Now, the state and the army have a completely free hand to indulge in an even more systematic repression against the worker's movement in Turkey, without even having to pretend that they are respecting the deceitful mask of bourgeois democracy. They can go ahead with massive arrests of combative workers and militants, with tortures, with searches of working class districts like in the Kurdish villages, and with executions. Up to now, two militants of the extreme left have already been executed and nearly a hundred have been condemned and are *in danger* of being hung *at any moment*. Of course, to create illusions, the military has also arrested some militants of the extreme right and even their leader Turkez, and are said to have hung a well-known fascist whose lawyer, curiously enough, was not present at the time of the execution. But this cannot fool anyone: the military terror's *only objective is to prolong the repression carried out by bourgeois democracy against the proletariat in order to clean out every place where there is social agitation.*

In fact, the overt terror exercised by the army (this is its third intervention since 1960) is nothing but the *natural result of the permanent action conducted by the state* within a democratic framework to smash an ever-increasing social agitation and the courageous struggles carried out by the working class to *defend* itself against the intensification of capitalist exploitation and oppression. (Each time that the parliamentary framework has been insufficient, the army has intervened to clear a new terrain which allows the revival of the democratic poison, *while reinforcing the state.*) Thus, since the last military intervention in 1971, the democratic veneer which has been applied through the alternation in power of the two bourgeois parties, the Justice Party and the People's Republican Party, aided by their two satellites, the pro-fascist National Action Party and the pro-Islamic Party of National Safety, has allowed the bourgeoisie to *monopolize* the political scene in order to channel the worker's movement into the ruts of electoralism and interclassism.

But at the same time, capitalist democracy had *strengthened* itself more each day by using on the one hand, the legal violence of the courts, the police and especially the army in setting up a state of siege in several provinces since the time of the large strike movement of June 15-16, 1970 and since then renewed most democratically by the bourgeois parliament. On the other hand, capitalist democracy reinforces itself by using the para-legal violence of the National Action Party's commandos, who can indulge in massacres and daily crimes against the combative workers and militants of the extreme left with impunity. *As we have stated on several occasions, this clearly demonstrates that in Turkey, like elsewhere, the state, the constitution, the laws, the parliament, the police, the army and the commandos together make up the armed fist of bourgeois democracy, and that, far from being incompatible, democracy and fascism go together in order to defend bourgeois order.*

This strategy of the bourgeoisie was intended to paralyze a more and more restless working class by enclosing it in a legalist and interclassist parliamentary framework, thanks to the reformist lies of the People's Republican Party, and the overt betrayal of the so-called leftist parties and the opportunist leadership of the DISK (trade unions) and thanks to the criminal blindness of the extreme left groups which, through pacifist or violent orientations, have all recommended supporting a fraction of the bourgeoisie judged to be more progressive, against another fraction, more openly conservative and thus termed more dangerous. The result was that the army and commandos could all the more easily strike a workers' movement which was disoriented (in spite of the magnificent movements of revolt like in Izmir in February, 1980) whose most combative elements were most often reduced to committing isolated acts of violence and individual terrorism, *while bourgeois repression was developing in a more and more organized and centralized way.* Thus, the stupidity of an interclassist popular front strategy confined the sincere elements, who felt in a confused way that it was false, to an individual form of violence and objectively hindered *the development of a large movement of proletarian self-defense.*

Starting from the moment when the western imperialisms (the USA and West Germany at the head), who were worried about the risks of destabilization in a region of great strategic importance, decided to supply financial aid, it became evident that the Turkish bourgeoisie had to devote themselves to preventing any possibility of a resumption and extension of the workers' struggle and to decisively smashing the workers' movement in order to justify this international counter-revolutionary solidarity and to profit from it to the maximum. This is the real meaning of the September 12, 1980 coup d'état, whose goal is *to centralize, systematize and enlarge* the state repression and terror, while appearing to struggle against a daily and extended fascist terror, which it incited and supported for a long time, but which was becoming insufficient and useless by itself in safeguarding the bourgeois social order. This demonstrates once again that fascism is the natural product of capitalist democracy, which in Turkey is merely the pillar of support for the enslavement of the masses of proletarians, impoverished peasants and those without any means of existence.

This coup d'état has provoked a profound relief and a thorough understanding in all the western imperialist states. And what is more, these states had evidently prepared its success, since it was from the Turkish embassy in Washington that the coup was publicly announced to the whole world and, by

sheer accident, it was preceded by the establishment of obligatory visas for Turks in West Germany, the Benelux countries and France, a measure which allows the strengthening of immigration control while closing the frontiers to the attempted escape of the militants who are being hunted down in Turkey. All the imperialist states who are so ready to wave the rag of the Rights of Man in order to denounce their rival, Russian imperialism, have declared themselves persuaded by the wish of the Turkish military to restore democracy on «healthy foundations» and convinced that is necessary to give them time, which amounts to actively supporting it. All these exploiters know perfectly well that in fact democracy and fascism are two complementary weapons in the service of their class domination.

As for the Turkish extreme left, it continues to remain the prisoner of democratic and interclassist anti-fascism. It calls all tendencies, no matter what they are, all democrats and progressives to denounce fascism, while without exception all the leaders of the People's Republican Party reacted to the coup d'état by... hoping that it will be beneficial for Turkey. Once again, instead of working, which it seems definitively incapable of, in order that the proletariat struggle *independently* of all bourgeois and petty-bourgeois influence, by opposing its own organization and its own violence to the violence and organization of the capitalists, this «extreme left» proposes an even broader popular front of struggle for a true democracy, without seeing that is the best way to paralyze every class response.

In addition, in place of calling for an international proletarian solidarity, these pseudo-revolutionaries prefer to whine to the parties of the left in Europe, who pretend to condemn the coup d'état in order to allow the bourgeoisie to control a real opposition movement and to defuse it. Thus, in order to obtain the support of the reformists of the left, these pseudo-revolutionaries denounce the crimes of the military junta alone, while keeping silent about all the crimes and massacres perpetrated by the previous democratic governments: they are even *in retreat* in comparison to the denunciation of the tortures carried out under the Ecevit and Demirel governments made by Amnesty International in the spring of 1980. As a result, *not only do they stupidly remain prisoners of the bourgeois democratic trap, but they are contributing to the political and physical disarmament of the proletariat faced with the dictatorship of capital.*

This is why *today*, while capitalist forces control the entire political terrain with an overt dictatorship, just like tomorrow, when they will again take cover behind a democratic mask in order to better preserve their class monopoly, the perspectives for struggle remain the same for revolutionary communists: the proletariat's resolute class struggle independent of all bourgeois or petty-bourgeois influence; the union of all workers *against* daily exploitation and oppression and *for* the defense of their conditions of life, work and struggle; in order to prepare the working class for the armed insurrection which alone will allow the overthrow of the capitalist state and the setting up of the dictatorship of the proletariat. As Lenin said, in the epoch of capitalism and imperialism *the only alternative is: either the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie or the dictatorship of the proletariat.*

But for this perspective to be achieved, it is essential that the proletariat arm itself with its indispensable organ, a communist and internationalist Party which will *regroup* the combative working class around the programme of the communist revolution. Only this party will be able to lead the workers



of Turkey, and following them, all the oppressed masses, on the path of emancipation and victory by seizing power by force, by setting up the proletarian dictatorship and by working for the extension of the communist revolution throughout the region and throughout the entire world.

*«A communiqué from the coordination committee of the state of siege command, made public on December 25, 1980 at Ankara, indicates that in the course of the last three months (from September 10 to December 10, 1980) 29,995 activists have been arrested throughout the territory, 8,500 of which have already been charged, while 8,517 others are still being sought...»*

*The number of deaths during the same period stands at 215, of which 27 were police or soldiers, 70 were activists killed in the course of skirmishes with the forces of order and 118 were persons assassinated by terrorists. In addition, there have been 368 wounded.»*

## The Chinese Proletariat Is Awakening!

Fifty-four years ago, in 1927, the heroic working class of Shanghai rose up when the Guomindang troops arrived. The Stalinized International had concealed from it that the advance of the national army had left behind it millions of peasant corpses in Hunan and Hubei. Because its party, the Chinese Communist Party had been made the prisoner of the Guomindang by the criminal policy of Stalinism, the working class welcomed these troops as liberators, believing that it would have the opportunity to put forward its own demands. It did not succumb to the blows of the imperialists, but to those of the Guomindang who entered the city on the corpse of the working class bled white and on the corpse of the Shanghai Commune. A few months later, a desperate insurrection was bloodily crushed in Canton.

For Stalin and his friends, all this proved that the revolution had gone onto another stage. But how could it go further when all the forces had been exterminated or demoralized? Since then, the valiant Chinese working class, which had given itself completely to the revolutionary struggle since 1919, has not been able to resurface. The anti-imperialist, national and democratic Chinese revolution was led, not by the working class, but by the petty-bourgeoisie of the cities and countryside, who were able to lead the Chinese peasantry, with its magnificent revolutionary traditions, under the flag of Mao's party, a blend of Stalinism, i.e. anti-worker opportunism and classic petty-bourgeois democracy.

The bourgeois revolution in China is quite finished. It is not a question of whether it was well-finished or badly finished. It is still the largest revolution of this half-century. But what society can the petty-bourgeoisie and peasantry give birth to, if not capitalist society? On one hand, capitalism produces wage labour and the social layers linked to the reproduction of the market, profit and capital, even if it is state capital; on the other hand: it produces and reproduces the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

When the bourgeoisie has exhausted its revolutionary cycle and the energy of all the layers which take part in it, including the petty-bourgeoisie, when it becomes adult, it must get rid of its youthful dreams, the «romantic» attire with which every bourgeoisie had made its first steps. And the dreams were not lacking in China; petty-bourgeois and peasant dreams, dreams of autarkic and popular egalitarianism. However, Deng Xiaoping is not the figure of a dreamer, but very much represents the adult bourgeoisie.

This is the meaning of the death sentence of Jiang Qing. The Chinese

bourgeoisie is getting rid of its out-dated relics, it is exorcizing the ideological demons of a social combativeness that no longer had any aim, and which can set a bad example for the social forces which are ripening. But the sentence has been «suspended». Who knows if Jiang Qing will be needed tomorrow to preach the eternal maintenance of the «bloc of four classes?».

In 1927, the number of workers in Chinese manufacturing, factories and railroads was estimated at 2 million. Craftsmen numbered as many. The large mass of the proletariat, which was concentrated in Shanghai and Canton, had been exterminated in a most determined way. Today, the bourgeois revolution has brought with it its subversive effects, those for which the proletariat defends it against the old classes and imperialism, and against the bourgeoisie itself, if necessary.

Today, there are more than 20 million pure industrial proletarians, i.e. ten times more than in 1927. Small industry and crafts account for as many workers. In an active population of 400 million men, 160 million work outside of agriculture. Peking is larger than Paris and has more workers than it. Shanghai is bigger than New York and Tokyo. It may be the largest city in the world. In any case, it is still the heart of the Chinese working class.

The Chinese proletariat is a giant. The terrain of its struggle is now well-cleared: following the efforts of these last twenty years, China has a nearly unified network of roads and railways. Above all, a single state handles and unifies the customs, the conditions of life, work and struggle of a quarter of humanity — let it fall into the hands of the proletariat and things will happen quickly! That is not all. The Chinese working class is now showing undeniable signs of life.

The cultural revolution was a period of social splits, which without doubt, allowed the workers to put forward a few demands. There were terrible repressions. These last years have seen the beginning of a persistent workers' agitation. The enterprises have been complaining since 1976 of «strikes», of «work stoppages without precise causes» (really?). These reactions correspond to the austerity demanded in order to «open China to the outside world», to achieve the great dream of the Chinese bourgeoisie since Sun Yatsen. But once the floodgates were opened, it was the international crisis which surged in: the plans must be revised downwards, austerity and sacrifices are called for over and over again.

Officially, there are 20 million unemployed. These are primarily the young. In Shanghai, the municipality has to serve 100,000 meals a day in the peoples' soup kitchens, in order to avoid trouble. Now, the restructurings underway necessitate massive new layoffs, and even if unemployment benefits are anticipated, some workers will, in any case, see their incomes fall considerably.

«China is heading towards very serious social difficulties, which it is preparing to confront by setting up a rigorous system of political and ideological control», one reads in *Le Monde* of January 27, 1981. The *Trade Union Daily* of January 31, 1981 (cited by *Le Monde* of February 1 and 2, 1981), declares war on the «agitators», the «disturbers of social order» who «are seeking to provoke disorder and incidents on a broad scale in order to win individual privileges from the party and the government and to satisfy their growing appetites». Nothing less!

Capital has an enormous appetite. It devours an increasingly greater part of the wealth created by the working class. Swarms of parasites of all kinds

thrive on this exploitation. But if the working class begins to try and keep its share in order to survive, to resist the lowering of its already insufficient portion and the deterioration of its conditions of living and work, what unbearable individualism! For our part, we salute these «growing appetites» of the working class. We know that the struggle begins from «self-centered» material interests, and with it, the hope of proletarian emancipation and struggle which will free the whole of humanity from slavery and misery can take root.

According to *Le Monde* of February 1 and 2, 1981, the «drastic austerity measures» are «all the more difficult for the population to bear because they are accompanied by a large increase in prices [...] The dispute is also developing among the young», but «agitation appears to be limited to the cities and workers».

And now, according to the organ of the Chinese «trade unions», these agitators, «thoughtless» because they refuse «to take into account the whole situation and the economic difficulties», also want «free trade unions»! Horror! The Chinese bourgeoisie who could rejoice at the agitation in central Europe which prevented Russian imperialism from carrying out its policy in the Far East as it had planned, are now becoming anxious about Polish style agitation at home! Imagine the Shanghai workers beginning to shout «Gdansk, Gdansk!», like the Turin workers did at the end of last year on the occasion of massive layoffs at Fiat.

And if tomorrow, the working class adds the genuine appetite which is its class duty to its «growing appetites», the appetite for the conquest of power and its class dictatorship, the real appetite, not the one that appears in the Maoist revolution's images of a Camelot, but the one which is based on the armed proletariat and which finds its strength in the exclusive leadership of the genuine proletarian, revolutionary and internationalist communist party?

We welcome this news from China with enthusiasm. Capitalism has made its world tour. Everywhere it has produced a working class which must struggle against it. History is accelerating today, each month involving new contingents of workers in the class struggle. It is up to revolutionary communists and the party to do their work so that the revolutionary end to the bourgeois crisis is forged in these struggles!



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